



COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY

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Responsible person	DOTTS	Approved by CEO	March 2020
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INTRODUCTION

Bravehearts is committed to being open and responsive to any compliments, complaints or feedback made by its service recipients (clients), stakeholders or other members of the community. Dealing with compliments, complaints and feedback helps us to maintain and improve our service quality and ensure clients, stakeholders or other members of the community have an opportunity to have their concerns resolved and feedback or compliments valued. Complaints processes give clients, stakeholders or other members of the community a way of expressing any dissatisfaction with Bravehearts services and of having their concerns dealt with quickly and effectively. In addition to formal evaluation of services, compliments and feedback enable Bravehearts to have insight into the experience of the organisation's clients and stakeholders. Feedback also assists in the continual delivery of appropriate and effective services and is an opportunity to continuously improve service delivery. The associated procedure guides appropriate and fair responses to compliments, complaints and feedback.

DEFINITIONS

Bravehearts Officer: Any member of the Bravehearts' National Board, staff, students or volunteers.

Bravehearts' National Board: Means the Board Directors and Relevant Officers of the organisation.

Client: Bravehearts provides services to people across the lifespan who have been affected, may have been affected or have been identified to be at risk of being affected by child sexual assault and exploitation. Bravehearts also provides therapeutic support to 12 - 17 year old (up to 21 with approval from Director of Therapeutic and Support Services) who have or are at risk of exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours. Clients also extends to individuals supported or participating with Bravehearts Education and Training department services.

Complaint: Any issue of a negative nature which is formally brought to the notice of the organisation in order to bring about a change or resolution.

Compliment: A polite expression of praise or admiration towards the organisation service delivery.

Department Manager: Department Manager refers to the manager assigned to a service operations department. This includes, but is not limited to, National Therapeutic Services Manager, National Advocacy and Support Manager, National Education Manager and National Child Protection Training Manager.

Director of Therapeutic and Support Services: A staff member who reports directly to the CEO and has the responsibility of management of the Operations Department Managers, Therapeutic and Support Services Quality Coordinator and Reception.

Feedback: Any issue which is brought to the attention of the organisation in order to improve the operations of the organisation.

Member of the community: Any person who is not a client and who is representing themselves, a community organisation or company. Member of the community includes volunteers and donors.

Responder: SET Member or Department Manager (or assigned delegate) who is responsible for responding to a formal or informal complaint raised to Bravehearts.

Senior Executive Team (SET): Internal senior management of Bravehearts, consisting of, but not limited to: Chief Executive Officer, Director of Research, Executive Assistant and National Grants Manager, Director of Therapeutic & Support Services, People and Culture Manager and Head of Community Engagement.

Staff: People employed under a current Employment Agreement as casual, part-time or full-time employees of the organisation.

Stakeholders: Any agency, government or non-government, who have a vested interest in the outcomes achieved by Bravehearts.

Students: Tertiary students formally completing an internship or placement with Bravehearts.

Supervisor: A staff member with responsibility for supervising Bravehearts staff.

Volunteers: People who are registered as volunteers with the Bravehearts Volunteer Coordinator.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Establish the principles which will govern the organisation's response to compliments, complaints and feedback.
2. Ensure the existence and clear communication of procedures through which clients and members of the community, including sector partners can communicate compliments, complaints and feedback regarding any aspect of the organisation's services, functioning or operations.
3. Enable the organisation to address all complaints by ensuring that the information is recorded, considered, resolved and monitored as required.
4. Ensure that feedback is actively encouraged, received, considered and if appropriate, delegated with the implementation monitored and recorded through an open and transparent process.
5. Ensure that staff, clients and the community, including sector partners, are aware of the content of this policy and its associated related procedures.
6. Ensure that all compliments, complaints and feedback are utilised to help the continuous improvement of Bravehearts' services.

POLICY

1. Bravehearts shall implement and maintain a formal complaints procedure to ensure that all complaints are responded to in a timely and impartial fashion. Acknowledgment of receipt of all formal complaints will be confirmed with the complainant, within two business days via written or verbal communication.
2. Bravehearts shall ensure that all formal feedback and complaints are recorded, considered and retained for process improvement purposes.

