



PROCEDURE NAME: Client Feedback	NO. 1.4.2
Approved By: Controlled Documents Committee	Approval Date: 27/09/2018
Document Owner: Director, Services and Operations	Next Review Date: 27/09/2021
Related Policy: 1.4 Quality Improvement	

1. PURPOSE

This procedure seeks to ensure that QEC is shaped by and responsive to the needs of its clients, carers and community, by defining processes which ensure meaningful feedback. Any compliment, comment or complaint must be dealt with seriously, efficiently and respectfully. It also seeks to ensure that QEC is compliant with relevant complaints handling legislation including the General Code of Conduct under the Health Complaints Act 2016 (Vic).

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all QEC employees, students and volunteers.

3. DEFINITIONS

Feedback refers to any compliment, complaint or comment expressed either verbally or in writing about the service.

Compliments refer to expressions of appreciation and specific thanks for the service provided by clients, their family, carer, guardian or an external provider. QEC records compliments that are given in addition to general politeness where a client has gone out of their way to communicate their appreciation for the service or the support provided.

Complaints are an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by clients, their family, carer, guardian or an external provider. They may be an informal verbal complaint or a more formal, written complaint. Complaints do not refer to simple requests for additional services, products, assistance and support.

Comments and suggestions refer to feedback given by clients, their family, carer, guardian or an external provider where they are not making a complaint but where they are providing information about their experience or how we can improve our services.

4. PROCEDURE

Principles

QEC values feedback as a way to ensure our services are responsive to client needs and experiences. QEC welcomes both compliments and complaints given by clients as well as their carers, family members and guardians. Clients will not suffer detriment if they submit or plan to submit a complaint. All staff are provided with information about the importance of client feedback as part of their induction. The following principles guide QEC's approach to client feedback:

- Accessible – Feedback opportunities and processes are available and accessible, with range of options offered. Clients are encouraged to use an advocate if required.
- Responsive and fair – Feedback is responded to in a timely, efficient, impartial and confidential manner. Complaints will always be acknowledged and respected.
- Integrated – Feedback systems are integrated with risk and quality approaches. Feedback will be shared across the organisation, to enable a collaborative approach to process improvements, and to allow QEC to celebrate our achievements.
- Valued – Feedback is an important tool for improving our services. Complaints identify weaknesses in our systems and assist QEC in making changes to improve services. Compliments confirm our strengths and demonstrate the areas in which we excel.

Receiving Feedback

Clients may provide feedback about QEC:

- In person, by speaking to any staff member
- Via telephone

- Via the 'contact us' form located on the QEC website
- Via a Feedback Form (Appendix 1), which can be given to a client at any time if requested and is usually distributed just prior to discharge from a program.
- Via exit surveys, which are distributed towards the end of a client's engagement with a QEC program.

Clients are informed of the above processes during admission and this is recorded on Form C. The key staff member working with a family is responsible for providing the family with a relevant exit survey towards the end of their engagement with QEC.

Staff in community programs may use their discretion in determining when to provide the exit survey (appendix 2), but where possible they are encouraged to:

- Explain to the family on the second last visit that there are two ways in which they can submit their survey, either via a hard copy form or via survey monkey. A copy of the survey or details of the link are to be provided, based on the client's preference.
- Collect the hard copy form on the last visit. For clients who indicated that they wish to submit the information via the survey monkey link, staff are encouraged to allow the client time to do this during the last visit.

The key staff member working with a family in a residential programs are to provide the family with a hard copy exit survey (appendix 3) towards the end of their stay at QEC. Staff are to explain that they can collect the survey or the client can place it in the boxes provided. Exit surveys from both boxes are collected each Friday by the Residential Coordinator for review. They are then provided to the Quality and Risk Leader who will arrange the data entry of the survey.

Any compliments that are received by QEC that are not recorded on exit surveys are to be logged on RiskMan, in the feedback module as a compliment, by the staff member receiving the feedback.

Responding to Complaints

The primary function of responding to complaints is to address the concerns of the client. This may include:

- Acknowledging the complaint
- Giving an apology and explaining how it will be handled/escalated
- Providing assurance that the matter will be investigated and that a response will be given communicated to the complainant.

In the first instance upon receiving a verbal complaint the staff member will speak to the client to try and resolve the issue as soon as possible. Early attention to problems usually leads to early resolution. The staff member who dealt with the complaint is responsible for logging it on RiskMan.

If a client wishes to provide a complaint in writing, staff should give the client a copy of the Feedback Form (Appendix 4). An appropriate staff member will be given responsibility for actioning the complaint, including investigating the matter and communicating with the complainant.

In the case of serious complaints (complaints that may have legal implications) managers will also inform the CEO, who will make a determination about whether to notify our insurer (VMIA), the Board and/or the relevant funding body.

Complaints should be acknowledged within two working days (either verbally or in writing) and documented in RiskMan. The outcome of a complaint should be communicated to the complainant within ten working days. Complaints should be fully resolved within 30 days of receipt. QEC must check that the client is satisfied with the response.

