

<b>Title:</b>	<b>FEEDBACK, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS</b>	<b>REF NO: BHCC SERVICE 01</b>  Page 1 of 7 Page/s
<b>Area:</b>	Bridges Health and Community Care Ltd	<b>Distribution:</b> All Facilities
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Sharon Sarah</b> Chief Executive Officer	<b>Responsible for Review:</b> Quality Manager

#### VERSION CONTROL

Original Date	Version Number	Description of Changes Made	Who By	Date	Next Planned Revision Date
01/2020	1.0	New Policy and Procedure	Quality Manager	01/2020	01/2024

### 1.00 Purpose

BHCC Ltd is committed to providing quality services to Service Users and conducting relationships in an equitable and impartial manner. We recognise that an essential part of this commitment is ensuring that our Service Users and their families and guardians have ways of providing us with feedback and holding us accountable.

### 2.00 Scope

This Policy applies to all employees and vocational placements of BHCC Ltd.

### 3.00 Definitions

Term	Definition
N/A	

### 4.00 Roles and Responsibilities

The Board, the Chief Executive Officer, Managers, Team Leaders, Program Leads and all staff.

### 5.00 Policy/Procedure

BHCC Ltd will ensure that procedures are implemented and maintained that:

- Ensure there are fair, accessible and accountable feedback, complaints and appeals mechanisms
- Our feedback and grievance processes are effectively communicated to our stakeholders
- People accessing our services and other stakeholders are informed of external avenues of feedback, complaints or appeals processes that can assist them and how they can be accessed
- Information gleaned from all feedbacks and grievances lead to improvement via our Continuous Improvement procedure
- Outcomes of any feedback and/or grievance are communicated to the relevant stakeholders in a timely and respectful manner

Staff should facilitate and encourage all Service Users to provide feedback on our services.

Formal opportunities for feedback are provided via:

- Enquiries link on website (confidential straight to CEO)

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- Feedback Forms provided in reception and upon request
- During initials, follow-up or other meetings e.g. Time to Work, Disability Employment Service
- During Goal/service review meetings
- Upon request/initiation of any Service User and/or their representatives
- Agenda item at Service User/stakeholder meetings
- Open door policy for all Service Users and other relevant stakeholders to the senior team
- Fortnightly “Our Say” meetings – Service User feedback meetings
- YES surveys (Your Experience of Service)

Informal opportunities for feedback are provided via:

- Service Users and their families, decision-makers or advocates can provide verbal feedback to any member of BHCC Ltd staff at any time
- Support staff regularly checking-in conversationally while providing support (“how are things going? Are you happy with how I’m supporting you? Do you have any feedback for me?”)
- Where people provide advice on how something could be improved, we thank them for the advice and ensure it is flagged with the relevant staff member/team.

When receiving feedback from a Service User or other stakeholder, all BHCC Ltd staff are to:

- Listen actively and respectfully
- Paraphrase the feedback back to the person to ensure you have understood it correctly
- Thank the person for the feedback and avoid providing excuses/justifications
- Let them know what you will now do with that feedback (i.e. “I’ll have a chat with my manager about it and let you know how it goes”)
- After the conversation, reflect on the feedback and ask the following questions:
  - How does this impact the way I do my job?
  - Does this feedback impact more than this particular Service User?
  - What can I learn from the feedback as a practitioner?
  - What can BHCC Ltd learn from the feedback?

A brief written record should be made of any verbal feedback and provided to the Team Leader.

The Team Leader presents any feedback for discussion at fortnightly team meetings to:

- Review any nonconformities with policies and procedures
- Determine the cause of any nonconformities
- Evaluate the need for action to ensure that nonconformities do not recur
- Determine and implement action needed
- Review the effectiveness of the corrective action taken.

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Where a Service User has requested BHCC Ltd to do so, the Team Leader will provide a formal response as to the outcome of the feedback.

A copy of all feedback (written, verbal, email, summary of survey findings etc) and the resulting review and actions should be sent to the Quality Manager. It is the Quality Manager's responsibility to record this information on the Feedback Register.

The Quality Manager will provide the Board with an annual Summary of Service User Feedback so that it informs strategic planning and continuous improvement.

### 5.3 Grievance Procedure:

The CEO will ensure that the staff induction process includes detailed information on staff responsibilities in relation to Service User grievances.

BHCC Ltd staff will advise all Service Users how to lodge a grievance in accordance with this policy and provide them with associated information in writing.

A Service User's right to receive services will not be affected by making a grievance.

BHCC Ltd encourages Service Users to discuss problems with staff in order to effectively deal with an issue at the earliest possible opportunity and to avoid the potential for minor grievances to escalate.

However, BHCC Ltd acknowledges that there may be occasions when a Service User is dissatisfied with some aspect of their service/treatment and the issue(s) remains unresolved. Under these circumstances, the Service User should take the following steps.

Service Users may seek legal advice or the support of friends, family, an independent advocate etc. prior to making a grievance or at any time during the process.

### Reporting a Grievance

A Service User must report any service-related grievance to the Chief Executive Officer or (in the event that the grievance relates to the CEO), the Chairperson of the Board who will:

- Clarify the facts of the grievance;
- Take possession of any substantiating evidence provided by the person (documents, photos etc.);
- Take any short-term measures deemed necessary to help alleviate possible escalation of the grievance before a proper investigation is conducted.

