

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

About this Policy

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, and subcontractors involved in the management of feedback and complaints related to the care and services of HomeMade Customers.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that HomeMade safely and effectively manages all feedback and complaints and minimises their impact on Customers and staff. It is also to provide the reader with information about how HomeMade views and handles feedback and complaints so that we can be as transparent as possible about our actions.

It is also a requirement of the Aged Care Quality Standards that aged care providers have effective risk management systems and practices in place to manage and minimise the risk of harm to Customers.

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Aim

Homemade is committed to delivering a platform that is responsive to the needs of its Customers, provides high-quality safeguards, and serves the community in which it operates. This policy provides guidance to anyone who wishes to notify us or the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (“**Commission**”) of feedback or a complaint. It sets out the approach we take when responding to such matters, the principles we apply, and highlights our commitment to consistency, quality, and continuous improvement.

Introduction / Background

Feedback management plays a critical role in the provision of safe and quality aged care services. HomeMade acknowledges that it is through active engagement with Customer feedback that improvements can be made. Feedback can be through compliments, constructive feedback, or complaints.

To support this, HomeMade has a robust system in place where:

- Customers and their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers, staff, contractors, and other stakeholders are actively encouraged to be engaged in the feedback process
- Compliments are welcomed and shared with the HomeMade community
- Complaints are viewed as an opportunity to improve the provision of care and services
- Customers and their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers are provided with information about how to access internal and external complaints mechanisms

The HomeMade management team actively supports Customers and their Representative / Substitute Decision Makers to provide feedback on the services provided.

HomeMade actively encourages feedback through:

- A management open-door practice
- Regular Customer and staff satisfaction surveys
- Supporting varying levels of health literacy to support feedback processes
- Having compliment and complaint information accessible
- Onboarding processes for new Customers and staff
- Provision of this information in the Customer Handbook

Staff are also supported to make complaints and provide feedback on all aspects of care and service delivery.

Policy Statements

HomeMade recognises that all Customers have a right to raise concerns and make complaints about the care and services they receive from HomeMade.

HomeMade is committed to the effective handling of all feedback.

HomeMade is committed to effective and timely recognition of compliments made about the service.

HomeMade has a strong commitment to timely and efficient complaint handling and resolution that is based upon HomeMade Mission and Values.

HomeMade is committed to using feedback and complaints to continuously improve our organisational processes at HomeMade.

Compliments

Customers and their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers and other people are able to provide compliments and provide positive feedback about good care and service provision.

This provides HomeMade with the assurance that systems and processes are working well. These positive compliments are welcomed and influence how we provide care and services.

Where staff are identified as providing exceptional service to Customers and their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers, they are recognised through a staff awards process.

Feedback

Customers are encouraged to provide feedback to HomeMade about people, product, or process. HomeMade appreciates and acknowledges all feedback, both positive and constructive. Feedback is integral to understanding how Customers feel about the platform and helps us to direct resources to where they may be most needed.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of an Approved Provider's responsibilities, that requires an outcome, action, or resolution.

All complaint feedback is taken seriously and any issues raised by a Customer and their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers or a staff member will be dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without fear of reprisal.

To enable this approach, Customers, their Representative/Substitute Decision Makers and staff will have access to external advocates and language support services when making complaints.

The underpinning principles of privacy, confidentiality, procedural fairness, and cultural safety will be respected.

This approach aligns with the Aged Care Charter of Rights.

Roles And Responsibilities

All staff are required to carry out their duties in accordance with their job descriptions, with the knowledge and skills attained as part of their profession or any qualifications, and in accordance with any applicable codes of conduct, practice or standards expected by HomeMade. Staff are expected to engage with Customers appropriately and respectfully, and to maintain professional boundaries.

Staff that do not have a universal professional code of practice or standards tied to their role, e.g. personal care workers, are subject to codes of behaviour or practice relevant to their role under their terms of employment.

Staff who are subject to professional standards (e.g., medical, nursing and allied health professionals), will have a higher threshold of professional training and qualifications, knowledge and skills, and scope of practice, and hence a higher threshold of conduct expected.

The content of professional standards varies but may relate to:

- The manner in which a Customer is treated (including their rights to privacy and dignity);
- The need for tailored, frequent and clear communication with a Customer.
- Ensuring informed consent and good record keeping.
- Providing culturally appropriate care; and
- Providing quality care and services.

Feedback Management And The Aged Care Quality Standards

Standard	Requirements
1 Consumer dignity and choice	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)
2 Ongoing assessment and planning with Customers	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)
3 Personal care and clinical care	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g)
4 Services and supports of daily living	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g)
6 Feedback and Complaints	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d)
7 Human Resources	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)
8 Organisation Governance	(3) (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

How To Notify Us

You may report feedback or complaints to us in a number of ways, including:

- [Feedback & Complaint Form](#) submitted via our website
- Telephone call to our Customer Support Team 1300 655 688
- Email to feedback@homemadesupport.com.au

- Email to your Support Provider

Whilst we accept anonymous feedback and complaints, if we cannot identify you, it often makes it difficult for us to investigate and provide feedback.

Your Privacy

We protect your identity where practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies you will only be used or disclosed in accordance with relevant privacy laws or our Privacy Policy. There are some limited circumstances where we may disclose your personal information without your consent. This may include matters involving allegations of violence, exploitation, neglect, abuse and sexual misconduct, which may be reported to the police and/or external regulators. For further information please refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

What You Can Expect From Us

Our approach to feedback and complaints is governed by the following key principles:

1	Accessible	We provide a framework that is easy to understand and accessible to everyone. If you would like another person or organisation to assist you with a complaint, we are happy to communicate with whoever you chose to represent you (e.g. a family member, advocate, legal or community member, etc.).
2	Responsive	There is a clear process for the timely handling of complaints, and you are kept informed of our progress.
3	Respectful	You are treated with dignity and respect and listened to with empathy and compassion.
4	Fair	We approach each matter in an equitable, objective, and unbiased manner. We act with integrity, transparency, and accountability.
5	Flexible	We are people-centered. Our process is flexible enough to respond to individual needs. Our people are empowered to act promptly and with as little formality as possible.

