



Managing Service User Feedback Policy

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Approval

Policy owner	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Business Unit	Specialist Community Services		
Approved by	Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services		
Date approved	30/04/2025	Review date	30/04/2026

1 Purpose

- 1.1 SCS understands that getting both formal and informal feedback from service users is important for focusing on their needs, improving services, and knowing what service users want. This helps make services more effective and responsive.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to ensure feedback is managed safely and consistently, focusing on a blame-free approach that protects service users from negative consequences.
- 1.3 Service user's views and experiences are actively sought to ensure that opportunities for service improvement are not missed and a high-quality service environment is maintained. All feedback is taken seriously and will be genuinely heard and taken into consideration.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to service users, staff and volunteers who work in or access the following SCS services;
 - Mental Health Service
 - Homelessness Services
 - Housing Plus

3 Policy principles

Types of Feedback

- 3.1 **Formal Feedback:** Formal feedback involves structured and organised methods for service users to provide input on their experiences with the service. This type of feedback is usually gathered through planned processes and documented using specific tools or systems. Examples include:
 - Surveys and questionnaires: Formal surveys designed to collect detailed information on service user satisfaction, preferences and suggestions;
 - Focus groups: organised sessions where small groups of service users share their experiences, allowing for in-depth discussions and insights;
 - Feedback forms: specific documents or online forms that service users fill out to provide structured feedback on their interactions with the service;
 - Formal complaints: where a complaint has been made with the intent that it is investigated and addressed via a structured predefined process.
- 3.2 **Informal Feedback:** Informal feedback involves spontaneous, casual, and day to day expressions of thoughts and experiences with the service, by service users. Feedback can come in different formats and may be shared through various informal ways of communication. Examples include:
 - Verbal feedback: Direct communication between service users and staff where they express their thoughts, concerns, or appreciation informally;
 - Suggestion boxes: Providing a physical or digital space where service users can drop written suggestions, comments, or feedback anonymously;
 - Casual conversations: Informal interactions during which service users share their experiences, positive or negative, with the service.

Policy Commitments

- 3.3 SCS adopts a trauma informed approach across all sites that informs all aspects of service delivery including processes for managing feedback, and promoting the service user voice through feedback processes.
- 3.4 SCS recognises that in order for service users to actively and fully engage in feedback processes, they must feel safe and, believe that their feedback will be treated with respect. SCS endeavours to create a safe and positive culture that encourages and values feedback in all forms.
- 3.5 Further to this, SCS maintains an awareness of the inherent power imbalances that service users may experience in relation to receiving support from the service and, commits to addressing this by; increasing staff awareness, recognising and addressing power imbalances, helping to empower service users and, adjusting our approaches where necessary.
- 3.6 SCS takes an active approach in identifying service and system wide barriers to formal and informal feedback and, acts to remove barriers wherever possible.
- 3.7 SCS believes all staff should foster an environment that encourages service user feedback. This means documenting informal feedback, regardless of their role, and ensuring that feedback is received without any influence from staff.
- 3.8 SCS utilised a range of methods to gain both formal and informal feedback from service users including but not limited to; secure suggestion boxes, specific feedback forms, intentional formal consultation and regular face to face opportunities to discuss their service experience.
- 3.9 Tenants in Housing Plus (HGP) are advised of the processes for providing feedback at the time of move in. These are detailed in the HGP Feedback Procedure and the HGP Complaints and Appeals Procedure. Feedback may be given formally and informally via phone, email and SMS.
- 3.10 SCS commits to ensuring that processes and systems developed to facilitate feedback from service users are easy to understand, accessible and promoted at all times.
- 3.11 SCS employ data collection processes that enable feedback to be analysed and utilised in service review and design.
- 3.12 SCS understands that reciprocity is crucial when it comes to handling feedback. This principle ensures that service users have the opportunity to express whether they would like a response from management regarding their input and the outcomes of the discussions that took place. Where a response is requested, management will ensure that this happens in a timely manner.
- 3.13 To build and maintain a culture where feedback and evaluation are valued, all reports need to include information about the experiences of service users. We collect this information through both formal methods, like surveys, and informal methods, like casual conversations.
- 3.14 SCS views all feedback as essential for continuous improvement. Both formal and informal feedback trends are discussed at bi-monthly Clinical Governance meetings. Practices are reviewed and adjusted as needed based on this feedback, with outcomes documented in meeting minutes.
- 3.15 Service users and/or their representatives are encouraged to openly discuss any issues or concerns with staff in the first instance, to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.

