

Policy 3

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOC SA INC

GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy

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.

Scope

All clients and volunteers of RDASA have a right to have their concerns about service delivery, care and treatment or other issues, heard and addressed. Complainants should, in the first instance, be encouraged to voice their concern, or complaint, at the point of the services, i.e. at Centre level. They also have a right to receive information about progress and improvements in service delivery upon request.

The consumer 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 quality improvement and risk management throughout the organisation.

Clients have a right to 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 have a right to complain about the way the riding program is managed/delivered and how the centre is managed, without fear of retribution, and can expect complaints to be dealt with promptly and confidentially

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

RDASA staff/volunteers will receive training in the grievance/complaints procedure as well as resolving complaints and disputes.

Resources

- Grievance/complaints policy
- Grievance/complaints flyer
- Grievance complaints flow chart
- Grievance/complaints registration form

All resources will be available at ALL centres and also on the RDA SA website.

Information regarding the RDASA grievance/complaints procedure:

- Will be included in the Client's Handbook and presented to, and explained to clients at the time of assessment.
- Copies of the Grievance/complaints Flyer will be made readily available, at each Centre and its use will be encouraged.
- The Grievance Policy will be readily available in the RDA SA resource manual and on the website.
- A copy of the Grievance Policy will be included in volunteer registration packs.
- A complaint handling procedure Flow Chart will be readily available at centres.
- A Grievance/complaints Register will be available at each centre and a 'master register' will be held at the RDA SA State Office.

1. 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.

There is an Australian Standard for complaints handling: ISO 10002/2006

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

1.1 "Informal Complaints"

These are expressions 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

1.2 “Complaints”

These include all written or verbal complaints that cannot be dealt with as informal complaints.

1.3 “Statutory Reportable Complaints”

These complaints are 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.

1.4 “Anonymous Complaints”

On occasion, a request is made for a complaint to be kept anonymous or confidential. This makes it extremely difficult to resolve. It is important that any passing of information from one body to another receives the permission of the complainant.

The State Manager will determine whether an anonymous complaint will be investigated dependant upon

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

Complaints that are signed will be treated more seriously than anonymous ones.

1.5 “Confidentiality of Complaints”

As far as possible, the fact that a complaint has been lodged, and the details of that complaint, should be kept confidential amongst staff/volunteers directly concerned with its resolution. The complainant’s permission should 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.

2. Complaint Handling Process and Procedure (Australian Standard ISO 10002/2006)

2.1 Any staff/volunteer approached with a request to lodge a complaint must advise the complainant of the methods and resources available. There is no need to record the enquiry. A record is only made when the complaint is lodged regardless of how minor the complaint may be.

2.2 Upon receipt of a complaint, either verbal or written, the staff/volunteer receiving the complaint must ensure that the complaint is registered in the “Complaints Record Register”, at both State Office (database at State Office) and Centre level. A “Complaints Registration Form” must also be filled out.

- 2.3** 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 5 days.
- 2.4** The letter of acknowledgement will confirm receipt of the complaint and provide details as to how the complainant should proceed.
NB This should indicate that 'ideally' resolution should be sought at point of service.
- 2.5** The Centre Management Committee (or State Manager if complaint is not resolved at centre) investigating the complaint will act fairly and without bias to determine what, if any, remedial action will be taken. It must be ensured that all details of the investigation (and remedial action taken or offered to the complainant) and the subsequent response are recorded, and linked, to the original complaint records.
- 2.6** The above process should be completed within thirty (30) days of the issue first being raised; the provision of services shall continue as normal. If the matter is still not resolved it may be taken up with the Management Board at Executive level.
- 2.7** The above procedure is not intended to preclude access by either party to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, or any of the public/clients advocacy services.

Signed:

Date:

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