3. Bravehearts encourages clients and members of the community, including sector partners, who have compliments, complaints or feedback in relation to any aspect of the organisation or to the actions of staff, students or volunteers to express this through the formal relevant procedures.
4. Compliments, complaints and feedback will be accepted in any appropriate format including written, verbal or online.
5. Bravehearts shall address all complaints in a confidential manner. Only the people directly involved in making, investigating or resolving a complaint will have access to information about it.
6. Bravehearts shall ensure that the complaint investigation process is impartial. No assumptions will be made nor any action taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.
7. Bravehearts shall ensure that any complaint is free of repercussions for the complainant. Bravehearts will take all necessary steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs against any party associated with the complaint.
8. The relevant Department Manager will be responsible for following the complaints procedure. If the complaint relates to the Department Manager or the complainant is not comfortable reporting to the Department Manager then the appropriate SET member or CEO will be responsible. If a complaint is unable to be resolved then the complaint is escalated to the relevant SET member. The Department Manager and the relevant SET member will then provide an opportunity to meet with the complainant to seek a resolution for the complaint. Should the complaint not be resolved at SET level then the complaint will be escalated to the CEO.
9. Bravehearts will ensure transparent procedures with avenue for communicating throughout the process with complainant and other related parties.
10. Bravehearts recognises the rights of individuals to appeal any decisions made regarding dissatisfaction of the complaints process.
11. All information relating to a complaint will be kept on a Complaints Register and no documentation will be kept on an individual's file. The complaints register is updated appropriately as complaints are received and actioned. The complaints registers will only be accessible by the appropriate listed personnel:
 - Therapeutic and Support Services Complaints Register: Quality Coordinator, Director of Therapeutic and Support Services, CEO
 - Bravehearts Departmental Complaints Register: SET members, CEO
12. The client or member of community, including sector partners can choose to remain anonymous when providing the organisation with either a compliment, complaint or feedback.
13. Where there is a complaint against a Bravehearts Officer, refer to Staff Performance and Misconduct Management Policy for working with the staff member.
14. Bravehearts shall ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and its related procedures.
15. Bravehearts shall ensure that all clients are informed of the existence of this policy and its related procedures at the commencement of receiving services. A copy of this policy and the relevant procedure must be made


available to clients in their preferred format as required and is available via the Bravehearts website.

16. Bravehearts recognises the right of individuals to approach an external agency if the formal complaints procedure has not resolved the issue to their satisfaction.

INTERNAL RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Bravehearts Departmental Complaints Register
- Client Rights and Access to Information Policy
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure
- Staff Performance and Support Policy
- Therapeutic and Support Services Complaints Register

AUTHORISATION



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March 2020



COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK PROCEDURE

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RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all Bravehearts' Officers to understand the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure*. It is the responsibility of Bravehearts Officers to ensure that clients and members of the community, including sector partners are aware and informed of the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure*.

The Bravehearts CEO, SET members and Department Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- The Department Managers and/or Team Coordinators are implementing the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures* within their teams.
- Investigations into complaints are handled respectfully and confidentially in line with the procedures outlined below.
- The complainant is communicated with regarding the progress and or status of their complaint or feedback.
- Staff who are a subject of a complaint are supported through the investigation process and referred to the EAP.

The Quality Coordinator is responsible for ensuring:

- Regular review of compliments, complaints and feedback practices across the organisation.
- Working with department managers to ensure quality training and practices for the teams

The Bravehearts Departments Managers and/or Team Coordinators are responsible for ensuring:

- Their teams are aware of the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures*.
- An investigation into a complaint is handled respectfully and confidentially in line with the procedures outlined below.
- That throughout an investigation they work collaboratively with the appropriate departmental manager or SET member to ensure a fair, reasonable and appropriate resolution has been met for all relevant parties to the complaint.

All Bravehearts staff/volunteers are responsible for ensuring:

- Clients are informed of the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures* through consent forms and/or verbal conversations.
- That the *Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedures* are followed when a compliment, complaint and/or feedback is received.

PROCEDURES

Compliments Procedure

If an individual or group wishes to pass on a compliment regarding Bravehearts services, this can be done via either written or verbal communication or through Bravehearts website, social media forums or the compliments, complaints and feedback form located on in counselling waiting rooms. Some departments may also request compliments complaints or feedback in forms of surveys or questionnaires at the completion of service.

This compliment will then get passed on to the appropriate Department Manager or SET member if applicable. Compliments will be sent to People and Culture Manager for placing on employee files at SET member discretion.

Complaints Procedure

Initial Complaint and Investigation

1. If an individual or group feels comfortable in doing so, the complaint may be raised with any Bravehearts staff member directly face to face, via phone, letter or email. Alternatively, complaints may be submitted via any of the below platforms:
 - Bravehearts website (Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Form, Contact Us forms);
 - Social media forums;
 - Compliments Complaints and Feedback form located in counselling waiting rooms; or
 - Departmental specific feedback forms or surveys.

The complainant can choose to remain anonymous or be identified (for response purposes).

2. The Bravehearts Officer who receives the initial complaint should identify the concerns and the preferred outcome that the complainant is seeking if appropriate to do so at that time. The Bravehearts Officer who received the initial complaint then needs to inform the appropriate Departmental Manager. If the complaint is regarding the Departmental Manager, then the Bravehearts Officer needs to inform the relevant SET member or CEO. Initial contact is required to be made to the complainant within 3 operational business days.