The grievance and any short-term measures taken to alleviate it must be recorded in writing and a copy placed on a relevant Complaints Register and staff Personal Files.

### Investigating a Grievance

The CEO or Chairperson will investigate grievances impartially and completely.

Service Users (or their nominated representative) have the right to be present when a grievance that directly affects them is being discussed, unless their presence poses a threat to the other person or persons involved

The CEO or Chairperson must ensure that all parties to the grievance have had an opportunity to refute allegations and/or explain mitigating circumstances.

The CEO or Chairperson must ensure that they interview all witnesses with any information relating to the grievance.

After careful appraisal of all evidence, the CEO or Chairperson must:

- Decide whether or not a legitimate grievance does exist;
- Decide how best to resolve the grievance;

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- Inform all parties involved of what action is to be taken and why;
- Document the action taken and place a copy in all relevant Personal Files;

Where the investigation reveals serious criminal activity, the CEO or Chairperson will report the matter to and assist the police or other authorities for investigation. The CEO or Chairperson will generally stand down the employee until they know the results of the investigation and what (if any) criminal charges have been laid.

Further, the CEO or Chairperson will also provide assistance to the police or other authorities where required in assisting with any other investigation as required by law.

### Resolving a Grievance

Where a grievance is un-substantiated, the CEO or Chairperson must advise the Service User and any employees involved of the finding and the reasons that the grievance is un-substantiated.

Where a non-serious grievance is substantiated, management may conduct a mediation session.

The Service User and any employees involved in the grievance must attend the mediation session as well as any other support people or professional mediators required to ensure a successful outcome. At the mediation session, the CEO or Chairperson must:

- Ensure that each person is given a fair opportunity to be heard;
- Help each person identify the outcome they want; and
- Work with the Service User and any employees involved to find out what middle ground exists and what compromises can be made.

At the end of the mediation session, all people involved should have a clear understanding of the action required to resolve the grievance.

Where a serious grievance is substantiated management must apply disciplinary action in accordance with the Policies and Procedures.

Where the Service User is not satisfied with the investigation and/or resolution of the grievance, s/he may be able to take the issue further through for example the legislative provisions of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act, Equal Opportunity Act, Workplace Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act, Privacy Act or other avenues. BHCC Ltd will assist Service User to access other avenues where possible.

### Documentation

The CEO or Chairperson must keep comprehensive written records of all grievance proceedings in a Case File.

Following resolution of the grievance, management will place comprehensive written records of the Grievance in accordance with the following:

- Records of serious and substantiated grievances will be placed on the Service User's file and the Personal Files of any employee who is facing disciplinary action as a result of the finding;
- Records of non-serious and substantiated grievances will be placed on the Personal file of any employee who is required to undertake action as a result of the resolution process;
- Records of un-substantiated, vexatious and frivolous grievances will be kept in the Case File.

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### Equity and Legal Considerations

BHCC Ltd is protected generally against legal action if they:

- Act in accordance with these policy and procedures;
- Act in good faith; and
- Do not disclose information concerning the grievance other than to persons with a legitimate interest in the information.

### Access to Grievances via an external source

Where people do not feel comfortable making a complaint to BHCC Ltd directly, they are able to access these alternative complaints processes. This is detailed in the complaints information Service Users receive when they first commence services at BHCC Ltd.

There are several areas where Service Users can lodge an external complaint (depending on the program they access):

1. Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business National Customer Service Line for Time to Work Employment Service  
1800 805 260  
<https://www.employment.gov.au/time-work-employment-service>
2. JobAccess Complaints Resolution and Referral Service  
1800 880 052  
<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/crrs>
3. National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline  
1800 880 052  
<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/hotline>  
hotline@workfocus.com
4. Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services  
1800 080 464  
<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/feedback@communiites.qld.gov.au>  
Online Complaint form: [www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints](http://www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints)  
<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/about/complaints/guide-to-making-complaint.pdf>
5. National Disability Insurance Agency  
1800 800 110  
[feedback@ndis.gov.au](mailto:feedback@ndis.gov.au)
6. Office of the Public Guardian  
1800 653 187  
[publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au](mailto:publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au)
7. The Commonwealth Ombudsman  
1300 362 072

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|---|-----------|-------|
| Online  | Complaint | Form: |
| <a href="https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=oco-complaint-form">https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/servlet/SmartForm.html?formCode=oco-complaint-form</a> |           |       |
8. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)  
1300 419 495  
<http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Make-a-complaint.aspx>
  9. Queensland Health  
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/complaints>
  10. Office of the Health Ombudsman  
133 646  
<http://www.oho.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/>

### 5.4 Accessing External Supports, Including Advocacy, Procedure:

BHCC Ltd understand that there will be times where some Service Users wish to seek the assistance of an external advocate or representative to assist them in lodging a complaint, resolving an issue or advocating for their needs.

BHCC Ltd will work with whoever the individual nominates as their representative in good faith.

Where BHCC Ltd staff identifies that there is a potential conflict in their supporting the person in making informed decisions, they are obliged to offer and connect the person with a relevant advocate/representative.

This may include but is not limited to:

People With Disability Australia (Advocacy Group)

1800 442 016 | TTY: 1800 422 016

[pwd@pwd.org.au](mailto:pwd@pwd.org.au)

[www.pwd.org.au](http://www.pwd.org.au)

Office of the Public Guardian:

1300 653 187

[Publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au](mailto:Publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au)

<http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au/adult-guardian>

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