



PROACTIVE
COMPLAINTS
MANAGEMENT

TRAINING • COACHING • CASE MANAGEMENT

Consult, Consult, Consult

Complaints relating to care recipients care have two common themes:

- 1) Family involvement in the delivery of care and services; and
- 2) A change in the care recipient's care needs.

Most organisations struggle with the issue of family involvement in the delivery of care and services for various reasons.

Some organisations have policies in place which state that all care will be delivered by the staff employed by the organisation.

What is important to keep in mind is that many of the families that want to be involved in the delivery of care to their loved ones are also the same individuals who may have cared for their family members prior to entering the facility.

In this instance it is advisable that during the admission process that the families expectations are documented. i.e.

- What are their expectations of care?
- Do they want to be involved in the care regime?
- What will the family's involvement look like?

The organisation needs to consider, from their perspective, the following question –

“Will the family involvement and type of involvement have an impact on the organisations legal responsibility?” i.e. Duty of care.

Organisations will then need to consider the impact that the family involvement will have on staff i.e.

- How will the staff react to the family providing the care?
- Will the staff feel intimidated if families are present during the provision of care?
- Do staff have a responsibility to follow the directions of family when providing care to a care recipient e.g. no lift policies.

- Who is responsible if something goes wrong i.e. family or the organisation?

Further consideration will need to be given by an organisation on the family employing “paid private carers” to provide care and services to a care recipient.

An approved provider will need to consider having robust policies in place that take into consideration the following:

- Does the organisation require the paid private carer to undertake a police check?
- Who is responsible for checking paid private carers police check if this is part of your policy?
- Does a paid private carer have a right to access the care recipient’s private files?
- Who is responsible for the supervision of the paid carer?
- Does the paid carer have a right to direct staff on how to provide care?
- Does the paid carer have a right to access staff only designated areas?
- Who is legally responsible if an injury occurs when a paid carer provides care to the resident and an accident occurs?
- Does the paid carer need to have insurance both professional indemnity and liability insurance – whose responsibility is it to check on this?
- Under what circumstances can an approved provider refuse entry to the premises of a paid carer?
- Can a paid employee of the approved provider resign and then become a private carer?
- What if an employee is sacked and then seeks to become a paid carer is this acceptable to the approved provider?

(The above is not an exhaustive list of issues to consider)

The second issue is that of families being kept informed by staff of the organisation when their family members care needs change.

Organisations will need to have clear policies and processes in place in regards to when they notify families if/when the care recipients start to show changes in their care needs.

In some instances staff of the organisation observe changes in a care recipients health needs and make the incorrect assumption that families will either notice the changes or that the changes are not significant enough to warrant a discussion.

It is prudent in these circumstances for staff to either phone or make an appointment with the family to discuss the changes or the reason for the changes in the care recipients health care needs and provide the family with the opportunity to advise the organisation whether they wish to be kept informed or not.

We must all keep in mind that a care recipient arrives in a facility with years of family interactions. Some families are more involved in the daily life of a care recipient and others are not.

Staff will need to ask the family members and the care recipient what information they wish to receive from the organisation if any.

The mantra of aged care organisations should be - *consult, consult, consult!!*

Always keep in mind if it was your family member would you want to know if your loved ones care needs changed?

To discuss this further please contact Steve Aivaliotis 0418 313 303 or email Steve steve@proactivecm.com.au