3.16 Matters that are unable to be resolved with a mutually agreeable outcome may be referred to an external agency if necessary, with the consent of the consumer/client/tenant.

3.17 Service users and their representatives are advised that they have the right to contact external services for advice and support and, are informed of how to lodge an external complaint via the relevant advocacy service if required. Contact details for these agencies are provided at each service site.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services is responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy.

4.2 SCS staff are required to adhere to this policy. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our policies and may result in disciplinary action.

4.3 SCS Management is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are easily accessible methods for providing feedback embedded at each SCS site;
- Ensuring the development and maintenance of policy and procedure that support service user feedback;
- Fostering a culture where service users feel safe and comfortable giving feedback;
- Ensuring that staff receive guidance on how to receive and respond to feedback given by service users;
- Genuinely considering all feedback received from service users, whether positive or negative, and where appropriate ensuring that they are informed of the outcome.

4.4 Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Making sure they have read and understood this policy to ensure its effective implementation within their service;
- Ensuring that interactions with service users create a safe environment for them to provide honest feedback;
- Accepting feedback openly, ensuring the service user feels at ease, and providing options for how their feedback may be handled.

5 Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed in 12 months to allow for the roll out of new processes across all services regarding the way that feedback is captured. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Executive Manager or SCS Management Team.

6 Further assistance

6.1 Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this policy.

7 References

References made in this policy are:

7.1 HGP-PR-4091 Complaints and Appeal Procedure

7.2 HGP-PR-4103 Feedback Procedure

8 Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval include:

- 8.1 SCS-PP-4018 Privacy and Confidentiality Consumer/Client/Tenant Policy
- 8.2 SCS-PP-4024 Consumer and Client Participation Policy
- 8.3 Australian Privacy Principle Guidelines. *Privacy Act 1988, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Australian Government.*
- 8.4 National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010, *Department of Health, Australian Government.*
- 8.5 Standard 1.15: Governance. *Licensing and Accreditation Regulatory Unit, Department of Health, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.6 Specialist Homelessness Service Standards 2016, *Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia.*
- 8.7 Youth Work Code of Ethics, *The Association for Youth Work Western Australia.*

9 Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	30/09/2021	Initial version
2.0	EM, SCS	02/02/2022	Scheduled review and conversion to new template
3.0	EM, SCS	05/03/2024	Scheduled review – renamed from Compliments and Complaints – Clients/Consumer and updated
4.0	EM, SCS	30/04/2025	Scheduled review – renamed from Managing Feedback-Consumer Client and Tenants Policy

10 Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	To express dissatisfaction (through a written or verbal statement) with an individual, organisation or service
Compliment	To express praise or commendation to a person, action or service
Continuous Improvement	Continuous improvement is the ongoing improvement of products, services or processes through incremental and breakthrough improvements
Data collection	The process of gathering and evaluating information

Term	Definition
Feedback	Information received from service users that describes their experiences or views regarding any aspect of the service
Power imbalance	Refers to an environment, relationship or interaction where one person has far more social power than the other
Service user	Is an umbrella terms used to refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumers – individuals who access Mental Health Services• Clients – individuals who access Passages Youth Engagement Hubs and Tom Fisher House• Residents – individuals residing at Wandjoo Bidi under a License to Occupy Agreement• Tenant – tenants residing in Housing Plus properties