

Ref No.:

Compliments and Complaints Policy for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations

Effective Date:	1 October 2009
Review Date:	1 October 2010
Replaces:	Not applicable
Custodian:	Office for the Community Sector

Introduction

Feedback is essential and extremely valuable in the provision of safe and quality service provision. Feedback from consumers, their families, carers, guardians, significant others, advocates and other stakeholders is critical to identify areas for improvement to enhance outcomes for consumers.

Compliment management is important to identify what organisations are doing well. It provides community sector organisations with positive feedback that allows further strengthening and enhancement of service delivery.

Complaint management is as important as compliment management. Complaint management focuses on the prevention of errors and/or a lack of quality service provision in order to reduce the potential for unsafe service delivery and unsatisfactory outcomes for consumers.

The requirements of this policy are referenced within Funding Agreements and other contractual arrangements between the Department of Health and Human Services (Agency) and community sector organisations. This policy is supported by Generic Standard 4 Incidents and Feedback, contained within the *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009-2012*.

In order to establish consistent definitions and reporting of compliments and complaints within community sector organisations, this policy is supported by:

- Compliment and Complaint Reporting Guideline.

Community sector organisations are required to have systems and processes in place to appropriately monitor and manage compliments and complaints. This suite of documents will assist community sector organisations and the Agency to record and trend compliment and complaint data for the purposes of enhancing service delivery and improving consumer outcomes.

This policy and supporting guideline does not override or replace legislative reporting requirements.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Agency is the Department of Health and Human Services.

Agency Units are both the Departmental and Operational Units within the Agency that purchase services from community sector organisations.

Community Sector Organisations includes any Agency funded organisation that provides services through a Funding Agreement.

A **Complaint** is any written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding any service provision or support.

A **Compliment** is an expression or implication of praise.

A **Consumer** is a person who directly or indirectly receives services from an Agency funded Community Sector Organisation.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Agency that, in accordance with the *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012*, all community sector organisations are required to report:

- De-identified compliment data to the Agency every six (6) months; and
- De-identified complaint data to the Agency every six (6) months.

Learnings from both individual compliments or complaints and trend analysis should be incorporated into the systems and operations of the community sector organisation to enhance safe and quality service provision.

The success of compliment and complaint management is dependent upon informing stakeholders of the actions and outcomes resulting from a compliment or complaint.

Scope

This policy refers to compliments and complaints that occur within a context of service provision delivered by a funded community sector organisation. This policy covers the:

- responsibilities and expectations of community sector organisations in relation to compliment and complaint reporting;
- reporting requirements for all compliments and complaints; and
- responsibilities and expectations of Agency Units in relation to receipt of compliments and complaints that occur within community sector organisations; and

Objective

The objectives of the policy are to:

- support the provision of safe and high quality services within community sector organisations;
- as appropriate, advise community sector organisations and Agency Units about effective responses to compliments and complaints that occur within the context of funded community sector service provision;

- promote a consistent and coordinated approach to the definition and reporting of compliments and complaints;
- facilitate learning through a consistent approach of compliment and complaint trending, both at the organisational and sector-wide level, and generalise the learnings and system improvements.

Expected Outcomes

- Community sector organisations will provide de-identified data for compliments and complaints at pre determined dates.
- Follow up and investigation of compliments and complaints will be carried out quickly and effectively.
- A culture of fairness, natural justice and good practice will be nurtured.
- A responsive system where continuous learning and improvement is the norm.

Policy

In addition to the principles contained within the *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012* this policy is based on the following values and ethics:

- **Emphasis on continuous quality improvement** – the recording and trending of compliments and complaints is promoted in an environment that facilitates learning through a consistent approach to managing and analysing compliments and complaints, both at the organisational and sector-wide level;
- **Obligation to act** – the obligation to take action to remedy problems is clearly accepted and the allocation of this responsibility is unambiguous and explicit;
- **Accountability** – the limits of individual accountability are clear, individuals understand when they may be held accountable for their actions;
- **Natural Justice** – principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adhered to in the management of compliments and complaints;
- **Appropriate prioritisation of action** – action to address compliments and complaints is prioritised and appropriately resourced;
- **Capacity Building** – resources that enable community sector organisations to develop procedures, staff education and service enhancements regarding compliments and complaints management are developed and distributed; and
- **Partnership** – collaborative reporting and management systems between community sector organisations and the Agency are established and maintained.

Rationale/Evidence Base

- The *Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012*
- Safety and Quality Framework *Keeping Our Services Safe* (under development);
- The DHHS Strategic Directions 2009-2012;
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care;
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights;
- Health Complaints Act 1995.

