

Client Complaints and Feedback POLICY
SD - 11



Policy Number	SD - 11
Version Control	4
Approved by/date:	Jalisa Kress/ 29/3/17
Review Due	29/3/18
Consultation Mechanism	Policy Review Team

Relevant Legislation	Contacts: NSW Ombudsman
Relevant Disability Service Standards	1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Relevant Home Care Standards	1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 3.4
Relevant Internal Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record of complaint form• Tell us what you think form

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Policy Scope:

Complaints and Client feedback are dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution by the staff and Board of Biala Services.

Definitions:

A **complaint** is a serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of Biala's service provision. Clients are encouraged to express their complaints to enable us to improve the quality of our support.

Feedback can be defined as a person's reactions to a product or the way a person performed a task. Feedback is generally used to make improvements.

Policy Statement:

Biala Services Inc. actively seeks the input of clients (and stakeholders) and encourages them to provide feedback, both positive and negative, as a source of ideas for improving services and activities.

Biala is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using our services or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access, equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

Biala Services Inc will:

- Foster a service culture that encourages honest and open communication
- Inform clients about the standard of service they can expect through the client handbook
- Protect the right of clients (and stakeholders) to provide feedback and to make complaints about service delivery
- Encourage and make it easy for people to provide feedback
- Provide anonymity to people providing feedback
- Record and analyse information arising from feedback and use it to improve services.

Biala Services will provide a complaints and appeals management procedure that:

- Is simple and easy to use
- Is effectively communicated and promoted to all clients and stakeholders
- Ensures complaints or appeals are fairly addressed and responded to promptly
- Is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice

- Complies with legislative requirements

All clients will be informed of their rights and responsibilities in regards to complaints in the “Client handbook” which is distributed at the initial assessment.

Procedure for Managing Complaints

Step	Timeline
1. A complaint is received via a Support Worker or directly from a client/representative via letter, email, face to face or telephone.	On day the complaint is received
2. A Complaint Record form is created by the person receiving the complaint and the complaint is reported to Manager.	
3. The complaint is reviewed by the manager and relevant information and proposed action is recorded.	Within two (2) working days of receipt of the complaint
4. The manager contacts the client (by phone or letter) to advise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint is being assessed • The process that is followed • The timeline • Their right to an advocate and advocacy agency support 	Within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint
5. The manager reviews the complaint and decides the action to be taken and who takes it	Within seven (7) working days of the complaint
6. The General Manager is informed of the complaint and update about the progress and the proposed action to be taken	Within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the claim.
7. Action is carried out. Person/s affected by the complaint are fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to provide further information.	
8. The client is advised of the final action taken to address the issues raised and the outcome of the complaint via letter.	
9. If the client is unsatisfied with the outcome they are advised that the complaint can be taken to the Board of Management whose decision is final.	
10. If the client wishes to appeal the complaint is reviewed by the Board of Management at the next Board meeting. This decision is final and the Board of Management will advise the client of the outcome of the appeal via letter.	Within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the claim
11. When the complaint is finalised a staff person is assigned to make sure that the client feels comfortable to continue accessing services and obtain feedback on the complaints procedure. The	

complaint is then closed out.	
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Complaints involving specific staff members or volunteers

The General Manager has the delegated responsibility for resolving complaints or disputes involving staff members or volunteers.

Procedure for Managing feedback

Step	Timeline
1. Feedback is received in the “suggestions” box located in the activities room	Checked weekly
2. Feedback is given to appropriate manager	On the day
3. Feedback is discussed at next staff meeting to determine if any changes to policy or procedure need to be made or if we can better accommodate client wishes	Within one month
4. Any changes that are decided on are made and implemented and if the clients details are on the form they are informed of this action	

Record keeping

A register of Complaints and Feedback will be maintained on the server under “complaints and feedback”. The register will be maintained by the Manager Corporate Services. These records will be kept in a private and confidential manner and on a “need to know” basis.

Information to be kept for **Complaints**:

- Details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- Date lodged
- Action taken
- Date of resolution and reason for decision
- Indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action

Copies of all correspondence will be kept on the client file and also in “Complaints” file.

Information to be kept for **Feedback**:

- Details of feedback
- Date lodged

- Any changes made due to feedback being received

Copies of all correspondence will be kept in the “Feedback” file.

NSW Ombudsman

If for whatever reason the client is not happy with the results of the complaint and the procedure that has been followed they are encouraged to take the matter further to the NSW Ombudsman. Contact details for the Ombudsman can be found in the client handbook and if requested a Biala staff member can assist the participant to make the complaint.

Surveys

Biala Services Inc. will conduct a large annual survey on all clients, carers, staff and volunteers. Suitable questions will be directed at clients/carers depending on what programs or activities the client participates in.

Other surveys may be requested when new procedures are implemented or if consultation is required.

Biala believes a thorough annual survey successfully identifies any feedback or complaints that the client may have but may not follow through.

Answers from the survey are grouped into 3 types: Positive, Negative and suggestions. This feedback is then acted on appropriately.

Results

Results collated from the surveys will be presented to the General Manager to present at the next Board of Management meeting. They will also be used for staff training and Service developments.

Internal Staff Complaints

Please see “Internal Complaints” policy.

Monitoring Complaints & Client Feedback policy

Processes will be regularly audited by the Manager Corporate Services or Development Innovation Coordinator as part of our audit.