For more complex complaints, or where resolution may take a while, staff should ensure that clients are regularly informed of updates and any delays expected. Where a complaint is not resolved, the client should be given the option of making contact with a senior manager and/or the contact details of the Health Complaints Commissioner.

The staff member who first learns of a complaint, is responsible for ensuring that the feedback is recorded on RiskMan and actioned appropriately. Complaints recorded on a Feedback Form are also to be entered into the RiskMan feedback module as a complaint. Complaints received via digital channels (e.g. Facebook and Google reviews) and those received via the website are to be forwarded to the Quality and Risk Leader, and will also be logged in RiskMan.

The Quality and Risk Leader is responsible overseeing complaint information entered in RiskMan. Any enquiries from external bodies in relation to complaints will be handled by the Quality and Risk Leader, who will:

- Comply with any requests or compliance notices within specified timeframes
- Guide staff in ensuring that correct processes are followed, particularly regarding confidentiality.

Please refer to the client feedback flowcharts (appendix 4).

Responding to comments, suggestions and compliments

Staff will respond to comments, suggestions and compliments given by clients, when:

- The feedback is provided in person, or
- The feedback is provided in writing and contact details are provided, or
- The client requests a response and provides sufficient contact details.

Staff responding to the feedback should:

- Acknowledge the feedback and thank the client for providing it to QEC
- Explain what has or will be done with their feedback
- Listen respectfully if further information is provided (e.g. in person or via phone)
- Ensure that all details are recorded appropriately in RiskMan.

RiskMan Entries

Type	Used For
Complaint	Logging client complaints by the staff member receiving the complaint. This includes complaints received on: exit surveys, feedback forms, in person, via email and via digital channels
Compliment	Logging client compliments by the staff member receiving the compliment. This excludes compliments received via exit surveys
Opportunity for Improvement	Logging client comments and suggestions that require action, follow-up or a response from QEC

Feedback Analysis and Reporting

All client feedback is analysed for trends and systems improvements on a quarterly basis and reported to:

- Relevant staff who are involved in following up on suggestions and issues
- All staff. De-identified information is provided to staff, including specific compliments and expressions of appreciation
- The Clinical Governance Committee, via meetings
- The Executive team, via meetings
- The Quality, Risk and Clinical Governance Board Sub-committee, via trend reports
- The full Board via quarterly dashboard reports.

Relevant staff will be involved in reviewing complaint data trends and identifying improvements including the: Residential Manager and Area Managers.

Staff will receive information about feedback provided via:

- De-identified quarterly data
- Submission of feedback forms, prior to entering them on Survey Monkey
- Access to the Survey Monkey portal (for community clients who choose to submit their feedback electronically).

Clients will receive information about feedback that they have provided via:

- The 'You Said – We Did' Board in the Noble Park hallway, maintained by the Quality and Risk Manager
- Direct feedback, given to clients who request information submitted on their feedback form.

5. RELATED QEC DOCUMENTS

- 1.2.28 Open Disclosure

6. RELATED LEGISLATION AND EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

[Use bullet points to list applicable external legislation, regulations, standards and frameworks. Include information about whether legislation is state or Commonwealth and the year of the Act]

- Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 (Cth)
- Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Health Complaints Act 2016 (Vic)
- Office of the Health Services Commissioner – Guide to Complaint Handling in Health Care
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria – Two Page Summary (<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/participation-and-communication/australian-charter-healthcare-rights/about-the-charter>)
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria – Easy English (see above link)
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria – Community Languages Link (<http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au>)

