



# Service provider resolution: What service providers need to know

The Aged Care Complaints Scheme (the Scheme) provides a free service for anyone to raise their concerns about the quality of care or services being delivered to people receiving Australian Government subsidised aged care services including residential care, Home Care Packages and Commonwealth funded HACCC services.

The Australian Government has improved the Scheme's capacity to respond to complaints about aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government. The Scheme has a range of tools and techniques to help resolve complaints. Service provider resolution is one of these options.

Service provider resolution involves the Scheme referring a complaint or specific issues within a complaint to a service provider to resolve. A service provider should resolve the matter through its own complaints management processes, which may include investigating the issue and/or meeting with the complainant and any other relevant parties to discuss and resolve the issue/s in a complaint.

## Helping to resolve complaints within the service

The Scheme uses service provider resolution to resolve concerns where possible. For this process to be effective, we need industry support. You have important roles to play, including:

- resolving concerns we refer to you
- a willingness to work with us and the complainant to achieve a positive result for the care recipient
- continuously improving the services you deliver.

## Complaint management principles can assist you

To obtain the best outcome, Scheme officers follow principles of procedural fairness in seeking to resolve each concern. These principles are outlined in the Scheme's service charter 'Our Service Commitment', which can be found in the 'Resources' tab on our website at [agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au](https://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au).



We can refer  
a complaint to  
a service provider  
to resolve.



These principles include:

- Aiming to resolve concerns and achieving the best outcome for the care recipient.
- Treating each complaint on its own merits and examining complaints regardless of a person's cultural background, disability, gender, sex and gender identity, sexual orientation or any other status.
- Applying fairness, responsiveness, efficiency, sound judgment, accessibility and accountability principles to every case.
- Being impartial, not apportioning blame and not taking sides.

Having these principles in mind can help you with your local resolution process.

### **What are the benefits of service provider resolution?**

- It empowers you, the service provider, to resolve concerns, allowing you to consider the issues in the complaint and develop solutions within your service that are sustainable and effective.
- It provides you with an opportunity to reach the best outcome for the service and the complainant as quickly as possible.
- It allows you to strengthen relationships between your service, complainants and care recipients.
- The process supports continuous improvement of the services you deliver.

### **How do we decide if service provider resolution is an appropriate way to resolve a complaint?**

The Scheme will select service provider resolution to resolve a complaint if it considers it to be the most appropriate approach, taking into account a range of factors including whether:

- the issues do not present any significant risk to the health or safety of the care recipient
- the service provider is willing to respond to the issue/s in the complaint
- the service provider agrees to provide a written resolution report to the Scheme, within the agreed timeframe
- the complaint is capable of resolution by the service provider.

### **What happens if we select service provider resolution?**

- We will outline the issues in the complaint to you in writing.
- We will discuss expectations about your role in the service provider resolution process.
- We will seek your agreement to engage in the process and provide a written resolution report to the Scheme, within a mutually agreed timeframe.



Service provider resolution allows you to strengthen relationships between your service, complainants and care recipients.



- The time you have to examine issues and report back to us will be decided by the Scheme officer in liaison with you. The timeframe will depend on the number, complexity and urgency of the issues in the complaint.
- We will write to you and the complainant confirming that service provider resolution is the agreed resolution approach.
- We will provide you with a report template with the letter that we send you confirming that service provider resolution is the agreed approach to resolving the complaint. Scheme staff can also email a report template to you upon request.

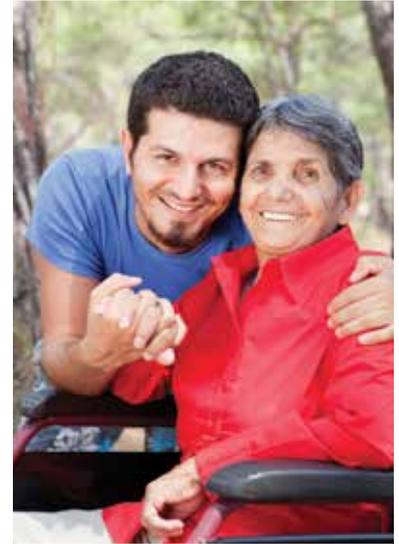
### **Checklist to help you manage a service provider resolution process:**

- Refer to your current complaints management policy.
- Determine who in your service should be involved.
- Approach each complaint as a potential opportunity for continuous improvement of your service.
- Treat the complainant with respect. Listen to and identify any matters they are seeking to raise.
- Identify the expected outcomes.
- Identify strategies and consider different ways you can handle issues.
- Involve all parties, which may include relevant staff (i.e. personal care worker, chef, hairdresser, or the cleaner).
- Actively involve the care recipient and complainant with these parties to achieve a mutual outcome.
- Examine your feedback system to see if it encourages resolution of concerns at your service.
- Consider if there are other ways to encourage feedback.

### **What happens after you complete a service provider resolution process?**

Once you have completed a service provider resolution process, you need to provide a report to the Scheme. This report should include:

- an outline of the issues in the complaint
- a summary of the action you took to resolve the complaint (i.e. how you investigated the issues, any dialogue you have had with the complainant, care recipient and staff members etc.)



We'll write to you confirming that service provider resolution is the agreed approach.



- an explanation of the outcomes achieved
- any documentation that supports the outcomes achieved
- an analysis of how the outcomes achieved sufficiently deal with the complainant's issues.

## What happens after you submit your report?

We will acknowledge receipt of your report. We will then use any or all of the following to determine whether you have sufficiently addressed the complaint by:

- reading the report and any supporting documentation
- speaking with the complainant and the care recipient, where appropriate, to determine if their concerns have been adequately addressed
- clarifying information with you (if required).

We will keep both you and the complainant informed until the process is finalised.

If **we are satisfied** with how you addressed the complaint the resolution process will end.

If **we are not satisfied** that the issues have been adequately addressed, then we will provide you with an opportunity to respond to, and address, the concerns identified. If, after further consultation, the concerns are still not resolved we may continue to facilitate resolution of the complaint using a different resolution approach or we may end the resolution process.

## How can we support you in managing complaints within the service?

We've developed a **Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide** with a variety of resources to help your service manage complaints effectively and enhance existing processes. These include a Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling in Aged Care booklet, quick reference cards, templates, and learning materials and reflection exercises.

Resources are designed for individual and team-based learning and can be tailored to the needs of your service. You can download or print these resources from the Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide link under the 'Industry' tab on our website at [agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au](http://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au)

Let us know how we're doing by leaving a comment on our website at [agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au](http://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au)



## Aged Care Complaints Scheme

Phone 1800 550 552\*

### Write

Aged Care  
Complaints Scheme  
Department of  
Social Services  
GPO Box 9820  
In your capital city

### Online

[agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au](http://agedcarecomplaints.govspace.gov.au)

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\* 1800 calls are free from fixed lines; however calls from mobiles may be charged.