

TITLE: Responding to Complaints	REFERENCE NO: RR-017
AUTHOR (OWNER): Trina Donohue, General Manager	REVISION NO: 11
APPROVED BY (LEAD): Alison Moore, Director of Nursing	EFFECTIVE FROM: 18th May 2023
REVIEW DATE: 18th May 2023	Page 1 of 6

TITLE: Responding to Complaints
SCOPE: St. Attracta's Residence, All Areas

AUTHOR/OWNER: Trina Donohue, General Manager

DATE: 18th May 2023

APPROVED BY: Alison Moore, Director of Nursing

SIGNATURE(S):

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1.0 Policy

St. Attracta's Residence welcomes suggestions and complaints from residents, family members/representatives and visitors. All comments or complaints shall be viewed as an opportunity to inform service provision and to continually improve the quality of care and service provided to the resident. Residents and their family members/representatives shall be confident that making a complaint will not jeopardize the quality of care provided to the resident in any way.

This policy is applicable for any complaint received from any person about any aspect of service, care and treatment provided in, or on behalf of St. Attracta's Residence.

2.0 Definitions

<i>Complaint:</i>	An expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of a service
<i>Complainant:</i>	Person(s) making the complaint.
<i>A Significant Issue:</i>	An alleged incident that cannot be dealt with immediately or one where there is a repetitive trend in occurrence.

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 All Staff: Local resolution of complaints where possible.
- 3.2 Director of Nursing: Management of the complaints process where a written complaint is received

4.0 Principles

- 4.1 All complaints, criticisms or suggestions, whether oral or written shall be taken seriously, handled appropriately and sensitively.
- 4.2 St. Attracta's Residence commits to safeguarding the rights and dignity of the service user and staff members in the implementation of the complaints process.
- 4.3 St. Attracta's Residence shall adhere to the following principles in relation to dealing with complaints:
 - Organisational commitment to the effective management of complaints
 - Leadership and commitment to all aspects of the complaints management process
 - Residents shall be aware of their right to complain
 - The complaints process shall be implemented without fear, favour or prejudice towards the complainant nor the subject of the complaint
 - A consistent and standardized approach will be adopted for the management of all complaints
 - The complaints system shall be well publicised and be accessible to residents, service users, their families and representatives
 - The complaints system shall endeavor to effectively resolve all complaints for both the complainant and those who deliver the service about which the complaint was made. The emphasis must be on resolving complaints effectively and in a timely manner without compromising other principles.
 - All complaints shall be dealt with in an impartial manner.
 - All complaints shall be acknowledged and addressed promptly and sensitively.
 - All information obtained through the course of complaint management shall be treated in a confidential manner and meet the requirements of the Data Protection Acts 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 1997 and 2003.
 - The complaints process shall be flexible to meet the changing demands of St. Attracta's Residence.
 - Anonymous complaints may only be considered where there is sufficient information provided to enable the home to investigate the case.
 - Staff responsibility in the management of complaint procedures shall be clearly defined.

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4.4 This process addresses the management of complaints made by residents, family members/representatives and/or visitors about some aspect of St. Attracta's Residence. It does not address employee complaints and grievance related to their employment. Any such complaint or grievance shall be addressed by the HR-026 Grievance Management.

5.0 Responding to Complaints

If we didn't do something well we will aim to put it right!

- a) Any person who wishes to make a complaint will be assisted in understanding the complaints process and the options available to them. This will typically be done by **the Nominated Complaints Officer who in St. Attracta's Residence is the General Manager, Trina Donohue.**
- b) Complaints may be made by any resident, family member/representative or visitor to St. Attracta's Residence. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Complaints may be made to any member of staff in St. Attracta's Residence.
- c) The staff member shall attempt to resolve the complaint immediately and locally where possible. They may require input from their Line Manager to do so. Where complaints are resolved locally, details of the complaint are documented in the complaint file and given to the General Manager/Director of Nursing who shall check that all is in order.
- d) Where complaints are not resolved immediately and locally they shall be forwarded to the **nominated complaints officer** which is the General Manager providing the General Manager is not the subject matter of the complaint. In the event that that General Manager is absent or is the subject of the complaint it shall be forwarded to the Director of Nursing as the nominated person.
- e) All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 days of receipt.
- f) The nominated complaints officer (General Manager) shall undertake an investigation of the complaint. During the investigation evidence will be gathered to determine if the complaint is warranted. The investigation may take different forms depending on the nature of the complaint, with the nominated person determining the level of investigation required. This shall be completed within 30 days of receipt of complaint. Where the investigation takes greater than 30 days, the nominated person shall liaise with the complainant and inform them of same.
- g) The investigation will be completed as promptly as possible.
- h) When the investigation is completed, the nominated person shall determine if the complaint has been verified or not.
- i) A full response to the complaint will be made within 30 days of receipt – this may be verbally or in writing. If, in exceptional circumstances, the response will be delayed, the complainant should be told of this within 30 working days of receipt and should be given a revised timescale for bringing the investigation to a conclusion as well as an explanation for the delay. An update should be provided every 20 working days thereafter.
- j) A complete record of the complaint including the investigation into the complaint will be maintained in the accidents/incidents folder.
- k) This will include the investigation notes, the outcome and whether or not the resident/complainant was satisfied.
- l) **The Director of Nursing, Alison Moore is the independent review person** who oversees that complaints are appropriately managed and responded to. In the event that Alison is the subject of the complaint or involved in the investigation she cannot oversee the process. If this occurs the process will be overseen by one of the company directors.
- m) The Director of Nursing oversees and reviews that the complaint has been adequately managed and appropriately responded to. She is distinct from those who shall investigate the complaint.
- n) Where the complaint has not been verified, the outcome shall be documented and communicated to the complainant. Where the complaint has been verified following investigation actions are documented and taken to close out on same. This includes documenting and implementing any corrective actions, informing staff where appropriate, retraining and putting in place suitable measures for improvement.

