Complaint Management Policy & Process

POLICY STATEMENT

UQ Health Care Ltd is committed to continually improving the care and services we provide by welcoming feedback from patients and our community. We want to ensure that any person or organisation using our services or affected by our operations, has the right to lodge a complaint with the organisation.

We value feedback and commit to resolving issues quickly, fairly, efficiently and respectfully. Patient rights to confidentiality, access, equity, and transparency shall be maintained throughout the complaints handing process.

The intent of this policy is to communicate and document a complaints management process that:

- provides a means for receiving complaints or feedback
- encourages the reporting of workplace complaints and issues
- is easily accessed and practical
- is understood by our patients and other stakeholders
- meets the requirements of our organisation in alignment with our purpose and vision
- provides for a fair, equitable and timely response
- is in compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint:	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about our staff, services or care for people that warrants a response and/or resolution
Complainant:	The person or entity that makes a complaint
Escalation:	The process of referring complaints to other persons for additional management action or actions.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide our organisation and commitment for managing customer complaints.

We shall:

- ensure our patients and carers are encouraged to raise concerns about the care and service they are provided
- accept all complaints from patients, suppliers, other stakeholders and members of our community
- recognise the importance of complaints that are submitted to us
- ensure confidentiality of all parties is maintained throughout the process
- commit to the resolution of complaints that satisfies all parties wherever possible
- endeavour to manage complaints within a timely manner
- maintain communications with all parties during the process

- provide employees with training on complaints management
- provide awareness on escalation options where required
- ensure complainants are not disadvantaged by submitting a complaint under this process
- ensure management reviews include complaints data to identify improvement opportunities
- continually monitor and improve the complaints management system

PROCESS

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

UQ Health Care's complaints management process will be documented for patients in a publicly available document on our website, when providing our services and upon request.

All patients will be informed of our complaints management process as required.

We shall advise potential complainants:
- how to submit a complaint
- who the contact person is at our organisation
- how we will deal with the complaint
- how we will advise the outcome of the complaint.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

We accept complaints either in writing or verbally through:
- the employee they were dealing with at the time
- a manager or supervisor of the clinic/area
- a Executive Manager, or
- an external body such as the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) or AHPRA

Complaints may be made by:
- submitting via email, post or hand. A Feedback and Complaints form is available in hard copy at our clinic or online from our website
- sending written complaints to the clinic Practice Manager. The Practice Manager will be responsible for receiving this correspondence and directing it to the appropriate person.
- calling the clinic directly

If the complaint is about an employee, the complaint will normally be dealt with by the Practice Manager or General Manager.

PROCESS FOR COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

1. Receiving the complaint

Where an employee is provided a complaint, they are responsible for receiving the complaint by:
- listening to the complainant, acknowledging the concern, and advising of our complaints management process
- depending on the type and severity of the complaint, either discussing with the complainant an agreed upon resolution (for smaller matters) or referring the complaint on to a manager/ supervisor for further investigation and action

2. Processing the complaint

Where a complaint cannot be resolved during step 1, the Practice Manager will be the Complaint Manager and will be responsible for all further steps.

Complaint Managers are responsible for processing the complaint by:

- acknowledging the complaint within 3 business days
- updating the complaints register
- communicating with the complainant and advising of the complaint management process and expected time frames

3. Investigating the complaint or appeal

Complaint Managers are responsible for investigating the complaint or appeal by:

- examining information relevant to the complaint
- seeking additional information, input or escalation to assist with the investigation
- investigating the complaint and determining a response
- communicating with the complainant on the determination and outcome of the complaint and next steps for resolution within 30 days
- resolving the complaint in a timely manner and, if delays occur, advising the complainant accordingly

4. Responding to and resolving the complaint

Complaint Managers are responsible for responding to and resolving the complaint by:

- making a decision or referring to the appropriate people for a decision within 7 days of the complaint being received
- informing the complainant of the outcome and the reasons for any decisions within 30 days
- resolving the complaint (and how this has been achieved); or if no further action can be taken, the reasons for this
- informing the complainant of any options for further action if required
- if an apology is in order, ensuring that the appropriate person makes the apology and informs the complainant what the organisation intends to do to avoid further instances

5. Reviewing the complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation and proposed resolution of their complaint or appeal, they can seek a further review of the matter by Executive Management.

6. Referring the complaint to an external procedure

If after an Executive Manager has reviewed the complaint and the complainant is still not satisfied, they may choose to escalate the complaint to an external body.

COOPERATION IN EXTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

If any person makes a complaint about UQ Health Care clinics to an external body (including police, Ombudsman, Office of Fair Trading or Administrative Appeals Tribunal), the Executive Management shall be responsible for liaising with the body responsible for investigating the issue.

UQ Health Care will fully cooperate in any investigation which may take place. This includes participating in early resolution, conciliation, and/or reporting to the body about resolution and corrective actions as required.

RECORD KEEPING

A complaints register shall be maintained by the business and kept for a minimum of 7 years after the complaint has been made. The register will be maintained within our records management system and will record the following for each complaint or appeal:

- name and contact details of the complainant
- details of the complaint
- actions taken
- date submitted and date closed

All correspondence shall be maintained in our records management system. Information shall be treated as confidential and access restricted.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The complaints management policy and process shall be reviewed and evaluated bi-annually or as management conducts reviews of our quality system. This will include:

- review of the Complaints Management System
- corrective actions and improvement opportunities identified to improve the system
- forward plans to ensure continual improvement

TRAINING PROCEDURES

Employees shall receive training on complaints management processes during their induction, and as part of ongoing training.

Managers will undergo training for complaints management and resolution to support patients and others through the complaint process and appropriately respond to complaints in an empathetic manner.