7. KEY WORDS

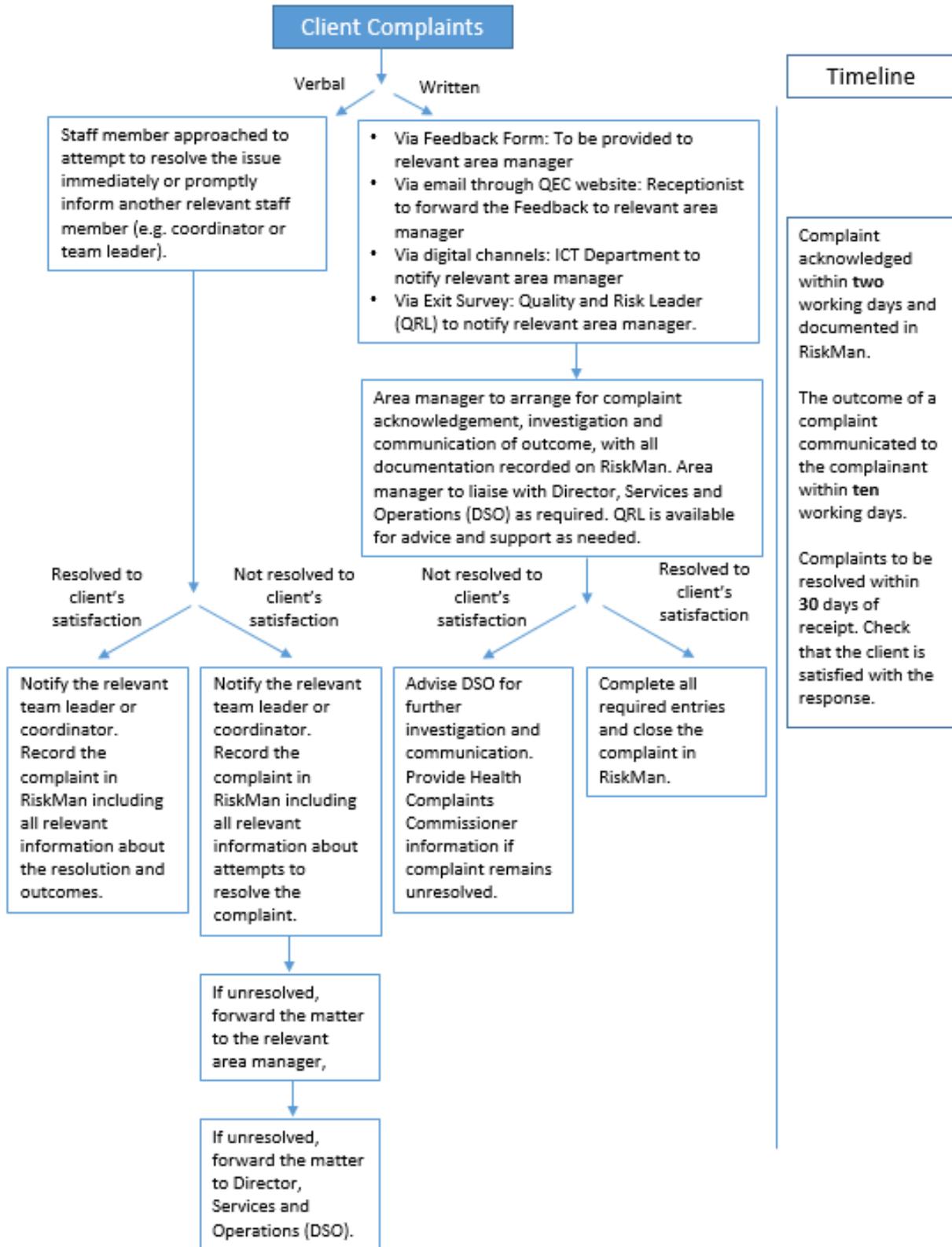
Feedback, complaint, compliment, concern, suggestion, comment

8. APPENDIX

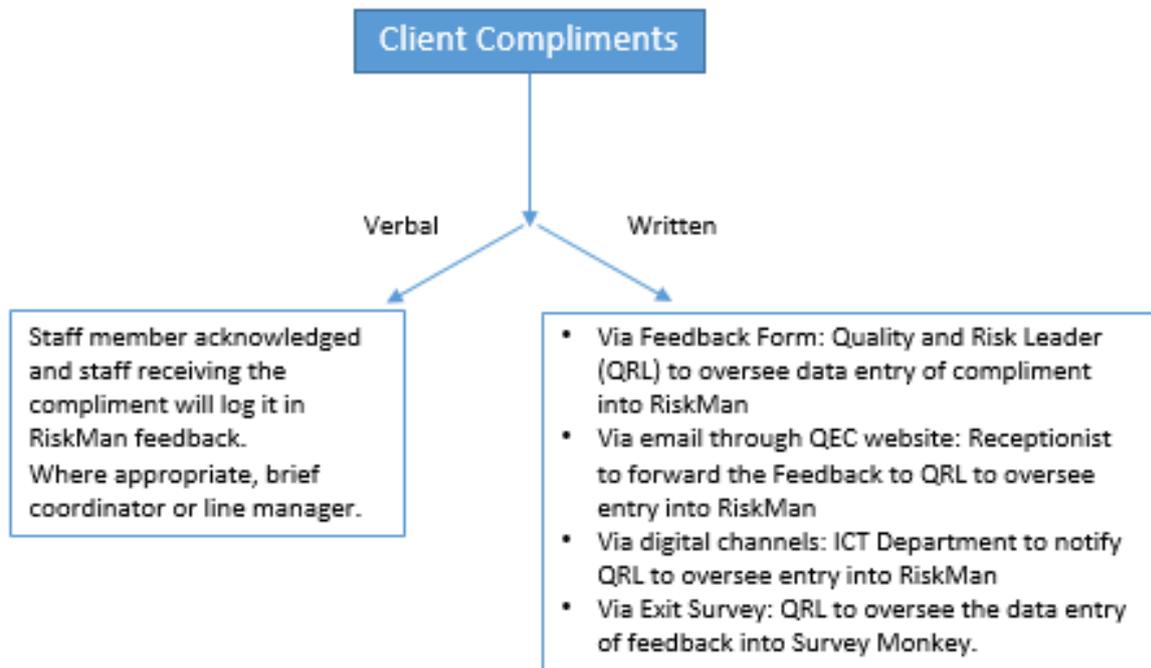
- Appendix 1 – Feedback Form
- Appendix 2 – Community Exit Survey
- Appendix 3 – Noble Park Exit Survey
- Appendix 4 – Client Feedback Flowcharts

Appendix 4 – Client Feedback Flowcharts

Flowchart 1: Client Complaints



Flowchart 2 - Client Compliments



Flowchart 3 – Client Comments

