

Complaint Management Policy

Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern made to an organisation by a service user, customer or from an employee or contractor that relates to the organisation's products or services, or the performance, behaviour and conduct of staff, or the complaints handling process itself.

Policy

Holistic Speech Pathology considers that a complaint may be made in person, by phone, fax, email or in writing. Holistic Speech Pathology will document details of the complaint so that there is a full understanding of the issues, and also an understanding of what the complainant would like to see as a resolution. Holistic Speech Pathology will endeavour to acknowledge complaints within two (2) business days of receipt and to resolve complaints, if possible, within five (5) business days.

Where a service user, staff member or contractor raises a complaint, they have the right to have that complaint:

- received and addressed in strict confidence;
- addressed in a spirit of helpful cooperation and sensitivity; and
- resolved promptly.

If a complaint is raised by a staff member or contractor against another staff member or contractor, both parties have certain rights, including the right to have the complaint investigated fairly and impartially, be provided with appropriate feedback and communication on work performance when issues are identified, have fair and consistent treatment and reasonable avenues of redress.

The Principal Speech Pathologist will manage dealing with complaints. Where the complaint relates to the Principal Speech Pathologist, an external party may be engaged to investigate the complaint to ensure impartiality.

Objectivity

Each complaint will be addressed in a fair, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process (Grievance Procedure). The principles of objectivity include:

Openness: to ensure both the complainant and respondent understand the complaints handling process and the nature of the complaint.

Impartiality: to ensure a balanced consideration of all information/evidence is undertaken before a complaint can be resolved without fear or favour, with procedural fairness applying.

Confidentiality: to ensure the complainants and other parties are protected.

Accessibility: to ensure all parties concerned are aware of and can participate in the complaints handling process and the lodged complaints progress.

Completeness: to ensure all relevant information/evidence has been collected from both sides.

Equity: to ensure equal treatment to all people.

Sensitivity: to ensure each case is considered on its merits, paying due care to individual differences and needs.

Record Keeping

All complaints will be documented, including the nature of the complaint, actions taken, outcome, and date of resolution. Complaint records will be retained for a minimum of 7 years, consistent with clinical record retention requirements.

External Complaints

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints process, or if you prefer to lodge a complaint externally, you may contact:

- **Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO):** Phone 1800 813 583 or visit www.hadsco.wa.gov.au
- **Speech Pathology Australia Ethics Board:** Phone 1300 368 835, email ethics@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au, or complete the Ethics Complaint Form on the Speech Pathology Australia website
- **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC):** Visit www.oaic.gov.au for privacy-related complaints