



Meals on Wheels<sup>TM</sup>  
Queensland



# LISTENING TO OUR CLIENTS:

Feedback, Complaints & Continuous Improvement

**27 March 2025**

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# Agenda

- **Responsibilities under the new Aged Care Act**
  - Regulatory Compliance
  - Your contractual obligations
- **Building a culture of no blame**
- **Continuous Improvement Framework**
- **Examples of feedback and complaints handling**
- **Examples of SIRS Incidents**

(Serious Incident & Response Scheme – Reportable through MAC)
- **Examples of Continuous Improvement in Practice**

# Responsibilities under the new aged care act

**Under the new Aged Care Act, CHSP providers delivering meals must meet the regulatory compliance obligations that include:**

- Registration and Compliance with the Aged Care Code of Conduct
- Rights & Principles (New Statement of Rights, replacing Charter of Rights)
- Incident Management & Reporting: including SIRS
- Data Exchange Reporting - 1 July 2025 (MAC ID for all CHSP Clients)
- Complaints Management
- Worker screening
- Service Planning
- Continuity of Care
- Duty of Care



# Building a culture of no blame!

- **When focusing on the outcomes:**

- Clients need to feel safe, encouraged and supported to give feedback and make complaints
- Clients need to feel engaged in the processes
- Communication on outcomes of the complaint

- **Regularly seek input through:**

- Surveys involving clients, carers and representatives
- Workforce surveys – identify gaps and provide training where necessary.
- The information you receive will lean into your continuous improvement framework.

# Building a culture of no blame!

## Individuals need to feel supported and heard...

- How do people feel when they raise a complaint with your service?
- Do they feel heard?
- Do they feel supported?
- How do you make people feel when they complain? Is it a positive or a negative?
- Can people see positive change outcomes from the complaints they have raised?
- Does feedback get fed into your continuous improvement before it becomes a complaint?

**The fear of punishment is the main reason people hesitate to make complaints.**

**Important: create a safe space where people feel supported when raising concerns.**

# Building a culture of no blame!

## Supporting your workforce

Your workforce, like your clients, needs to feel safe to raise complaints.

When your staff or volunteers are speaking with individuals or performing reviews, are they saying:

- “How are you going?”
- “Do you have any problems with our service?”
- “Is there anything we can do to improve your experience?”
- “Does your workforce advocate for your clients?”

If you incorporate this culture into your service as part of your standard practice, you'll be on the right track to fostering a positive complaints culture.

# Building a culture of no blame!

## Practical Tips:

1. Create a no blame culture, where mistakes and near misses can be safely reported.
2. Set up communication and capture feedback and concerns before they become complaints.
3. Address concerns before they become complaints and that is fed into your Continuous Improvement Plan
4. Workforce training is key – empower your volunteers to speak up.
5. Respond to the complainant in a timely manner and assure them that they are part of the decision-making process.  
***(Do not leave feedback, complaints or incidents until the next committee meeting)***
6. It's everybody in the organisation's responsibility.

# Continuous Improvement Framework

## Continuous improvement framework:

- Designed to Identify, analyse, and enhance processes.
- Focuses on making incremental improvements through regular assessment and feedback loops.
- Feedback highlights areas that need attention.
- Decision to be based on facts.
- Tracks progress and performance metrics.
- Quantifies improvements.
- Pinpoints specific actions.





# Open Disclosure:

**Open Disclosure: Here's what it looks like when done well**

## **1. Honesty & Transparency**

- The information shared is complete, accurate, and unambiguous.
- The service doesn't hide details or sugarcoat the situation.
- When something goes wrong, you need to take responsibility rather than deflecting or making excuses.

## **2. Timeliness**

- The disclosure is made as soon as possible, ideally at the first opportunity when the information becomes relevant.
- Delaying or withholding information can erode trust, so it's important to act quickly and provide updates regularly.

## **3. Clarity**

- The message is clear and accessible to all parties involved.
- Complex language, jargon, or overly technical terms should be avoided unless the audience is familiar with the terminology.
- The goal is for everyone to understand the situation fully.

## **4. Empathy**

- Especially in cases where the disclosure involves bad news or mistakes, empathy is key.
- Acknowledging how the situation might affect others shows care and concern.
- It's not just about the facts, but also about the emotional and practical impact.



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# Open Disclosure when done well continued:

## 5. Action Plan

- Along with the disclosure of information, there should be an outline of the steps being taken to address the issue or prevent it from happening again.
- This gives clients and their representatives confidence that the situation is being actively managed.

## 6. Open Dialogue & Support

- Encouraging feedback, questions, and ongoing communication is an essential part of open disclosure.
- When people feel their concerns are heard and addressed, it strengthens trust and engagement.
- Offering support or assistance for affected parties also makes a big difference.

## 7. Accountability

- Taking responsibility for the situation, whether it's a mistake, failure, or problem, and not blaming others.
- Accountability is crucial in building credibility and trust, especially when navigating difficult situations.

## 8. Consistency

- There should be consistency in the messaging and actions taken.
- If the message shifts over time or seems contradictory, it can undermine confidence in the disclosure process.

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# Examples Complaint

## Client Complaint

Client complained that their roast meat was very fatty.

**Response:** The volunteer returned the meal that appeared very fatty and the coordinator notified the supplier via email, including a photo of the meal.

**Outcome:** The supplier acknowledged the food was not up to standard and explained they had staff training at the time when the meal was packed. Another meal was provided to the client by the supplier free of charge.

**Continuous Improvement:** The supplier informed the service that extra training and supervision will be provided to the trainees.



# Examples Client Feedback

## Client Payment Feedback

A client called to say they are unable to pay their monthly account and will have to cancel meals.

