



RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOC SA INC

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Policy 3

GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Established: October 2001

Version: 2

Reviewed: Feb 2003, June 2004, Nov 2006, Sept 2009

Next Review Date: June 2010

Introduction

All people involved with RDA SA have the right to complain if they are not happy with the service they receive. They should be able to complain without fear of retribution or discrimination. All complaints, whether informal or formal, written or verbal, should be received and handled promptly and in the spirit of co-operation; confidentiality should be maintained. Where possible all complaints should be followed to resolution in order to prevent reoccurrence. Ideally complaints should be resolved at the point of service.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform clients and volunteers about the grievance/complaints process is an avenue for encouraging clients, relatives/carers and volunteers to express concerns and offer views about different aspects of service delivery and centre management. In this way the grievance/complaints process contributes to improvements in service quality and risk management throughout the organisation.

Policy

Clients may complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution or discrimination and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly and confidentially.

Volunteers may complain about the way RDA SA programs are managed/delivered and how their centre is managed, without fear of retribution, and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly and confidentially.

Person/s affected by the complaint will be fully informed of all facts and given the opportunity to put their case forward.

RDA SA staff/volunteers will receive training in Grievance/Complaints Policy and Procedures.

Confidentiality will be maintained in regard to each complaint.

Cross References

This policy should be read in conjunction with

- RDA SA Advocacy Policy (Policy 32)
- RDA SA Privacy & Confidentiality (Policy 2)

Definitions

For definitions of '**complaint**', '**grievance**', '**dispute**', '**informal complaints**', '**formal complaints**', '**statutory reportable complaints**' and '**anonymous complaints**' refer to the Appendix at the end of this policy.

Procedure (Based on Australian Standard ISO 10002/2006)

1. Any staff/volunteer approached with a request to lodge a complaint must advise the complainant of the methods and resources available and provide such resources if requested. There is no need to record the enquiry until the complaint is officially lodged regardless of how minor the complaint may seem.
2. Upon receipt of a complaint (verbal or written) the staff/volunteer receiving the complaint must record the complaint in the "Complaints Record Register" at both State Office and the relevant Centre. A "Complaints Registration Form" must be completed at the same time.
3. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Centre Management Committee (or State Manager if complaint is not resolved at centre) shall forward a letter of acknowledgement to the complainant, within five (5) working days.
4. The letter of acknowledgement will confirm receipt of the complaint and provide details as to how the complainant should proceed.
N.B. This letter should indicate resolution "ideally" should be sought at point of service.
5. The Centre Management Committee (or State Manager if complaint is not resolved at the Centre) investigating the complaint will act fairly and without bias to determine what, if any, remedial action will be taken. All details of the investigation (and remedial action taken or offered to the complainant) and subsequent response must be recorded, and linked to the original complaint records.
6. The outcome of the complaint will be forwarded in writing to the complainant and other involved parties as appropriate.
7. The above process should be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of the issue first being raised. Service provision shall continue as normal. If the matter is still not resolved it may be taken up with the RDA SA Board of Management at Executive level.
8. The above procedure is not intended to preclude access by either party to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, or any other public/client advocacy service.

Resources

- Grievance/complaints Policy (Policy 3)
- Grievance/complaints flyer
- Grievance/complaints flow chart
- Grievance/complaints Registration Form

The above resources are available at ALL centres in their RDA SA Resource Manual, and on the RDA SA website (www.rdasa.org.au).

Information regarding the RDASA grievance/complaints procedure:

- Will be provided to every new client and explained to the client and/or their parent/carer, teacher or advocate at the time of assessment.
- Copies of the Grievance/Complaints flyer are readily available each Centre and on the RDA SA website
- Reference to and circulation of the flyer is encouraged.
- The Grievance Policy is readily available in the RDA SA Resource Manual (2007) and on the RDA SA website.
- A Complaint Handling Procedure Flow Chart is available at centres in the RDA SA Resource Manual (2007), and also on the RDA SA website.
- A Grievance/Complaints Register is maintained at each centre and a 'master register' is held at RDA SA State Office.
- An abbreviated version of the Grievance Policy is included in Volunteer registration packs.
- An abbreviated version of the Grievance Policy and Procedure will be provided to registered clients on a regular basis in any relevant format, no less than once per calendar year.

Confidentiality of Complaints

As far as possible, the fact that a complaint has been lodged, and any details identifying the complaint, should be kept confidential amongst staff/volunteers directly concerned with its resolution. The complainant's permission must be obtained prior to any information being given to other parties, which it may be desirable to involve, in order to satisfactorily resolve the complaint.

Authorisation

State Manager
Riding for the Disabled Association SA Inc.

Acknowledgments

Nil

Authorised: Date:
State Manager

Appendix

Definitions

A '**complaint**' is an expression of displeasure, dissatisfaction or resentment.

A '**grievance**' is a complaint about an event which causes resentment and is grounds for action

A '**dispute**' is a disagreement or argument between people or groups about something important; the assertion of conflicting claims/rights between parties; a question regarding the truth/validity of something

For the purposes of the complaints process the '**complainant**' is the person lodging the complaint.

For the purposes of the process, there are three categories of complaints:

An '**informal complaint**' is an expression of dissatisfaction that may be seen to be minor in nature. It is assumed that the complainant would have first approached the point of service, i.e. dealt with at Centre level. However, if there is still dissatisfaction, a user of the organisation's service or their representative (advocate) may bring complaints to the State Office at any time.

Informal complaints (minor) may be received in person or by telephone. All verbal or telephone complaints should be resolved at the source (at Centre level) immediately. Any informal complaint must be recorded in the Grievance/ Complaints Register

A '**formal complaint**' is a written or verbal complaints that cannot be dealt with as informal complaints.

A '**statutory reportable complaint**' is covered by statutory reporting obligations and involve allegations of assault and abuse. Mandatory reporting requirements of sexual and physical assault must be followed in these instances.

Other organisations responsible for handling reportable complaints may include regulatory bodies for the various professions, the Equal Opportunity Board, the Child Protection Office of the Department of Human Services and the Ombudsman.

Occasionally a request is made for a complaint to remain confidential ('**confidential complaint**'). The permission of the complainant must be received before any information can be passed from one body to another for resolution.

Unsigned and unidentified complaints ('**anonymous complaint**') will be investigated at the discretion of the State Manager or, failing the State Manager, the Board of Management executive, dependent upon:

- the seriousness of the complaint
- there being sufficient information to enable an investigation to be conducted; or
- there being a statutory requirement for investigation.

END OF APPENDIX

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