



4.8 Complaints Handling and Feedback Policy

Policy number: 4.8
Date last reviewed: December 2024
Reviewed by: Child Care Team

This policy relates to	
National Quality Standards Early Childhood Education & Care	7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2.1,

Purpose

Beaucare has a commitment to continuous improvement and promotes an organisational culture that is responsive to complaints and feedback. The policy upholds the right of all staff, volunteers, program participants including parents, educators and children, their family members and members of the public to fair treatment and allows their concerns to be heard and addressed. It also serves an important role in service provision and provides the service an opportunity to review processes and identify improvements in service.

Policy

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Complaint	Is considered to be a problem raised or acknowledged with another person, and include any service related issue, which the Complainant sees as a problem.
Complainant	Refers to the person raising the grievance or complaint.
Respondent	Refers to any individual against whom the complaint is made.

Principles of Natural Justice

Principles of Natural Justice as they relate to this policy are:

- Parties should have the opportunity to be heard before decisions are made;
- The process should be fair, impartial, and without bias with clear and transparent procedures;
- Parties involved in a complaint will not be victimized or suffer negative consequences of having made a complaint;

- Opportunities for independent mediation should be made available;
- Information about how to appeal a decision should be clearly outlined.

Complaints may be made by program participants including parents, children and educators, staff, volunteers, clients and their family members and members of the community.

Roles and Responsibilities

❖ General Manager

The General Manager has responsibility for developing procedures which ensure that:

- All complaints are acted upon immediately according to procedures;
- Managers, staff and volunteers are familiar with, and trained in dealing with complaints;
- Review processes for complaints.

❖ Managers and Supervisors

All Managers and Supervisors have a responsibility to:

- Process complaints according to procedures;
- Encourage feedback as an opportunity to improve;
- Ensure staff and clients have access to the Complaints policy and procedure.

❖ Staff, Subcontractors, Volunteers and Board

Every Board member, staff member and volunteer has a responsibility to ensure that responses to complaints are made according to procedures.

Contact Details

Beaucare General Manager:

Telephone: (07) 5541 4216

E-Mail Address: gm@beaucare.org.au

Beaucare Child Care Manager:

Telephone: (07) 5541 3588 / 0421 311 618 (after hours)

E-Mail Address: fdc@beaucare.org.au

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services - Complaints:

Telephone: 1800 080 484

Office for Early Childhood Education and Care:

Telephone: (07) 5656 6688

Procedures

Persons who have a complaint about any aspect of the service are advised to speak to the person with whom they have the concern, if this is possible and appropriate. If the complainant is uncomfortable or unable to address the person directly, or the issue is not resolved, or if the issue concerns a policy or procedural matter, or an ethical or criminal matter, it is recommended that the program Manager is contacted.

Steps to take in making a complaint

- (1) If possible and appropriate, talk to the person whom you have a concern with.
- (2) If not resolved, refer to the Program Manager or General Manager
- (3) Contact may be made with funding body of program

Complaints can be made via phone, in person, email or in writing.

It is preferred for complaints to be made directly to the particular program staff or Manager involved. If a staff member, volunteer or service user receives a complaint, they are advised to facilitate the person speaking to the relevant Manager or assist to record the complaint for forwarding to the Manager. The complainant is encouraged to raise any issue of concern as soon as they arise.

Complainants will be encouraged to provide their name. Complaints from anonymous sources will be documented but sources will be advised that the process of resolution will not be able to be followed to the same extent and that the validity of the complaint, and therefore the information supplied, will be less verifiable and more difficult to appropriately address. A response and outcome is unable to be provided to anonymous third party sources.

If the complaint concerns a Manager, the General Manager is to be contacted. Departmental representatives may also be contacted with complaints. Refer list of departmental contacts attached to the policy.

On disclosing a complaint, the complainant will be assured of the following:

- Each complaint will be investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially.
- Persons who make complaints, or who are witnesses will not be disadvantaged in either the services they receive or any future associations they have with Beaucare.
- Clients of Beaucare services have the right to involve an advocate in their dealings with service providers. The role of an advocate is to speak and act on behalf of the person receiving services but not to mediate between Beaucare and the clients when there is a dispute. Assistance to access an advocacy service will be provided on request.
- A person with a complaint can, at any stage, seek advice from the relevant program Manager.

The following process will be used once a complaint is received

- The complainant will be encouraged to clearly outline their concerns, describing the issue as factually as possible. The Manager may contact the complainant to discuss and clarify the nature of the complaint and seek further information if needed. This will be documented.
- Complainants from non-English speaking backgrounds will be offered interpreter services. Clients who may have impaired decision making capacity (including dementia) will have their concerns discussed with the carer/legal guardian and if necessary the concern may be made in writing to the Office of the Adult Guardian.
- The complainant will be advised via verbal or written communication of the receipt of the complaint and the process that will follow. If the complaint is delivered directly to the Manager, this will be considered acknowledgement of receipt.
- If the complaint involves another person - the Respondent will be contacted by the Manager or delegated person and advised that there has been a complaint and the details of the complaint. An appointment will be made with the respondent within one week of the initial complaint to allow discussion and response to the issue. The respondent is advised of their right to have a support person present. The response is documented.
- An investigation will be conducted by the Manager unless they are included in the complaint. In this case the complaint will be forwarded to the General Manager. If the General Manager is included in the complaint, the complaint will be forwarded to the Beaucare President.

Complaint resolution

- The Manager will invite the parties together to discuss further and endeavour to resolve the matter – this should occur within a reasonable time frame. At the joint meeting the Manager will provide each party with the opportunity to outline their perspective on the issue, and assist the parties to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution. Ideally the two parties, rather than the Manager, should determine the outcome. When this is not possible, or when appropriate, the Manager may suggest a solution, and if both parties are in agreement this may be implemented.
- The Manager may approach the complainant with a suggested resolution or discuss resolution options with the complainant if no other parties are involved.
- If the investigation and/or mediation results in a resolution, then the resolution is documented and the complaint is finalised and forwarded to the Manager for collating and/or review of policies and practices.
- The complainant should then be advised of the outcome.

If the matter is not resolved

The complainant is to be informed and alternative resolution practices and timeframes discussed and communicated.



If the Complainant is not satisfied with the resolution

If the Complainant is still not satisfied the complaint has been resolved, the issue may be referred to the General Manager or Beaucare board.

Clients who are dissatisfied with the management of their complaint with Beaucare can alternatively contact the relevant Departmental representative or external agencies listed in contacts.

Information to be recorded

All complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Register. Documented complaints and their outcomes will be retained in a confidential complaints file.

Staff files will be noted if complaint refers to breaches of regulations or processes that require monitoring of compliance.

Disciplinary Action

In instances where staff and volunteers' actions are deemed to have been inappropriate or contrary to policy and procedures, the Manager may direct this to the party concerned and provide education, training and/or explanation of policy and procedures.

If disciplinary action is required, managers will follow Beaucare *Personnel Management* policy.

Review

The Manager will finalise follow-up action including monitoring ongoing compliance and policy and procedures updates.

Report

Summarised non-identifying information of complaints will be reported to the General Manager and evaluated on a regular basis as part of quality improvement processes.

Associated Beaucare Policies and Documents

[Appendix F QIP and Compliance](#)

Relevant Legislation

National Law

National Regulations

National Quality Standard

Australian Government Department of Education and Training: *Child Care Provider Handbook*

<https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0>