

POLICY STATEMENT

Title:	COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES AND FEEDBACK
Policy No.:	UPCS 0007
Date of approval:	23 January 2008
Date of operation:	30 January 2008
Date to be reviewed:	30 January 2009
DSQ Service Standards:	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 8.1 and 8.2,

Policy Principle

- All clients, and potential clients, will be informed of their rights (as per Client's Rights Policy) including the right to complain without affecting access to services and the right to an advocate of their choice.
- To focus on clients needs and ensure there is pro-active communication with clients with a view to correcting deficiencies and obtaining information on areas of potential improvement.

Policy

UPCS welcomes and encourages verbal and or written complaints as we recognise that what we don't know about, we are unable to improve.

UPCS is committed to resolving complaints as quickly as possible. The expectation of UPCS staff is to acknowledge receipt of written complaints to the author, within five working days.

UPCS place a high degree of emphasis on communication with clients. This involves listening to clients, understanding their requirements, clearly explaining the quality of services offered and keeping them well informed. UPCS Complaints Policy is designed to ensure that clients are aware of their ability to contribute and that UPCS value their suggestions and feedback.

Any, difficulties encountered by clients can provide important information on areas for improvement in the quality of our services. UPCS policy is that any complaint or suggestion from any source will be given prompt attention with timely follow-up and appropriate response. A complaint form has been developed to ensure that any complaints and suggestions are given the appropriate degree of attention.

Complaints Process Content

All complaints (whether formal or informal) must be:

- undertaken in a fair and positive manner with confidentiality maintained throughout the process;
- for more serious complaints, acknowledged in writing within 3 days upon receipt, and whenever possible the matter resolved, within 21 calendar days;

- recorded on the Complaints Register¹ (minor and major) for future reference;
- approached in a positive way, with the aim of resolving the complaint appropriately, and making any warranted improvement to procedures, service delivery and policy; and
- forwarded immediately to the Director, where a complaint relates to an organisational policy matter.

Complaint Process

- A minor (informal) complaint is an issue or occurrence that is resolved at the first point of contact, with all parties must agree and be satisfied with the outcome;
- A major (formal) complaint is an issue or occurrence that is not resolved at the first point of contact, and needs further investigation²;
- A Complaints Form³ must be completed for all major complaints;
- On receipt of a more serious complaint, the Coordinator / Manager, or delegate is to be made aware of the complaint immediately;
- The complainant is notified within 3 days in writing to provide feedback on progress, actions taken and outcomes achieved⁴;
- UPCS will endeavour to fully resolve all complaints with 21 calendar days from receipt;
- In the event of an unresolved complaint between two parties, information on conflict resolution, mediation, counselling and advocacy services will be provided;
- Staff members will be notified of any complaints made against them to give them an opportunity to state their case;
- In the event of a complaint between a client and their principal carer, UPCS encourages early identification and open discussion of potential difficulties at assessment and care plan to alleviate major conflicts;
- UPCS recommends the use of an advocate, is able to supply a qualified staff member, or recommend a suitable mediator in an endeavour to resolve the situation; and
- In the event that a complaint between a client and their principal carer may be suspected elder abuse, it is UPCS staff's responsibility to report this to the Coordinator, who in turn may seek legal advice.

