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| **Date adopted:** 14/06/18 | **Endorsed by:** John Hunt (Chairperson, Centro Board) | |
| **Date last reviewed:**  September 2019  **Reviewed by:**  Hayley Dunikowski | **Written by**:  Hayley Dunikowski (Coordinator, Hannahs House)  New Policy written and adopted June 2018 (replacing former HH Grievance Policy) | **Date of next review:** June 2021 |

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| **Policy context** | |
| Human Services Quality Framework | **Standard 5** (Feedback, Complaints and Appeals) |
| Other standards | N/A |
| Legislation or other requirements | Information Privacy Act 2009 (QLD)  Right to Information Act 2009 (QLD) |

**\**Organisational background:*** Centro Church (Ipswich City Christian Church) is the incorporated legal entity which is the aucipicing organisation for Hannahs House. Centro Church has provided support and guidance to Hannahs House for over 35 years and together both organisations work to assist young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Centro Church Board and Hannahs House are committed to respectfully and efficiently responding to all complaints.

***1. Purpose:***

Addressing complaints and appeals professionally and efficiently helps us to maintain and improve our service quality and ensures that issues are resolved promptly. Complaints and appeals processes provide clients, staff and members of the public, a way of expressing any dissatisfaction with our service and sees their concern dealt with quickly and effectively. It also provides us with the opportunity to improve our service delivery. The procedures guide us in responding appropriately and fairly to complaints and appeals.

***2. Definitions:***

* **Complaint** refers to dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided or unsatisfactory interaction or behaviour of a resident or staff member
* **Appeal** is a request for a review of the determination of a complaint

***3. Scope:***

All clients, staff and members of the public have the right to make a complaint or appeal a decision made as a result of a complaint.

This policy will apply to current and former clients and staff of Hannahs House Crisis Accommodation Service at 1 Pettigrew Street Woodend and members of the public who wish to make a complaint against Hannahs House, its staff or residents.

This policy relates, but is not limited to, complaints in regarding;

* Staff
* Coordinator
* Other residents
* Service delivery
* Equity, access, discrimination, harassment and bullying

***4. Policy statement: Our commitment***

Hannahs Houseis committed to facilitating the right to make a complaint about our service, to appeal a decision we have made that directly concerns someone and to ensuring that complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly.

Specifically, we will:

* Inform clients, staff and members of the public about how to make a complaint, using either internal or external mechanisms
* Ensure support and advocacy is available for complainants (where appropriate)
* Ensure procedural fairness in our complaints procedure and that complainants are not disadvantaged by making a complaint
* Deal with complaints in a timely and culturally appropriate way
* Advise the complainant of the outcome of their complaint
* Advise about the options for appealing a decision
* Ensure that our procedures comply with legislative requirements
* Take the outcome of complaints into account in planning service improvements

***5. Procedures***

*5.1 Information about our complaints and appeals procedure*

We want clients, staff and members of the public to voice any dissatisfaction with any aspect of our service and to be confident that our organisation will manage their complaints and appeals efficiently and respond quickly and appropriately.

All clients and staff are informed of their rights and responsibilities and about our Complaints and Appeals Policy at the earliest possible stage of their involvement with our service. Hannahs House also has a related document, Feedback Procedure and Form, which outlines processes for providing feedback and the form to complete if wishing to proceed with a complaint. These documents can be accessed at Hannahs House reception or found on the Centro Church Website (Hannahs House page of the website).

Clients are provided with information about their right to make a complaint or appeal a decision, and the procedures that will be followed if they do. We provide this information in these ways;

* During Client Intake Appointments, the Case Worker will inform clients of the Client Complaints Policy and explain the Client Complaints Process including where they can locate feedback forms. Clients will sign a document to indicate that the Complaints process has been explained to them at intake.
* The Complaints and Appeals Policy and Feedback Procedure and Form is provided in the Client Welcome Pack (provided at Intake)
* Information about giving feedback is discussed briefly at weekly resident meetings if a new resident is present
* Our Client Services Charter, which is displayed in the Youth Worker Reception area, briefly describes the complaints process and to whom complaints may be made

*5.2 How to make a complaint or appeal a decision*

A complaint can be made by:

* Lodging a complaint in person, by phone, email or mail. Where a verbal complaint has been made either in person or on the phone, the documentation of the complaint will be read back to the complainant. The complainant is not obliged to be named or sign the complaint form. Verbal complaints can be made to a youth worker, caseworker or the Coordinator
* Completing a feedback form

