



Dee Wardrop Speech Pathology Pty Ltd

**Date of last amendment:** 22/06/23

## CLIENT FEEDBACK AND IMPROVEMENT POLICY

### Purpose

This policy aims to ensure the proper handling of feedback and complaints, prevent reoccurrence, and view feedback and complaints within a Listen/Respond/Improve framework.

### Overview

Dee Wardrop Speech Pathology / Occupational Therapy (DWSP) is committed to effective, independent, and impartial management of all feedback and complaints. We welcome all feedback and take any complaints seriously, treating them as opportunities for improvement. This policy ensures compliance with DWSP policies and relevant legislation.

### Scope

Clients have the right to fair and equitable procedures for dealing with feedback and complaints promptly, courteously, and confidentially, without fear of retribution or discrimination. DWSP is responsible for ensuring that all clients understand the options and process for giving feedback or making a complaint while viewing feedback and complaints as opportunities for understanding client needs and practice improvement.

### Definitions

**Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA):** Supports the 14 National Boards responsible for regulating health professions.

**Feedback/Complaint:** A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

**Employees:** All staff, consultants, contractors, temporary workers, and students of DWSP.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission:** An independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.

**Occupational Therapy Australia:** The national professional association representing occupational therapy in Australia.

**Speech Pathology Australia:** The national peak body for the speech pathology profession in Australia.

## Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Feedback and Improvements

### When we may gather feedback

There are times when DWSP may contact a client to gather feedback on the services and experience they have had at DWSP. This call may be prompted due to:

- Cancellation of an appointment / service
- A DWSP employee sensing that the client is not satisfied.

### When we receive feedback:

#### Employees:

- Act promptly to achieve a satisfactory resolution of client complaints.
- Handle client complaints confidentially, fairly, and equitably.
- Take actions to prevent recurring complaints and ensure continuous improvement in service and care based on feedback.

#### Clinical Directors/Practice Managers:

- Ensure the complaints process is accessible and clear for clients and employees.
- Manage all complaints effectively, independently, and impartially.
- Treat all complaints seriously, seeking opportunities to listen, respond, and improve.
- Evaluate and implement ways to improve based on received complaints.

### Things you may wish to provide feedback about:

#### The service:

- Provided in a safe and professional environment
- Progress made with therapy
- Input into developing plan/s
- Plan/s regularly reviewed and updated.

#### DWSP employees:

- Friendliness and professionalism of employees
- Knowledge of the treating clinician
- Communication between the clinician and client
- Interaction between the clinician and client.

The practice:

- What do we do well?
- What can we do better?
- How likely they are to refer people to this practice?

Method of Feedback and Improvements:

Clients may choose from two ways to give feedback or make a complaint to DWSP:

Verbal: Face-to-face or by phone.

Written: Formal letter, email, fax, or drop box (during in-clinic survey periods).

## The Process for Feedback and Improvements

### THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK PROCESS

Employees will:

- Thank the client for their feedback.
- Pass on the appropriate information to the staff member/members
- Let the staff members senior/manager know so it can be documented for their performance appraisal.

### THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

#### **Verbal Complaints**

Employees will:

- Listen/Understand: Respond to the client in a polite and respectful manner, actively listening.
- Respond: Acknowledge and thank the client for their feedback.
- Seek clarification on the complaint and inquire about their desired resolution.
- Resolve the complaint immediately if possible, or escalate it to the Clinical Director/Practice Manager if necessary.

#### **Written Complaints**

Employees will:

- Respond: Acknowledge the client for their feedback. Provide follow-up information on whether the complaint has been escalated to the Practice Manager, Clinical Director, or Leadership Team.
- Within 2 working days, provide an initial response, confirming receipt of the complaint and its investigation.
- Advise the expected timeframe for the outcome/response.
- Forward the complaint to the relevant Manager- Practice Manager/Clinical Director.

## Resolution

The Clinical Director/Practice Manager will respond to the client within 10 working days and aim to resolve the matter in consultation with the client.

The response may include:

- Information about the feedback and complaint process and estimated resolution timeframe.
- Contact details for further communication.
- Seeking further clarification from the client to understand their perspective fully.
- Suggested actions by DWSP to rectify the issue.
- Presentation of alternative options to resolve the complaint.

If necessary, providing guidance on escalating the feedback or complaint to professional bodies such as AHPRA or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and participating fully and transparently in this process.

## Improvement

- Log the complaint and resolution in the complaints register for continuous improvement purposes.
- Leadership to review the complaint and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Implement improvements based on the review.

Our policy reviews are conducted annually, however, improvements are implemented as required. The complaints register is reviewed annually to ensure no pattern of complaints is emerging and to ensure that any changes that have been implemented are successful in preventing further complaints from arising regarding the same issues.

## Escalation

Should a client feel that DWSP has not responded to their complaint in a fair and equitable way or should no resolution be agreed upon between the client and DWSP, the client may escalate their complaint through one of the following channels.

PROFESSIONAL BODIES

**The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency**

[www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)

(download a PDF form)

1300 419 495

**Speech Pathology Australia**

[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

ph.: 1300 368 835

**NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

[www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

(choose Make A Complaint button)

ph.: 1800 035 544

**Health Complaints Commissioner**

<https://hcc.vic.gov.au/>

(select Make A Complaint button)

1300 582 113

DWSP is committed to addressing complaints promptly, ensuring client satisfaction, and continuously improving our services. Client feedback is valued and appreciated at all times at DWSP. Feedback and our response to it ensure we remain flexible and dedicated to offering the best possible services.

Date	Author	Version Number	Summary of Changes
20/01/2023	TSR	1	