

Complaints Management Policy

We will ensure we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively. Complaints will be dealt with in line with the *Rules of Conduct for Operators of Retirement Villages* and using the guidelines set out in the *Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling* by the Commonwealth Ombudsman, Canberra.

Our complaint management system is intended to:

- a) Enable us to respond to issues raised by residents in a timely way
- b) Maintain resident confidence in our administrative processes
- c) Provide information that can be used by us to deliver quality improvements to our services, systems and complaint handling

This policy provides guidance to our staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

Organisational commitment

This policy applies to all staff receiving or managing complaints made to or about us, regarding our services, staff and any other related matter.

We expect staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling.

The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from all areas of the Village management and the way that commitment should be implemented.

Who	Commitment	How
Our Board of Directors	<p>Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution.</p> <p>Looks to improve through complaint management.</p>	<p>Report openly on our complaint handling.</p> <p>Provide adequate support and direction to the Village Manager and others responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage the Village Manager to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints to resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage the Village Manager to make recommendations for system improvements.</p> <p>Recognise and reward good complaint handling.</p> <p>Support recommendations where relevant on product, service or our staff along with complaint handling improvements arising from complaints.</p>
Village Manager	Establish and manage our complaint management system.	Provide regular reports to our Board of Directors on issues arising from complaint handling work.

	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices.	<p>Ensure recommendations arising out of complaints are canvassed with our Board of Directors and implemented where appropriate. Recruit, train and empower staff to resolve complaints promptly and in accordance with our policies and procedures.</p> <p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.</p> <p>Comply with this policy and its associated procedures. Keep informed about best practice in complaint handling.</p> <p>Provide feedback to the Board of Directors on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis and evaluation of complaint data as directed by our Board of Directors</p>
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Terms and definitions

Complaint

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about our products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is expected or legally required.

A complaint covered by this Policy can be distinguished from:

- a) staff grievances
- b) responses to requests for feedback about the standard of our service provision (see the definition of 'feedback' below)
- c) reports of problems or wrongdoing merely intended to bring a problem to our notice with no expectation of a response (see definition of 'feedback')
- d) service requests (see definition of 'service request' below)

Complaint management system

All policies, procedures, practices, hardware and software used by us in the management of complaints.

Dispute

An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

**Feedback**

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling where a response is not expected or legally required.

Complaint Management Process

We respect expressions of dissatisfaction. Complaints are acknowledged as coming from a resident, a resident's family or a person associated with the operation of the Village.

A Complaint Register has been established within our Village master system. This is used to ensure all complaints are recorded for quality assurance purposes and properly dealt with at all times.

We encourage prompt handling of complaints and disputes. The following steps are to be taken:

1	An issue is highlighted/complaint received/dispute acknowledged
2	The complaint or internal dispute is acknowledged as being received within 48 hours
3	The complaint/dispute is investigated – if appropriate, face-to-face meetings will be held Comments and complaints are recorded and meeting notes registered
4	Updated information on progress of the resolution and timeline set (within 5 days)
5	The issue is resolved, and the process closed
7	If the matter requires escalation to the chief executive officer or the Board of Directors the process recommences from step 2 The maximum time-frame for the management of the complaint or internal dispute is 60 days. An expected resolution date should be set where possible
8	If the matter remains unresolved it may be referred to an independent external body such as: NSW Fair Trading mediation service, Retirement Village complaint service, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal

We acknowledge complaints and feedback are a significant part of running the Village. An unhappy resident ordinarily tells others about their experience. Not only does this cause disruption in the Village but it may have an adverse impact on residents. Unhappy residents pay a significant role in the reputation of the Village.

Complaints, feedback and disputes are dealt with in the knowledge of the following and in the timeframes set out in same:

Retirement Villages Act 1999 (NSW)
Retirement Villages Regulation 2017 (NSW)
Policy and Procedures for the Village
Retirement Living Code of Conduct

The Village Contract
The Village Rules

We will handle all complaints with care and consideration to ensure the privacy of our residents.

We will keep a record of the information about complaints and internal disputes at the Village required by the *Rules of Conduct for Operators of Retirement Villages*, for at least 5 years.

Review: This policy became effective as of 1 July 2020 and is scheduled for review on or before 1 July 2022 in keeping with the *Rules of Conduct for Operators of Retirement Villages*

Related documents: Complaint Management Policy, Village Rules, Village Contract, *Better Practice Guide to Complaint Management*, Commonwealth Ombudsmen, Canberra.

Application: This policy applies to our staff and volunteers.
Reviewed 25 January 2023 with no changes