Once a complaint has been made:

* If established that the complainant wishes to proceed with an investigation, the complainant will sign a consent form acknowledging their agreement for Hannahs House to investigate the complaint
* Complaints are directed to the Coordinator, or in the case of the complaint being about the Coordinator, clients will be advised that they may make their complaint to the Chairperson of the Centro Board of Directors
* Clients who are residents of Hannahs House Crisis Accommodation may lodge their complaint with the youth worker or caseworker on duty, who will notify the Coordinator by email prior to the end of their shift, that a complaint has been lodged. Where the client does not want the complaint made known to the youth worker on duty, they will be informed that they can make a time to see the Coordinator to discuss their complaint. All communication regarding complaints will be kept in the Complaints and Appeals register which is in a locked filing cabinet
* Should a complainant wish to make a complaint about Hannahs House to an external body, they will be advised that they may make a complaint to The Centro Board, Dept of Housing & Public Works or the Queensland Ombudsmen
* Hannahs House will manage and respond to all complaints and appeals in a professional and confidential manner and will ensure a fair and efficient investigation in its efforts to achieve a satisfactory result for all parties
* Hannahs House is committed to resolving the compliant and/or appeal in a timely manner and will ensure complaints and appeals are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable

A complaint outcome can be appealed by:

* Contacting the Chairperson of the Centro Board or the Dept of Housing & Public Works. Appeals may be lodged when you are unsatisfied with the decision made by Hannahs House as a result of a complaint.
* Contacting the Queensland Ombudsmen

*5.3 How staff and management will respond to a complaint or appeal*

*Step 1: Registering a complaint or appeal*

We will follow this procedure when a complaint or appeal against a decision is received:

* Complaints will be processed by the Hannahs House Coordinator except in the case that the complaint is about the Hannahs House Coordinator, in which case, the complaint will progress directly to the Chairperson of the Centro Board.
* Complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Register, which is kept onsite at Hannahs House in a locked filing cabinet
* The Coordinator or the Coordinators delegate will confirm to the client that the complaint has been received and registered, within 1 business day of the complaint being lodged
* Complainants will be advised of the complaint and appeal resolution process

*Step 2: Investigating a complaint or appeal*

Each registered complaint or appeal will be investigated and assessed in the following way:

* The coordinator of Hannahs House, in receipt of a complaint or appeal, will conduct an investigation, which will offer the complainant the right to be heard and may include interviews with other relevant persons and a review of any relevant documentation
* Complainants will be advised of the outcome of their complaint or appeal by the coordinator within 10 working days, or if for some reason, the investigation will take longer, the complainant will be advised. A resolution will be determined based on the nature of the complaint or appeal and the complainant will be informed of this
* Complainants will be offered assistance and support from Hannahs House where necessary and will be referred to appropriate support or advocacy services if required

*Step 3: Review*

If the complainant is not satisfied with theinvestigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal, they can seek a further review of the matter by:

* Requesting a review by the Chairperson of the Centro Board

*Step 4: Formal external procedure*

A formal external complaints procedure may follow Step 3 if the client is still not satisfied with an outcome. The complainant will be referred to The Department of Housing and public Works Contract Management South West to lodge a complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, appeal or review conducted by Hannahs House or the Centro Board.

*5.4 Using complaints and appeals for service improvement*

Information about complaints and appeals will be kept in:

* All information and documentation relating to a complaint or appeal will be kept in the Hannahs House Complaint and appeals register in a locked filing cabinet.

And used for:

* Compiling and assessing information about the types of complaints and appeals we receive and the outcomes from those complaints. Hannahs House does this regularly through staff meetings and annual reviews. We use this information to identify issues or areas of service improvement required

***6. Other related policies and procedures***

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| **Documents related to this policy** | |
| **Related policies** | Feedback Policy  Confidentiality Policy |
| **Forms or other organisational documents** | HH Charter of Service  HH Client Service Contract  HH Feedback Procedure and Form |

***7. Review processes***

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| **Policy review frequency:**   1. Every 3 years or 2. If the policy is found to be inadequate to meet service and / or legislative requirements | **Responsibility for review:**   1. HH Coordinator 2. Centro Board |
| **Review process:** Policies are reviewed and updated by the Hannahs House Coordinator. Polices that have been reviewed and updated go through an approval process with Centro Board and are endorsed by the Centro Board | |
| **Documentation and communication:** In line with HH Review of Policies & Procedures Policy | |