Responsibilities/Expectations

Effective compliment and complaint management requires a whole of organisation approach with accountability for reporting and feedback at all levels. In partnership, the Agency has the important role to engage with community sector organisations to promote the safe and quality services.

It is expected that community sector organisations will have systems and processes in place, or develop such, to ensure that the organisation appropriately records, reports and manages compliments and complaints.

Community Sector Organisations and the Agency are expected to:

- contribute to a culture that actively seeks compliments and complaints;
- contribute to a culture that actively responds to compliments and complaints;
- support consumers to provide compliments and complaints in relation to the services they received;
- manage compliments and complaints in a respectful, consistent and transparent manner;
- contribute to a culture that encourage consumers to appropriately participate in the resolution of complaints;
- contribute to a culture that supports consumers through the complaints process;
- ensure that the principles of natural justice are applied when managing and responding to compliments and complaints.

Community Sector Organisations and the Agency are required to:

- manage verbal and documented information according to legal obligation.

Community Sector Organisations

Additionally, community sector organisations:

- are required to report the de-identified compliment and complaint data to the Office for the Community Sector on the pre-supplied template, in line with the requirements of the Funding Agreement;
- are expected to have established organisational policies / procedures / guidelines / processes that support this policy;
- are expected to manage complaints in line with relevant legal requirements;
- are expected to have a policy in place that clearly states who within the community sector organisation is accountable for ensuring that reporting occurs in accordance with this policy.

Agency Units

Additionally, Agency Units:

- will provide support and service specialist advice to community sector organisations to assist with the enquiry and/or investigation of a complaint;
- are expected to have established policies / procedures / guidelines / processes that support this policy;
- will adhere to the Electronic Incident Monitoring System (EIMS) policy and requirements, including entering the data related to compliments and/or complaints received directly by the Agency in respect of community sector organisations; and
- will action compliments and/or complaints received directly by the Agency in respect of community sector organisations.

Office for the Community Sector

The Office for the Community Sector:

- will support and monitor compliance with the *Compliments and Complaints Policy for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations*; and
- will identify and analyse trends relating to compliments and complaints and will provide such advice to community sector organisations and Agency Units.

Audit and Compliance

A set of key performance indicators regarding the responsibilities and expectations of all stakeholders will be established and used as the basis for ongoing monitoring of compliance with this policy.

The Office for the Community Sector is responsible for undertaking regular audits to ensure this policy and supporting guideline is being complied with.

Related Documents/Resources

- *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*;
- *Privacy Act 1988*;
- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*;
- *Funding Agreement between the Crown in Right of Tasmania and the Organisation*; and
- *An Overview of the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations 2009 – 2012*.
- Agency internal policies and guidelines.

Attachments

- I. Compliment and Complaint Reporting Guideline:
 - Appendix 1 Compliment Statistical Data Report template; and
 - Appendix 2 Complaint Statistical Data Report template.

Compliment and Complaint Reporting Guideline

Effective Date:	1 October 2009
Review Date:	1 October 2010
Replaces:	Not applicable
Custodian:	Office for the Community Sector

Introduction

This guideline is an attachment to, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Compliments and Complaints Policy for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations*.

This guideline is applicable to all compliments and complaints that occur within the context of community sector service provision.

This guideline does not override or replace legislative reporting requirements.

What is a compliment?

A compliment is an expression or implication of praise. It may be expressed verbally or in writing.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding services received. It may be expressed verbally or in writing.

Care must be taken to differentiate between a complaint about services received, as per the Funding Agreement, and comment and suggestions about issues outside of the context of services received.

How do I report compliment and complaint data to the Office for the Community Sector?

De-identified compliment and complaint data is to be reported to the Office for the Community Sector every 6 months consistent with the reporting timeframes documented within the *Overview of the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012*.

Community sector organisations may submit the data on the appropriate pre-supplied template (refer to Appendices 1 and 2) or utilise their existing processes so long as the information required on the templates is provided.

Completing the compliment and complaint reporting templates

The templates require the identification of the number of times the same compliment or complaint type occurred during the reporting period.

The templates allow for the inclusion of comments as appropriate (this section is optional).

How will the Office for the Community Sector use the de-identified data?

- For the purposes of trending and identifying individual organisational patterns to highlight areas or issues that may require education or training or other support.
- For the purposes of trending and identifying sector-wide patterns to highlight areas or issues that may require education or training or other support.

How do I use the learnings to enhance service systems, processes and service delivery?