All parties are informed of their right to have a support person or advocate present to assist or represent them during the formal complaints procedure. A translator can be provided to the complainant if required through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).

3. The Department Manager/relevant SET member or CEO is responsible for assessing and responding to the complaint. From here on they become the

Responder. If deemed appropriate the Responder can delegate the complaint response to a Team Coordinator or Bravehearts Officer within their department who will then be responsible for keeping the Responder updated.

4. Unless a complaint is received anonymously, the Responder will be responsible for contacting the complainant and is required to gather further information and identify the desired outcome the complainant would like to achieve. They will also be required to assess any level of risk associated with the complaint. Reference to the Child Protection and Reporting Harm Policy will help guide and formulate the risk assessment if required. If unacceptable risk is identified the Responder is responsible for informing the relevant SET member or CEO.
5. If the Responder is unable to achieve a mutual outcome with the complainant, the Responder is required to escalate the complaint to the relevant SET member or CEO. The SET member or CEO is required to contact the complainant to mediate an ideal resolution between the parties.
6. Where a staff member is implicated in a complaint, the relevant SET member or CEO will advise the People and Culture Manager at their discretion if the complaint may require internal investigation of the Bravehearts Officer as per the Staff Performance and Misconduct Policy. If the complaint regards risk or harm to a child or vulnerable person then the Child Protection and Reporting Harm Policy is required to be followed.
7. At all times the complaints will only be discussed with those directly involved with the complaint process. Complaints are to be addressed and resolved within a timely fashion of no longer than twenty (20) business days. The complainant will be advised of any updates via written or verbal communication and this will be recorded on the complaints register.
8. The Respondent is required to seek feedback from the complainant regarding their level of satisfaction at the conclusion of the process.

National Board and External Complaints Appeals

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process with Bravehearts they have the right to appeal to Bravehearts National Board or a relevant external body (appropriate to each department).

1. Appeals to Bravehearts National Board
The complainant may write their formal complaint to the National Board or request to speak with them directly through their appeal. The Bravehearts Responder or CEO will assist the complainant in arranging this communication. The Bravehearts National Board is required to contact the complainant to mediate an ideal resolution between the parties
2. Appeals to External Body
Bravehearts operations and services are sometimes funded by a variety of different government bodies. If the complainant is dissatisfied by Bravehearts complaints management, they have a right to request an external investigation through the appropriate body. The relevant bodies may include but are not limited to:
 - Relevant state child protection department
 - Department of Social Services
 - Queensland Human Rights Commission
 - Australian Human Rights Commission

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Complaints Registers

Bravehearts operates with two complaints registers which have restricted access for the complainants and any relevant Bravehearts Officers privacy;

- Therapeutic and Support Services Complaints Register: Quality Coordinator, Director of Therapeutic and Support Services, CEO
- Bravehearts Departmental Complaints Register: SET members, CEO

The Responder of a Bravehearts complaints is required to provide Bravehearts Quality Coordinator or relevant SET member the following details to be logged into the appropriate Complaints Register:

- Date of initial complaint;
- Complainant name and contact details (if choosing to be anonymous this does not get included);
- Summary of initial complaint (including Bravehearts Officer details and department details as appropriate);
- Responder actions taken including dates; and
- Outcomes of complaint.

Vexatious Complaints

A vexatious complaint is one that is falsely made; that is, it is not made in good faith or based on evidence or fact. Generally, they are malicious in nature. Complaints in this regard will be responded to by Bravehearts Officers if lodged formally however this will be at the discretion of the Bravehearts Officer. If a Bravehearts Officer is uncertain if a complaint is vexatious or has risk and safety concerns, they are required to immediately discuss this with their Department Manager or SET member.

Feedback Procedure

If a client or member of the community, including sector partners, wishes to provide feedback regarding the organisation this can be done by via written or verbal communication to a Bravehearts Officer or via any of the below platforms:

- Bravehearts website (Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Form, Contact Us forms)
- Social media forums
- Compliments Complaints and Feedback form located in counselling waiting rooms
- Departmental specific feedback forms or surveys

The feedback is then to be passed on to the appropriate Department Manager or SET member. The Department Manager or SET member is then responsible for discussing this feedback with either the provider of the feedback to gather further information if required. If the feedback is appropriate and able to be implemented this will be arranged by the Department Manager or SET member within the relevant department or service offering.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Bravehearts Departmental Complaints Register
- Child Protection and Reporting Harm Policy
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Survey
- Human Rights Act QLD 2019
- Privacy Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Staff Performance and Misconduct Management Policy
- Therapeutic and Support Services Complaints Register

AUTHORISATION



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