

## Complaints Management Policy

### 1. STATEMENT:

Ability OT is committed to promoting and encouraging our clients, their families and carers to provide feedback, both good and negative, about our services. We aim to implement a positive culture whereby compliments and complaints are treated as an opportunity to continuously improve the quality of services that we provide.

### 2. PURPOSE:

This policy outlines Ability OT's commitment to effectively managing complaints, providing quality customer service and seeking feedback to resolve concerns in a positive way.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITY:

Implementing this policy is the responsibility of all Ability OT employees. The Administration Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff read and implement this policy and associated procedures, and that feedback is sought from our clients to ensure continuous improvement in everything we do.

### 4. OUR SERVICE COMMITMENT:

All staff will proactively work to ensure that:

- People understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to providing feedback and making a complaint
- People are treated with respect and dignity. This includes respecting their privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of their information
- Commitment is shown to a fair, effective and efficient complaint handling process
- A person does not necessarily have to expressly state that they wish to make a complaint to have an issue or concern dealt with as a complaint
- Information on the feedback and complaint management process is easily accessible
- We explain how and where to make a compliment or complaint, including an anonymous complaint
- We explain alternative complaint resolution pathways when the complaint is first lodged and when it is closed
- We support individuals to identify and seek their preferred outcome.
- We explain how the organisation will manage a complaint and the expected timeframe for resolution
- There are no adverse consequences or outcomes of making a complaint and Ability OT employees work collaboratively with the client to ensure clients are satisfied in the way their complaints are managed
- We record and analyse data to identify emerging and existing trends or systemic issues and monitor timeframes for resolution of complaints
- Employees are trained in our feedback, compliment and complaint management processes and develop the capabilities required to manage compliments, complaints and feedback
- We build an organisational culture that is focused on effective, person-centred complaints resolution and utilising feedback for continuous improvement.



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## 5. MAKING A COMPLAINT:

A client can make a complaint in any way, including by speaking to Ability OT in person, sending a letter or email, phoning, or through another agency.

- Complaints can be made anonymously.
- A person making a complaint can have an advocate, such as another person or an organisation, help them when making or interacting with Ability OT about a complaint.
- We will acknowledge all complaints as soon as possible and, at most, within three business days.

Ability OT will treat every complaint with integrity and in a fair and unbiased manner. We will:

- Keep the identity of people making complaints confidential in line with our Privacy Policy;
- Ensure that the person making a complaint is not adversely affected because they have made a complaint
- Treat any new complaint on its merits, even if it has been made before
- Manage any conflicts of interest responsibly.

## 6. MANAGING A COMPLAINT:

When a complaint is received, Ability OT will seek information about the nature of the complaint, the person(s) involved, what outcome(s) the complainant is seeking and any other information required to support an effective investigation. The complaint will be logged into the Complaints Register.

Where a complaint is straightforward and simple to resolve (level 1), Ability OT will seek to manage and resolve it on the day it is received. Level 2 or 3 complaints will be managed by the Director of Ability OT. See expected timeframes for resolution in section 7 of this document.

Ability OT will let the person making the complaint (and their advocate, if relevant) know what to expect from the complaints process including:

- the expected time frames for our actions,
- their likely involvement in the process, and
- the possible or likely outcome of the complaint.

As the complaint resolution progresses, Ability OT will keep the person making the complaint (and their advocate) informed.

After investigation, Ability OT will let the person making the complaint (and their advocate) know:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action we took or intend to take,
- the reason(s) for our decision, and
- any options for review that may be available, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.



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We will ask the person making the complaint (and their advocate) if they are satisfied with the resolution of the complaint that respects a person's culture, values and beliefs.

#### **7. COMPLAINT TYPE AND RESOLUTION TIMEFRAMES:**

There are three categories for complaint complexity and handling:

**Level 1** - Single issues that are straightforward and simple to resolve. Managed by the person receiving the complaint. Target resolution time – 7 days.

**Level 2** - More complex or multiple issues where investigation may be required. Managed by The Director of Ability OT. Target resolution time – 14 days.

**Level 3** - Complex, serious or sensitive issues including complaints: referred by another agency; where intensive investigation is needed; that allege serious misconduct or unlawful behaviour, or required to be reported or referred to an authorised agency. Managed by the Director of Ability OT. Target resolution time – 28 days.

#### **8. PROCEDURE:**

On receipt of a complaint, Ability OT will:

- Where appropriate, encourage the client discuss concerns directly with the treating therapist (level 1).
- The treating therapist will record the client's concerns and agree on a plan to rectify the situation.
- If the concern cannot be discussed directly between client and treating therapist OR cannot be rectified by the treating therapist (level 2 or 3), the client is encouraged to contact the Director of Ability OT to discuss and rectify the situation
- The Director will document the complaint into the complaints register to ensure confidentiality is maintained.
- The Director will consult with the client to determine how best to rectify the situation based on client input. The outcome of this may include:
  - Provision of feedback and training to employees on the unique needs of the client
  - Change of treating therapist
  - Change of service provider (referral to another Occupational Therapy practice)

If the client is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process or the complaint cannot be rectified effectively, Ability OT will direct the client to contact:

- The NDIS Commission [www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints#making-a-complaint-about-the-quality-or-safety-of-services-or-supports](http://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints#making-a-complaint-about-the-quality-or-safety-of-services-or-supports)
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to lodge a formal complaint; <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Make-a-complaint.aspx>



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#### **9. RECORDING AND REVIEWING COMPLAINTS:**

Ability OT keeps confidential records of complaint details, including:

- The nature of the complaint, expected and actual outcomes, complainant satisfaction and resolution times
- Actions taken or recommended to address identified issues.

All complaints are de-identified and recorded in the Complaints Register. De-identified data is used annually to analyse trends and identify and address systemic issues.

Complaint information is securely stored for seven years or longer if required by regulation, legislation or contract.

Ability OT is committed to quality service provision for our clients and encourages anyone with questions or concerns to contact the Director of Ability OT as below:

**Cathy O'Connor**

Director and Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist

Ability OT

[cathy@abilityot.com.au](mailto:cathy@abilityot.com.au)

M: 0431 807 305