

<b>Title</b>	<b>ACIA 020 – Complaints Handling</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>This guideline is to assist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers (organisations and individuals), participants, stakeholders and funders</li> <li>• in the process of handling complaints received from a participant, a member of the participant’s family, or other member of the community in relation to the care of an individual within the service providers duty of care</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<p>In the course of delivering a support or service, a service provider or support worker may receive a complaint. Such a complaint may be lodged through informal or informal channels.</p> <p>Complaints should be responded to with due diligence and process to demonstrate a service provider’s commitment to the ongoing safety of a participant.</p> <p><b>All member agencies should have a complaints handling policy in place for responding to complaints received from a participant or member of their support network. This may include complaints from a family member a friend or a member of the community. The service provider should provide training to all employees including support workers. This training should have a focus on the employee’s role and responsibilities in handling complaints.</b></p>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>This guideline applies to the provision of paid support in the community. It is relevant Australia-wide or when a participant is travelling overseas with their Australian team of support worker/s.</p>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<p>This guideline is provided to help guide best practice in the community service and support industry. This information does not in any way replace legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements. Users of this document should seek appropriate expert advice in relation to their particular circumstances. ACIA does not accept any liability on the use of this guideline.</p>
<b>Definitions and Supporting Information</b>	<p><b>Community Supports and/or Services</b> is defined as the provision of paid supports and services in a participant’s home or community. It includes but is not limited to, the following activities of daily living:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal care or support</li> <li>• housework or domestic assistance</li> <li>• transport assistance</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community access</li> <li>• social support</li> <li>• nursing services</li> <li>• clinical supports</li> <li>• gardening and home maintenance</li> <li>• palliative care</li> <li>• respite care</li> </ul> <p><b>Support Worker</b> is an individual who assists or supervises a participant to perform tasks of daily living to support and maintain general wellbeing and enable meaningful involvement in social, family and community activities in the person’s home and community. The Support Worker is a paid person who has access to education, support and advice from the <b>Service Provider</b> line manager or team leader. <b>Support Worker</b> has been commonly known as attendant care worker, disability worker, aged care worker, community worker, homecare worker, care worker or paid carer.</p> <p><b>Service Providers</b> are organisation or a person who are funded for the delivery of supports and services to participants</p> <p><b>Carer</b> is a person that provides supports to the participant at no cost (generally family or friend).</p> <p><b>Complaint</b> is any item that is raised to a service provider or member of staff which indicates the participants care may have been at risk.</p> <p><b>Participant</b> means the participant, consumer, client or person receiving nursing or support.</p>
<p><b>Desired Outcome</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist service providers to respond to complaints in a responsible and ethical manner</li> <li>• To maintain the standard of care delivered by the Community Support and Services industry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guideline</b></p>	<p><b>Any complaint received in relation to a service should be responded to with due diligence. The response should be appropriate to the type of and seriousness of the complaint received.</b></p> <p><b>Service providers should have a Complaints Management policy in place to deal with complaints about a service. The policy must handle</b></p>

	<p><b>all types of complaints regardless of their origin or degree of severity.</b></p> <p>The policy should highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the role of each employee in responding to a complaint and the employee’s responsibility for reporting and recording the complaint</li> <li>• the requirements and process for documenting complaints</li> <li>• how complaints will be responded to and handled</li> <li>• the escalation process for unresolved complaints</li> </ul> <p>Service Providers should provide training to all staff on their role in handling complaints. The training will include who complaints should be reported to and how they should respond to complaints that they receive directly.</p> <p>Service Providers should refer to the requirement of the funding body under which a participant is funded and ensure all guidelines set out within the funding agreement for the participant are followed. Service Providers should also follow any requirements for Serious Incident Reporting (SIR) set out by the funding agency.</p> <p>Service Providers are to have an effective system for management and resolution of complaints about the supports or services provided and the system must be appropriate to the size the organisation and the complexity of the services and supports delivered.</p>
<p><b>Resource Documents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Guidance on Legal Issues in Consumer Directed Care, Home Care Today, September 2015</li> <li>• Duty of Care, The Department of Health, Australian Government <a href="http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-toc~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb-6~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb-6-1">http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-toc~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb-6~drugtreat-pubs-front11-wk-secb-6-1</a> (last updated 2004)</li> <li>• Complaints – Internal Complaints Processes, Australian Human Rights Commission <a href="https://www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12001">https://www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12001</a></li> <li>• Serious Incident Reporting Guidelines, Transport Accident Commission Victoria <a href="http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/providers/working-with-tac-clients/guidelines/provider-guidelines/serious-incident-reporting-guidelines">http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/providers/working-with-tac-clients/guidelines/provider-guidelines/serious-incident-reporting-guidelines</a></li> <li>• Serious Incidents Policy, Department of Health and Human Services Tasmanian Government <a href="http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/business/community_sector_relations_unit/quality_and_safety">http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/business/community_sector_relations_unit/quality_and_safety</a></li> <li>• Serious Incident Reporting, Disability Services Commission, Government of Western Australia <a href="http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-">http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-</a></li> </ul>

[service-providers/contracts2/serious-incident-reporting-/](#)

- Reportable Conduct, Employment Related Child Protection, ACT Ombudsman <http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme>
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission  
Complaints Management  
National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018