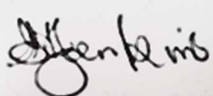


COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date approved	27/6/22	Signature by Management representative	
Previous titles	Complaints Management Policy 2015		Chairperson, Suzanne Jenkins
Previous versions	28/9/20		



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Internal ECS References	
In S:\0 CURRENT POLICY & PROCEDURES:	In S:\1 CURRENT FORMS:
<i>ECS Constitution</i>	<i>Complaints Form (Part A)</i>
<i>Aged Services: Rights & Responsibilities of Clients Policy</i>	<i>Complaints Form (Part B)</i>
<i>People & Communities Policy</i>	<i>Feedback & Complaints Register in H:\IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS\CONFIDENTIAL REGISTERS</i>

External References	
<i>Child Safe Standards at https://ocq.nsw.gov.au/resources</i>	<i>Aged Care Quality Standards at https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/providers/standards</i>
<i>https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-chsp-manual</i>	
<i>https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/common-wealth-home-support-programme-guidelines</i>	

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COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

ECS is committed to openness and responsiveness in regard to feedback and complaints.

1.1 Definitions

ECS workers = anyone who carries out work on behalf of ECS, including staff, volunteers [including management committee members], contractors and students on placement

client = term used across ECS programs and policy documents instead of “consumer”, which is specific to Aged Care

1.2 Acronyms

ECS = Engadine Community Services

2. GENERAL POLICY

ECS is responsive and flexible in adapting to the current and emerging needs and expectations of people who engage with the organisation to ensure services are appropriate and inclusive. Feedback is welcome and encouraged, either informally or through the formal complaints procedure described below.

3. PRINCIPLES

- Clients have a right to complain about the ECS service they are receiving without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly (see also ***Aged Services: Rights & Responsibilities of Clients Policy***)
- The ECS complaints procedures are applied equally to all parties, regardless of their role or social standing
- ECS staff take steps to ensure that clients feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint
- Clients may choose to have a support person with them
- The complainant has the right to use an interpreter or translator during the process
- The complainant has the right to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf with the staff and/or management of ECS. [This may be a family member or friend, or an advocacy agency]
- All official complaints are recorded on the *Complaints Form*
- Person/s affected by the complaint are fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to present their case
- Upheld complaints are used in the review and evaluation of activities of the organisation

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At all stages of the following procedure, ECS representatives attempt to resolve the complaint after asking how the client would like the complaint to be handled. This may include referral to the ECS Management Committee (and informing the client of this development). All official complaints are registered on the *Complaints Form (Part A)* and reported to management through the relevant staff member's regular monthly report without identifying the client. All decisions and responses to a complaint that has been registered in writing are likewise conveyed to the client in writing.

All reasonable efforts are made to provide assistance to the client with special needs they may have, including provision of an interpreter. The complainant has the right to use an advocate to negotiate on their behalf and/or seek resolution of the grievance by an external body at any stage of the process.

ECS provides people with the opportunity to register any concerns or encouragements by the following methods:

- Telephone
- Visit to the office
- Letter
- Email
- ECS webpage
- Facebook [private messaging is preferred, as it is confidential]

COMPLAINTS POLICY

4.1 Stage 1

- i People are encouraged to raise their complaint with the relevant Coordinator in the first instance, or the ECS Manager in the second instance, and offered the opportunity to register their concerns on the *Complaints Form (Part B)*.
- ii The staff member acknowledges the complaint in writing within 5 working days. Even if the complaint proceeds no further than the ECS staff and is satisfactorily resolved, it is registered on the *Complaints Form (Part A)* and reported to management through the relevant staff member's regular reporting mechanism, without identifying the complainant.
- iii An outcome is provided to the complainant.

4.2 Stage 2

- iv If the person is not satisfied with the outcome, or not happy to discuss the issue with the relevant staff or ECS Manager, they are encouraged to contact the ECS Chairperson [or relevant Liaison] and asked to complete the *Complaints Form (Part B)*.
- v The management committee representative acknowledges the complaint within 5 working days and attempts to resolve it prior to the next management committee meeting.
- vi If the person is not satisfied with the outcome, or not happy to discuss the issue with the ECS representative, or if after approaching the above people, the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved, the client can complain to an external body for attempted resolution, such as:
 - NSW or Australian Government funding body or Sutherland Shire Council
 - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
 - Community Services Division, NSW Ombudsman
 - Aged Care Complaints Scheme
 - Community Justice Centre
 - Anti-Discrimination Board
 - Older Persons Advocacy Network

Further information is made available to any client requiring current contacts for the above-listed bodies. The person is informed that once the complaint is forwarded to an external complaint service they are unable to have influence on its progress; the external complaint service informs the person of the outcome of their complaint.

4.3 Confidentiality of Complaints

As far as possible, the fact that a person has lodged a complaint and the details of that complaint are kept confidential, and discussed only amongst staff directly concerned with its resolution. The person's permission is obtained prior to any information being given to other parties that it may be desirable to involve in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

4.4 Carer Disputes

If an ECS worker becomes aware of a dispute between a care recipient and their carer that concerns ECS, they refer the situation to the ECS Manager, who either mediates or attempts to negotiate a solution or, with the person's permission, engages a mediator. If a dispute arises which does not involve ECS, we do not get involved but, if requested, refer the matter to the appropriate mediation service.