

Feedback & Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Blue Mountains Food Services understands that feedback and complaints will assist in the ongoing improvement and development of the service. Feedback and complaints are encouraged. Blue Mountains Food Services will make every effort to address and resolve feedback and complaints where reasonable and possible.

Feedback and complaints will be dealt with in a positive and transparent manner and will be linked to the organisations' Continuous Improvement Plan. Each item (feedback or complaint) will be documented in the Continuous Improvement Plan and discussed with the team and improvements actioned where possible. The Open Disclosure Policy complements this policy.

Policy

Making a complaint

Blue Mountains Food Services encourages feedback from clients, carers, family, and the community in a variety of ways. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Verbal feedback
- Feedback via emails, letters, or social media
- Surveys
- Suggestion box
- Feedback form provided to new clients upon entry to the service
- Feedback/complaints can be provided anonymously where preferred via feedback form, suggestion box or survey.

Blue Mountains Food Services will provide regular information to clients via a variety of avenues including newsletters / memos, community meetings (among others) to ensure clients are well informed and information is provided in a way that supports their understanding. The following procedures will also encourage a culture of openness and disclosure:

- Training on complaints handling will be provided to staff/volunteers
- A brochure/flyer will be displayed at the facility stating that feedback is welcome and encouraged, explaining clearly how this can occur
- Staff and volunteers will explain the process for feedback and complaints upon entry to the service and when/as needed so that clients feel comfortable to share their feedback freely
- A culture of improvement will be fostered, and complaints will not be dealt with in a negative or hostile manner
- Clients will be encouraged to use an advocate when providing feedback or making a complaint

Steps for making a complaint

As well as encouraging ongoing feedback, if clients, carers, or community members are dissatisfied with an aspect of the service and wish to make a complaint the following steps will be taken:

1. Write a letter to the General Manager, with details of the complaint. This includes:
 - What the complaint is about
 - Who the complaint might be about
 - Any facts that you wish to outline such as day, time the issue occurred
 - What you would like to see occur to resolve the complaint.

Where a client does not feel comfortable to write a letter, they will be encouraged to use an advocate to assist them, or they may make a verbal complaint.

2. If the issue is not resolved in this instance, write to the Chairperson of the (Blue Mountains Food Services) Board
3. If the client is unable to obtain a satisfactory resolution to their complaint with the General Manager or Chairperson, there are external avenues for complaints:
 - Aged care complaints can be made to the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission at 1800951822 or via the online complaint's form
 - Or write a letter to:

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city

- Alternatively, you can contact one of the services below and ask them to help contact the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission on 1800 951 822:

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) - 131 450
Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) - 1800 334 944

More information can be found regarding aged care complaints at
<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint/lodge-complaint>

- Complaints may also be made through the NSW Ombudsman using the Online Complaint Form www.ombo.nsw.gov.au Phone: 02 9286 1000 Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524
- If you are a non-English speaking person, the Ombudsman can help through the Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131 450
- If you are hearing impaired or have a speech impairment, contact the Ombudsman through the National Relay Service.
- Complaints relating to the provision of NDIS services can be made to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Responding to a complaint

In responding to a complaint, the following will occur.

1. Volunteer or staff member who received the complaint verbally will attempt to resolve the issue immediately where possible
2. Where the issue cannot be resolved immediately, volunteer or staff member must notify their direct supervisor verbally or in writing (email) as soon as possible
3. The supervisor will contact the complainant within 48 hours and attempt to resolve the issue
4. The supervisor will follow up with a letter thanking the complainant for their feedback, outlining the issue and how this was resolved
5. Where a complaint was investigated, and considered vexatious, or was not able to be resolved this will be outlined in the letter
6. All feedback/complaints will be provided to the General Manager in writing, and this will be recorded on the standing agenda (Feedback and Complaints) of all staff and Board meetings.

A register of feedback and complaints will be maintained by the organisation to identify trends or potential ongoing issues or future risks. Feedback will be reviewed regularly, and where systemic issues are identified action will be taken to minimise the issue arising in future.