



## **Feedback and Complaints Policy**

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## Complaints and Feedback Policy

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### 1.1. Purpose

Down South Therapy aims to provide a high-quality service that is individualised to its clients and their families. However, it is recognised that from time to time a client (and/or carer) might be dissatisfied with a service they receive.

When a client (and/or carer) has a complaint, the issue will be dealt with promptly, fairly and in a non-threatening way, according to principles of natural justice and with due regard to the clients (and/or carer's) rights.

Down South Therapy's preference is that grievances will be resolved through the procedures outlined below, but it is understood that on occasions, a client (and/or carer) might choose not to follow this practice. They might prefer to make a complaint through an external agency such as the NDIS Commission and use the process of that agency to resolve the matter of concern. In these circumstances, Down South Therapy is committed to working with the client (and/or carer) and whomever they nominate to be their representative.

DST recognises and acknowledges the NDIS Commission Complaints Principles as outlined in the NDIS Commission Complaints Management and Resolution Guidance 2018 document as follows:

1. **Centred on people with disability** – Management of complaints is respectful of, and responsive to, a person with disability's preferences, needs and values.
2. **Outcome Focussed** – Management of a complaint should reveal the factors that contributed to the complaint being made, and seek to prevent matters giving rise to complaints from reoccurring, where appropriate.
3. **Clear, Simple and Consistent** – The process for receiving and responding to complaints is easy to understand, accessible and consistently applied.
4. **Accountable** – NDIS Providers are responsible for appropriately managing complaints. Everyone involved in the management of a complaint understands their roles and responsibilities, and will be accountable for decisions or actions taken in regard to a complaint.
5. **Continual Improvement** – The complaints process facilitates the ongoing identification of issues and implementation of changes to improve the quality and safety of NDIS Supports.
6. **Proportionate** – The nature of any actions following a complaint will be proportionate to the issues raised and any risk of harm to people with disability.

### 1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all Down South Therapy; Services, Staff, Contractors and Customers and is framed around the NDIS Commission Complaints Management and Resolution Guidance 2018 and NDIS Practice Standards 2021.

This policy is about Down South Therapy being responsive to the needs of clients and their representatives and in resolving the client's grievance as quickly and as fairly as possible.

### 1.3. Awareness of the Complaint Process

Down South Therapy will ensure that all client and/or carers, are provided with information about the Feedback and Complaints Policy when they first access the service, and that they are reminded of the policy and their rights to make a complaint without fear of affecting their service. They will also be made aware that feedback can be provided anonymously.

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Down South Therapy will communicate the Complaint Handling process in the following forums on a routine basis:

- Ongoing training and support to clients in making complaints. Both formal and informal methods may be used to facilitate this goal; and
- Induction of new employees and contractors.
- Via the Down South Therapy website.
- As written in the client's NDIS Service Agreement

#### 1.4. Anonymous Complaint Handling Procedure

When a complaint is made anonymously about any aspect of their involvement with Down South Therapy, the details of the complaint are passed to the Team.

- 1) The Team Leader will review the complaint within 48 hours of the complaint being received. They will then:
  - a. Discuss the complaint with any/all involved workers at DST.
  - b. Discuss how the complaint can be resolved with any/all involved workers at DST.
  - c. Discuss any obvious resolutions and put in place a plan to resolve the issue or make changes to any policies/procedures or any training involved worker/s may require. (if unable or solution is complex or a solution cannot be resolved by involved worker/s, then the complaint will be escalated to the Clinical Services Manager)
- 2) The 'Complaint Form' or email will be forwarded to the Clinical Services Manager and Director. This should occur as soon as possible and by no later than 48 hours after receiving the complaint [if complaint lodged during the weekend].
- 3) The Clinical Services Manager or Director will meet in person or via phone call to formulate an agreed resolution or reasons for non-resolution. The agreed resolution or reasons for non-resolution at this meeting are to be documented

#### 1.5. Informal Complaint Handling Procedure

When a client and/or carer makes a complaint about any aspect of their involvement with Down South Therapy, the first step will be for the staff member to whom the complaint is made, listens respectfully and non-judgementally to the complaint and attempts to work with the consumer (and/or carer) to resolve it.