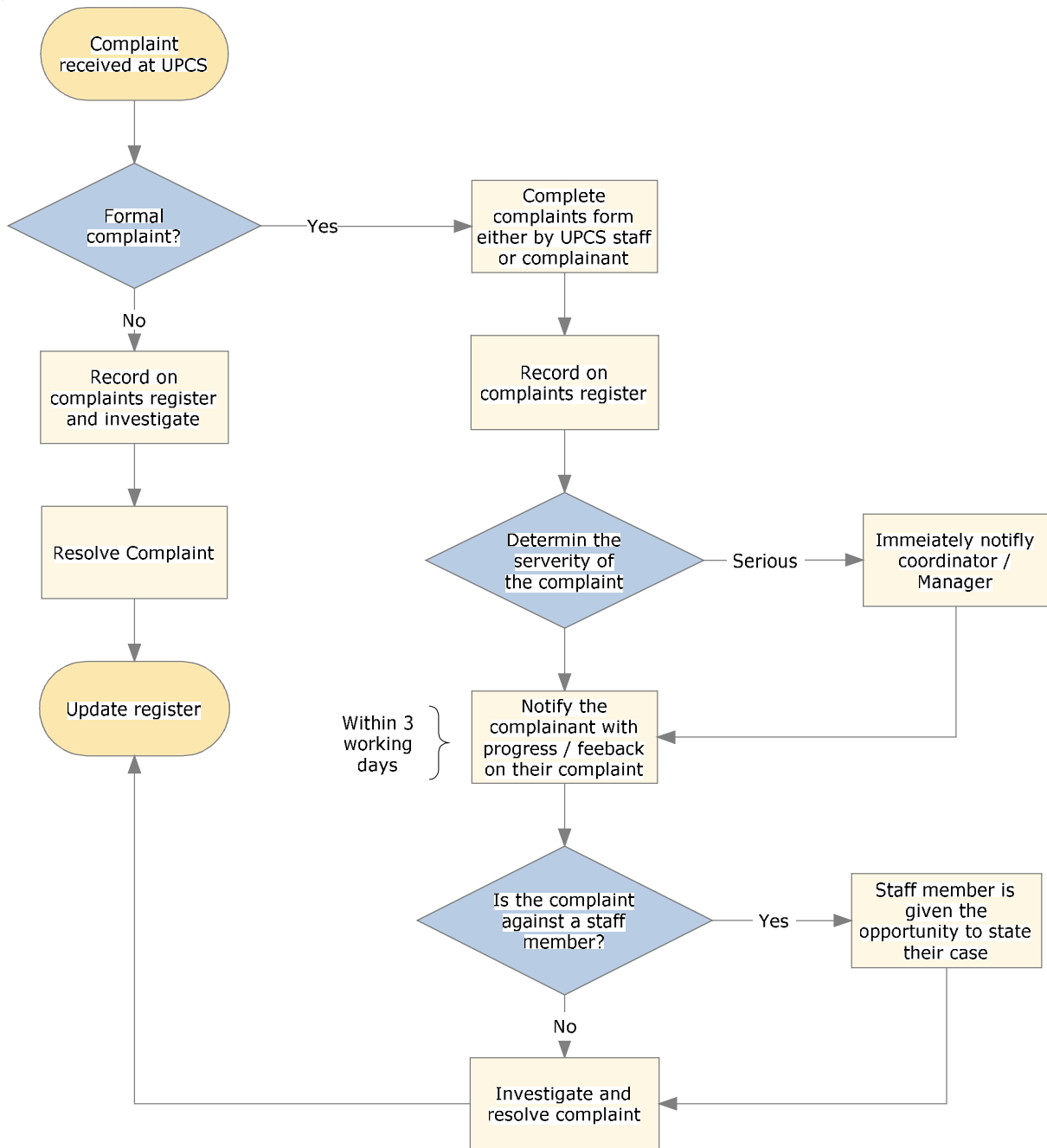
¹ Annex III Complaints Disputes & Feedback