How Are Complaints Managed?

Stage 1	We aim to resolve complaints at the front line. This means that the Homemade staff member receiving the complaint is able to resolve it themselves. If this is not possible, a formal complaint may be submitted to us via any of the channels referred to above.
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<p>Stage 2</p>	<p>Formal complaints are dealt with by our Trust & Safety Team. All formal complaints will be acknowledged as soon as reasonably practicable. We investigate and respond to all complaints within 10 working days.</p> <p>This second level of complaint handling generally involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment & Planning – review of the complaint; identifying the steps to be taken and who needs to be informed • Investigation of the complaint • Action – enacting any decisions made on actions to be taken • Outcome and closure – informing concerned individuals of the outcome and closing out the complaint for our records • Continuous Improvement – identifying any opportunities to prevent recurrence or improve our operations going forward
<p>Stage 3</p>	<p>Upon request, complaints will be escalated to the Trust & Safety Manager for review. This review process may also involve the General Manager and other key HomeMade staff members (as appropriate). You will be notified of any revised outcome within 14 days. The complaint will then be closed.</p>
<p>Stage 4</p>	<p>The complainant has the ability to request an internal appeal or make a referral to an appropriate external body. For details, please see section 11.0 of this document.</p>

What If You Are Still Not Satisfied With The Outcome Of A Complaint?

You may consider using our internal appeals process. Appeals are escalated to, reviewed by and determined by our Trust & Safety Committee. Appeals need to be submitted in writing to: feedback@homemadesupport.com.au.

The appeal submission must state the reason(s) you are appealing the decision or outcome and provide the complaint case reference number (if this has been provided to you). The time limit for lodging an appeal is three months from the original decision or outcome. Appeals are determined within 21 days of the date of submission, and you will be notified in writing of the outcome. The Board reviews all appeals on a regular basis.

If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome following the conclusion of the appeals process, then you may wish to refer the matter to an appropriate external body such as:

- Aged Care Quality & Safeguards Commission, Ph: 1800 951 822 Web: www.agedcarequality.gov.au
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner in your State or Territory.

Relevant Legislative / Compliance Items

The [Aged Care Act 1997](#) is the overarching legislation that outlines the obligations and responsibilities that aged care providers must follow to receive subsidies from the Australian Government.

Accountability Principle 2014

Aged Care Act 1997 and Principles

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act & Rules 2018

Aged Care Quality Standards 2019

Charter of Aged Care Rights 2019

Code of Conduct for Aged Care

Information Principles 2014

Quality of Care Principles 2014

Records Principles 2014

Sanctions Principles 2014

Serious Incident Response Scheme

User Rights Principles 2014

Other Relevant Documents

Charter of Aged Care Rights

Aged Care Quality Standards

Aged Care Open Disclosure Framework and Guidance

Clinical Governance Requirements in Aged Care

Glossary

Advocate

A person who:

- publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy
- puts forth a case on someone else's behalf.

Approved Provider

As defined in the Commission Act, a person or body is an approved provider if:

As defined in the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018* a person or body is an approved provider if:

- a. the person or body:
 - i. has been approved as a provider of aged care under section 63D of the Commission Act; or
 - ii. is taken, under paragraph 63F(2)(a), to be an approved provider; and
- b. the approval of the person or body is in effect.

Approved providers may also be referred to as service providers or providers or aged care providers.

Charter of Aged Care Rights

Describes the rights of Customers of Australian Government funded aged care services to be consulted and respected. Provides the same rights to all Customers, regardless of the type of subsidised care and services they receive.

Culturally safe care

Care and services that are planned and delivered in a way that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe and respectful for Customers. Culturally safe care and services also ensure that a person's identity is respected so that who they are and what they need is not questioned or denied.

Mediation

A process where an independent mediator assists the complainant and provider to resolve the issues in a complaint.

Open disclosure

Open discussions with Customers, their family, carers and other support people of incidents that have caused harm or had the potential to cause harm to the Customer.

It involves an expression of regret and a factual explanation of what happened, the potential consequences and what steps are being taken to manage this and prevent it happening again.

Decision Maker

A nominated person who has the delegated authority to make decisions about Customer's care, finances and medical treatment when a Customer lacks capacity to make such decisions themselves:

- Supported Decision-making: the process of enabling a person who requires decision-making support to make, and/or communicate, decisions about their own life. It is the Customer's decision but they are supported in making it.
- Substitute Decision-making: when a substitute decision maker is appointed to make decisions for the Customer who requires decision-making support. The substitute decision maker should be directed by the will, preferences and rights of the Customer
- Substitute Decision Making: this term refers to decisions made by others that are motivated by 'what the Customer would have wanted', had they been able to make the decision themselves.

Representatives Substitute Decision Maker

A Representatives substitute decision maker means a person or body, under the law of the state or territory in which the Customer is provided with aged care, who can give informed consent to the use of Representative in relation to the Customer, and if the Representative is chemical restraint-the prescribing of medication for the purpose of using the chemical restraint, if the Customer lacks the capacity to give that consent.

(Australian Government and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (2021) Regulatory Bulletin 2021-13)