**Response:** The service inquired whether weekly invoices would be more manageable for the client's finances. It was agreed that increasing the frequency and breaking payments into smaller amounts would be easier.

**Outcome:** Invoices are now issued weekly instead of monthly.

**Continuous Improvement:** Provide all clients with a choice of invoicing and frequency during the client onboarding process.





# Examples- Client Feedback / Positive

## **Client Feedback**

Client phoned to thank the service for the wonderful Easter Eggs and parcel she received for Easter.  
Very thoughtful and it bought a tear to the client's eye.

**Response:** Staff thanked the client for their lovely feedback

**Outcome:** Compliment noted and passed onto workforce and management committee.

**Continuous Improvement:** No continuous improvement



# Examples- Workforce Feedback

## Volunteer Feedback

Volunteer advised they were short of two soups on the meal run.

**Response:** Clients involved were contacted, and meals were replaced for one client, while the other client chose not to have their soup replaced. An investigation was then conducted to determine how this incident occurred and prevent it from happening in the future.

**Outcome:** Two additional clients on this run were suspended and removed from the kitchen sheet, rather than sending a new one. A kitchen staff member removed two soups for these clients, and another staff member, unaware that the soups had already been removed from the esky, took two more out of the allocation.

**Continuous Improvement:** A new kitchen sheet will be sent to the kitchen for each change made to avoid confusion among kitchen staff and old kitchen sheet will be removed to avoid mistakes being made.

# Examples SIRS (Neglect)

## Incorrect Meal Incident

A client is allergic to cucumber and received a meal that contained cucumber.

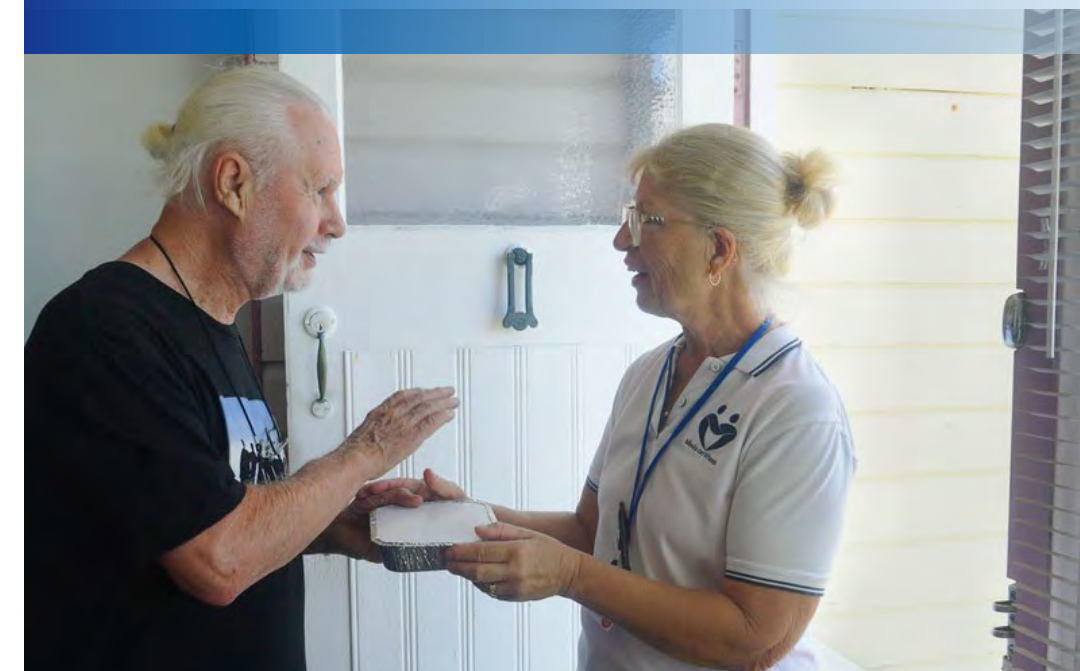
**Response:** Oversight by kitchen staff when reading paperwork to prepare meals.

Kitchen was notified and meal was replaced before it was consumed (near miss)

- **SIRS was lodged in MAC**
- Apology was given to the client.

**Continuous Improvement:** Meal labelling system was implemented with client's name and dietary requirements on the label to avoid delivery of incorrect meals.

**Priority 1 – 24 hours**



# Examples- SIRS (Psychological or Emotional Abuse)

## Client Complaint

Client was not happy with the way the office staff spoke to her this morning, stating it caused emotional distressed.

**Response:** Office Manager spoke to the staff in question regarding the tone used with the client.

**Outcome:** Staff member phoned the client and apologised for their rough tone. (abuse)

- **SIRS was lodged in MAC**

**Continuous Improvement:** Staff member will be monitored internally

**Priority 1 – 24 hours**



# Examples- SIRS (Neglect)

## Client Complaint

Client notified service they did not receive their scheduled meal delivery yesterday.

**Response:** Investigation showed a staff member had been notified that the client would resume meals, but failed to tell the kitchen that an additional meal would be required.

**Outcome:** Apology was made to the client. The non delivery of the meal was also credited.

- **SIRS was lodged in MAC (Neglect)**

**Continuous Improvement:** Additional training for staff member on processes.

**Priority 2 – 30 Days**

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# Thank You

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# Continuous Improvement Framework

## Key elements include:

- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of processes
- Collecting and analysing feedback
- Incremental Improvements
- Workforce Engagement and Involvement
- Feedback Loops
- Workforce Satisfaction

In summary, the continuous improvement framework is about embedding the mindset of ongoing evaluation and problem-solving methodologies to guide improvement into your service. It is a model that involves planning changes, implementing them, checking the results and acting on those results to standardise the change or refine it further.