- 1) The staff member receiving the complaint identifies and clarifies the person's complaint and the outcomes expected by the client;
- 2) Where the issue can be resolved through mutual agreement, then this should be undertaken and the informal complaint has been resolved;
- 3) If the complaint cannot be resolved, the complaint is to be referred to the immediate Team Leader for resolution.
- 4) Where appropriate an Incident Report or Complaint Form may need to be completed.

## 1.6. Formal Complaint Handling Procedure

- 1) Where the complaint cannot be mutually resolved via the informal complaint handling procedure or the client chooses to escalate the complaint, the details of the initial complaint are passed to the Team Leader.
- 2) The Team Leader will contact the client by phone within 48 hours of the complaint being received. The phone call will cover the following points:
  - a. Listen to the client's information about the complaint
  - b. Ask the client how they would like the complaint resolved including what they would like the outcome to be
  - c. Offer any obvious resolutions during the call if able (if unable or solution is complex then explain to the person you will need to seek further guidance from the Clinical Services Manager and you will get back to them within 48 hours)
  - d. Outline DST's Formal Complaints Handling processes to the client
  - e. Ask the client if they would prefer to complete a DST Complaint Form themselves or if they would like you to summarise the complaint and desired outcomes to them in writing via email. Both methods are treated with the same level of formality.
- 3) The person will be provided a 'Complaint Form' or summarise the complaint and desired outcome in an email, which outlines:
  - The complaint.
  - The outcomes expected by the client; and
  - Provides contact information for the client.
- 4) The 'Complaint Form' or email will be forwarded to the Clinical Services Manager and Director as soon as it has been received. This should occur as soon as possible and by no later than 48 hours after receiving the complaint [if complaint lodged during the weekend].
- 5) The Clinical Services Manager or Director will meet in person or via phone call, with the client and/ or carer, and their advocate if they have one, as soon as possible to review the complaint and endeavour to resolve the situation if it has not been resolved at the Team Leader level. The agreed resolution or reasons for non-resolution at this meeting are to be documented, and a copy provided to the parties involved.

## 1.7. Raising a Complaint with the NDIS Commission

If the matter is not resolved with the Clinical Services Manager or Director and the client and/or carer remains dissatisfied, they will be advised of other agencies they can use to assist them to achieve a resolution including the NDIS Commission. If necessary, the client will be assisted to access advocacy and the NDIS Commission in order to gain a resolution to a complaint.

Clients are made aware of the Complaints process and the NDIS Commission by:

- Initial phone call with NDIS Liaison
- As stated on the clients Service Agreement
- Through the DST Website
- At any stage where the need arises
- On report of an informal or formal complaint

DST understands that a client may make a complaint to the NDIS Commission at any point in the complaints process and may not wish to seek resolution with DST via an informal or formal

complaints process. Every effort will be made by DST staff to assist the person to access and help required to go through the NDIS Commission process.

### **1.8. Responding to a Complaint from the NDIS Commission**

All complaints from the NDIS Commission will be directed to the Clinical Service Manager and Director. The Clinical Services Manager will investigate the circumstances surrounding the complaint and respond to the NDIS Commission within the specified timeframe.

### **1.9. Service Improvement**

The Complaints Register will be reviewed at least once every year to analyse complaints and identify opportunities for service improvement.

### **1.9 Feedback**

Clients can give feedback at any stage of their services with DST via the feedback form either in hard copy, soft copy emailed to them, the Feedback link on the DST website or over the phone in phone interview. Feedback can be provided anonymously. Feedback will be actively sought from clients during the following times:

- Within 3 months of the commencement of a new therapist
- During the year for five randomly selected clients per therapist to assist with Performance Appraisals and Quality Improvement.
- Each quarter with the ISIP Review

All feedback is passed on to those involved with the client if the feedback is for their services. Any feedback that can be used for service improvement is passed to the Clinical Services Manager who may contact the client to gain further information and directly address any service concerns.