

## COR-28 Management of Client Complaints

*How to let Bedford know that your service is not “hitting the mark” and how Bedford will listen and work with you to sort your complaint out.*

### 1. PURPOSE

This document outlines Bedford’s policy for management and resolution of Client Complaints as part of Bedford’s Client Quality, Safety and Wellbeing Framework.

### 2. SCOPE

#### 2.1 In Scope

This policy covers all Client Complaints as they relate to the supports and services provided by Bedford Group.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Bedford documents:

- Client Quality, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Clinical and Service Governance Policy
- Client Incident Management Policy
- Client Choice and Advocacy Policy
- Client Incident Reporting Procedures
- Complaint Procedure and Guidelines.

#### 2.2 Out of Scope

- Any Client Complaint that relates directly to employment with Bedford as covered under the current Employee Enterprise Agreement.
- Any Staff or customer Complaint.

### 3. POLICY

Bedford supports the rights of Clients, their families, carers, guardians or Advocates to have a say in how supports and services provided by Bedford are designed and delivered. Bedford encourages all Clients and stakeholders to exercise their right of choice and control. This includes the right to raise concerns or to complain about their supports and service provision.

To ensure Clients and stakeholders can raise concerns and Complaints about supports and service provision, Bedford has established a Complaints Management System.

Bedford will ensure that it maintains a robust Complaints Management System aimed at supporting timely and effective notification, management and resolution of Client concerns or Complaints about Bedford services or supports.

## ***Management of Client Complaints***

---

Bedford will do this by ensuring the Complaints system:

- Is accessible to all Bedford Clients in a manner and form most appropriate for them.
- Is simple to understand and navigate and enables Complaints to be lodged anonymously.
- Clients are provided with information on how to make a Complaint directly to Bedford and to the NDIS Commission.
- Supports Clients to understand their rights and what they should expect from Bedford as part of the Complaints management process.
- Supports other stakeholders, including families, carers or Advocates raising concerns where the Client is unable to do so.
- Supports responses to concerns or Complaints in a timely manner, underpinned by confidentiality, dignity and respect; based on the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, with responses provided in a manner and format best suited to the Client.
- Is focused on resolving Complaints in a timely, appropriate and effective manner with active involvement of the Client in the resolution as far as possible.
- Triage and categorises Complaints to ensure the appropriate level of response and resolution, including escalation as part of the Client Quality, Safety and Wellbeing framework.
- Has effective recording, reporting and monitoring processes in place and that individual and systemic issues are managed and monitored to drive continuous improvement of services and supports.
- Meets the requirement of the NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework, NDIS Practice Standards and other relevant Government legislation.
- Is overviewed by a designated Complaints Manager.
- Is reviewed annually, as part of Risk and Compliance internal auditing processes, to ensure its effectiveness.

Bedford is open to receiving feedback, compliments and complaints and views participant feedback as an effective way to improve the quality of supports and services provided to Clients.

Bedford Staff will acknowledge feedback by listening, showing empathy, checking whether the Client wants a support person/Advocate, asking the Client what a good outcome would look like to them and keeping the Client (or their nominated representative) involved and informed.

Bedford will provide statistical and other information about Complaints to the Commissioner, on request. All documentation relating to Complaints will be held for a period of seven years from the date the record is made.

If a Complaint is made about the Chief Executive Officer, Bedford will appoint an external body to handle the Complaint.

**4. DEFINITIONS**

**Advocate** – An Advocate is a person who, with explicit authority, formally represents another’s interests. However, an informal Advocate can be a friend, family member or other person chosen by the Client to support them. Advocates assist Clients to have a say about issues, can speak on their behalf, can represent a Clients’ wishes or work with them to understand processes.

**Client** – A person with disability, receiving support from Bedford. This can include employees, supported students, students on work experience or transition placements, residents, members and people receiving support from Bedford through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

**Complaint** – Is an expression of dissatisfaction about the supports or services they are receiving.

**NDIS Commission** – Is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services and to promote safety and quality services, resolve problems and identify areas for improvement.

**Skytrust** – Bedford online data base for Complaint management and internal reporting

**Staff** – For the purposes of this policy, staff are defined as any persons engaged by Bedford to provide services or support the provision of such services, whether they be paid or unpaid workers, including volunteers, relief Staff or labour hire workers and mainstream student placements.

**5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

Bedford Policies, procedures and related documents including Client Quality, Safety & Wellbeing, Code of Conduct (including NDIS Code of Conduct), Client Choice and Advocacy, Complaint Form, Steps Process.

**6. REFERENCES**

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013

NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018

NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018

NDIS (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018

NDIS Effective Complaints Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers

NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018

NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules - Explanatory Statement

Disability Services Act, 1993