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- o) The complainant is informed of the outcome. Where the complainant is satisfied, the outcome is documented. Where the complainant is not satisfied, they are advised regarding the appeals process.
- p) The board of the nursing home shall be informed of all complaints. The directors shall oversee the management process to ensure that all complaints and the results of all investigations into the matters complained of and any actions taken on foot of a complaint are fully and properly recorded and that such records shall be in addition to and distinct from a residents individual care plan.
- q) Any resident who makes a complaint will not be adversely affected in any manner as a result of having made the complaint
- r) Where appropriate and required under legislation relevant complaints will be notified to HIQA.

6.0 Resident Expectations

In the event that a resident makes a complaint the nominated complaints officer shall clarify at an early stage the expectations of the resident. These expectations are taken into account and considered throughout the process. The resident is kept informed of the process and outcomes.

7.0 Appeals Procedure

If we do not succeed in resolving a complaint the complainant may appeal/complain to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- Have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on our part.
- Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure.

The Ombudsman expects the complainant to bring their complaint first to St. Attracta's Residence and give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman on:

- Telephone: 01-639 5600 / 1890 223 030
- Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie
- In writing to: The Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2

In addition there are listed below at 13.0 the various contact options for residents who wish to get further external advice or to pursue other avenues.

8.0 Confidentiality and Data Protection

The confidentiality of the complainant shall be maintained through the investigation process. Residents and family members/representatives shall be informed that the complaints process shall maintain their confidentiality at all times

9.0 Communication with the Resident

- 9.1 Residents shall be aware of the complaints process and how to make a complaint. The method by which this is done is that the complaints process is detailed in the Resident Guide and Statement of Purpose. All residents are given a copy of this on admission.
- 9.2 The process and contact people is prominently displayed in St. Attracta's Residence.
- 9.3 Residents are periodically reminded of how to make a complaint via the resident's advocacy meeting.

10.0 Advocacy

All residents have the right to access St. Attracta's advocacy service to facilitate their participation in the complaints process. The details are listed below at 13.0

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11.0 Communication of Complaints Data

Details of all complaints and any resulting actions shall be communicated to the Board of the nursing home informing of all stages of their management. Complaints will also be communicated to staff via team meetings to enable learning and for quality improvement actions to be considered and initiated.

Complaints data shall be analysed periodically and reviewed by the management team.

12.0 Staff Education

- 12.1 All staff receive education regarding the management of complaints, and the local resolution of complaints
- 12.2 All staff shall receive education on assisting a resident or family member/representative to make a complaint should local resolution not be achieved.

Every complaint is an opportunity to improve our service so treat the complaint and the person making it as a positive and welcome opportunity.

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13.0 Advocacy Contact details

The following is a list of the primary contacts available to residents who wish to avail of an advocacy service:

Organisation	Phone	Email	Overview
Anne Lynch	087 926 6788.	Anne.Lynch@outlook.ie	Independent Resident Advocate for St. Attracta's – comes in monthly
SAGE Advocacy	(01) 5367330	info@sageadvocacy.ie	Sage provides information, support and advocacy and our work on behalf of clients is independent of family, service provider or systems interests
Patient Advocacy service	0818 293 003	info@patientadvocacysevice.ie	Patient Advocacy Service provide a free independent and confidential service to support resident in nursing homes who wish to make a formal complaint through the nursing homes complaint process about the care they have received in their nursing home
National Advocacy Service	0818 07 3000	www.advocacy.ie	The National Advocacy Service (NAS) is an organisation which helps adults with disabilities. If you have a disability, like a physical or intellectual disability, one of our staff could help you with an issue you are having.
Office of the Ombudsman	01 639 5600	www.ombudsman.ie	The Ombudsman investigates complaints from people who feel they have been unfairly treated by certain providers of services including nursing homes.
Decision Support Service	(01) 211 9750	queries@decisionsupportservice.ie	We provide an essential service for people who need support to make certain decisions. This includes people who would like to plan ahead for the future.
Safeguarding Ireland	(061) 461 358	info@safeguardingireland.org	Safeguarding Ireland was established to promote safeguarding of adults who may be vulnerable, protect them from all forms of abuse by persons, organisations and institutions and develop a national plan for promoting their welfare