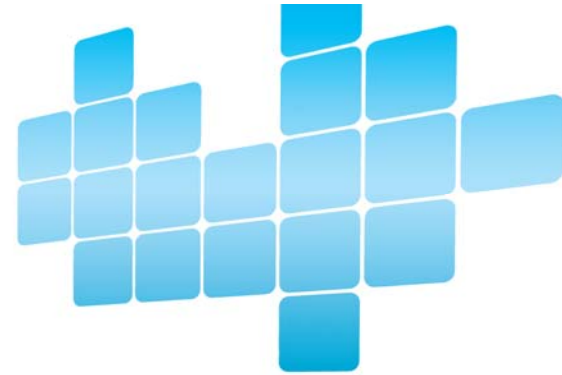
- Recording and analysing compliments and complaints will enable quality improvement activity to be undertaken. For example, quality improvement activity may include:
 - Changes in policy or protocols;
 - Changes to standard operating procedures;
 - Training and education; and
 - Revised service delivery pathways.
- An action plan is one strategy to progress the improvement activity and should include stakeholder roles, responsibilities and timeframes for completion.

Information Management

- Respecting the privacy and dignity of persons identified in a compliment or complaint is paramount;
- Personal information should be shared on a 'need to know basis';
- Personal information and information relating to compliments and/or complaints must be stored securely; and
- Individual organisational de-identified data relating to compliments and complaints will be securely managed by the Agency.

Quality and Safety Standards Framework

Compliments Statistical Data Report



This form:

- Is used to provide statistical reporting for all compliments received by the organisation;
- Should be completed in line with the requirements of the *Compliments and Complaints Policy for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations*; and
- Should be submitted to the Office for the Community Sector within the timelines defined in the *Overview of the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012*.

Organisation Name:

Reporting Period:

Service Delivery

Compliment Type

Total Number of Compliments

Comments

Access to Services

Cost of Services

Compliment Type

Total Number of Compliments

Comments

Ethics / Legality

Equipment

Food

Level of Support

Medication

Policy / Guidelines

Quality of Facilities

Compliment Type

Total Number of Compliments

Comments

Quality of Support

Safety of Services

Staff Conduct

Waiting List for Services

Information / Communication

Access to Information

Consent

Compliment Type

Total Number of Compliments

Comments

Quality of Information

Consumer Rights

Access to Supports

Choice / Decision Making

Community Access

Cultural Diversity

Health and Wellbeing

Compliment Type

Total Number of Compliments

Comments

Individual Safety

Rights and Responsibilities

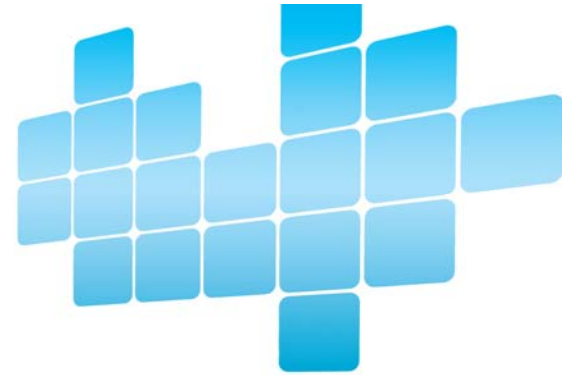
Visitation

Other

Other

Quality and Safety Standards Framework

Complaint Statistical Data Report





This form:

- Is used to provide statistical reporting for all complaints received by the organisation;
- Should be completed in line with the requirements of the *Compliments and Complaints Policy for Tasmania’s Agency Funded Community Sector Organisations*; and
- Should be submitted to the Office for the Community Sector within the timelines defined in the *Overview of the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania’s Agency Funded Community Sector 2009 – 2012*.

Organisation Name:

Reporting Period:

Service Delivery

Complaint Type	Total Number of Complaints	Comments
Access to Services	<input type="text"/>	 <input type="text"/>
Cancellation of Services	<input type="text"/>	 <input type="text"/>

Complaint Type

Total Number of Complaints

Comments

Cost of Services

Delay in Response

Ethics / Legality

Equipment

Food

Level of Support

Medication

Complaint Type

Total Number of Complaints

Comments

Policy / Guidelines

Quality of Facilities

Quality of Support

Safety of Services

Staff Conduct

Waiting List for Services

Information / Communication

Access to Information

Breach of Confidentiality

Complaint Type

Total Number of Complaints

Comments

Consent

Lack of Communications to Consumer

Lack of Communications to Family / Significant Others

Quality of Information

Consumer Rights

Abuse

Access to Supports

Choice / Decision Making

Complaint Type

Total Number of Complaints

Comments

Community Access

Cultural Diversity

Damage to / Loss of Personal Goods
and Property

Discrimination

Harassment

Health and Wellbeing

Individual Safety

Neglect

Complaint Type

Total Number of Complaints

Comments

Rights and Responsibilities

Visitation