² Annex II Complaints Disputes & Feedback

³ Annex I Complaints Disputes & Feedback

⁴ Annex IV Complaints Disputes & Feedback

Complaints Process



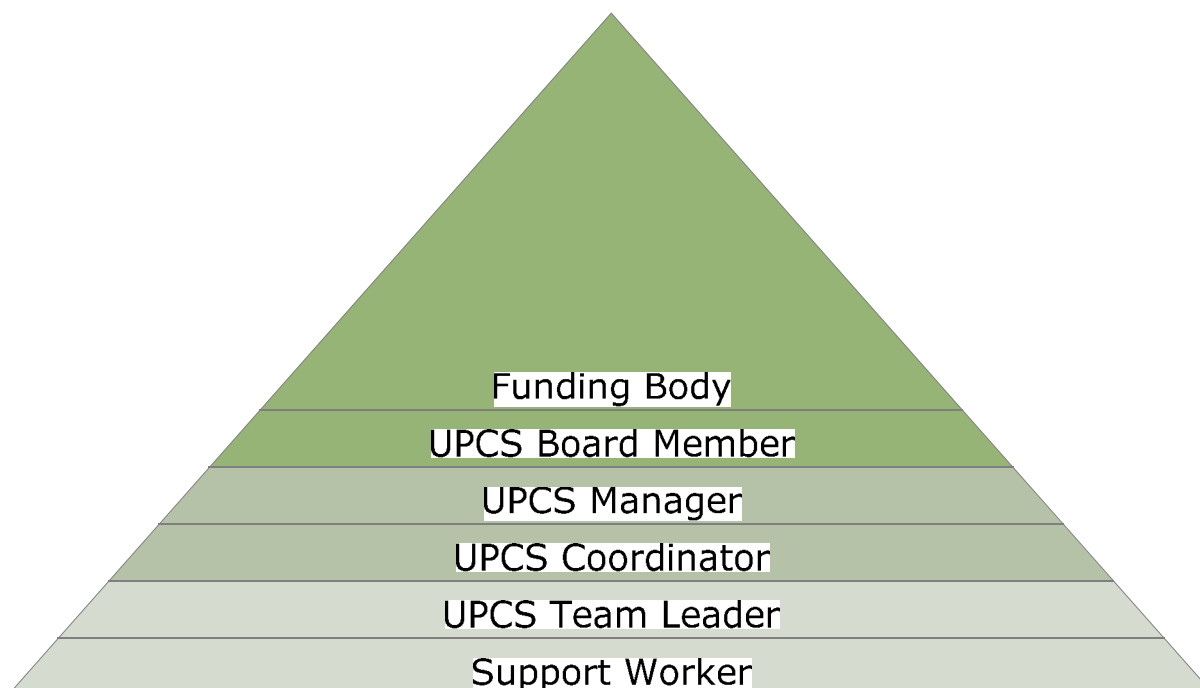
UPCS endeavours to fully resolve all complaints within 21 calendar days from date of receipt

Responsibility

- Staff members to refer to Policy Manual for procedures on handling complaints.
- After finalisation of a complaint, the relevant staff member will evaluate current procedures in service delivery, procedures and policies, and modify where warranted.
- The Complaints Register Form is to be completed by administration staff members of UPCS immediately a complaint is made, no matter how informal it may seem.
- The Coordinator / Manager will determine if legal advice is to be sought, staff counselled or disciplinary action instigated.
- The service is primarily accountable to the community for any activities undertaken.

Talking Through the Problem

Many complaints are resolved just by talking to someone. If you can, try to talk to someone about the situation. The chart below shows the order of the “chain of command”. It is expected that a person with a complaint will start at the bottom of the chart and progress their way to the top of the chart as dependent on how far they need to resolve the problem.



If you are unsure of the name of the staff member who holds the position that you feel you need to contact, phone the office on 07 5578 9678.

Feedback from Clients

Means by which we seek feedback from clients include:

- a. client survey forms completed by clients four times annually;
- b. telephone conversations with clients concerning deliveries; and
- c. in-person contact (feedback during visits to UPCS clients).

Advice to Clients – Lodging a Complaint

At some point in time it may be necessary for you to put your complaint in writing so that everyone is clear about what the problem is. A staff member can provide you with a written complaints form or you can write your own letter.

If you are not prepared to write down your complaint, it may not be able to be dealt with. If you need help to write your complaint, the person you are complaining to will be able to help you, or organise another person to help you.

If you feel uncomfortable lodging your complaint through the UPCS process or are dissatisfied with the outcome you have the right to contact your local Disability Services Queensland office on the following numbers:

- Gold Coast 55318055
- Beenleigh 32870742
- Brisbane 32247179

Confidentiality

Details of the complaint will be kept in confidence and only those who are directly involved and need to know will be informed. “Need to know” is based on those who are either involved in the complaint or require the information as part of a duty of care.