

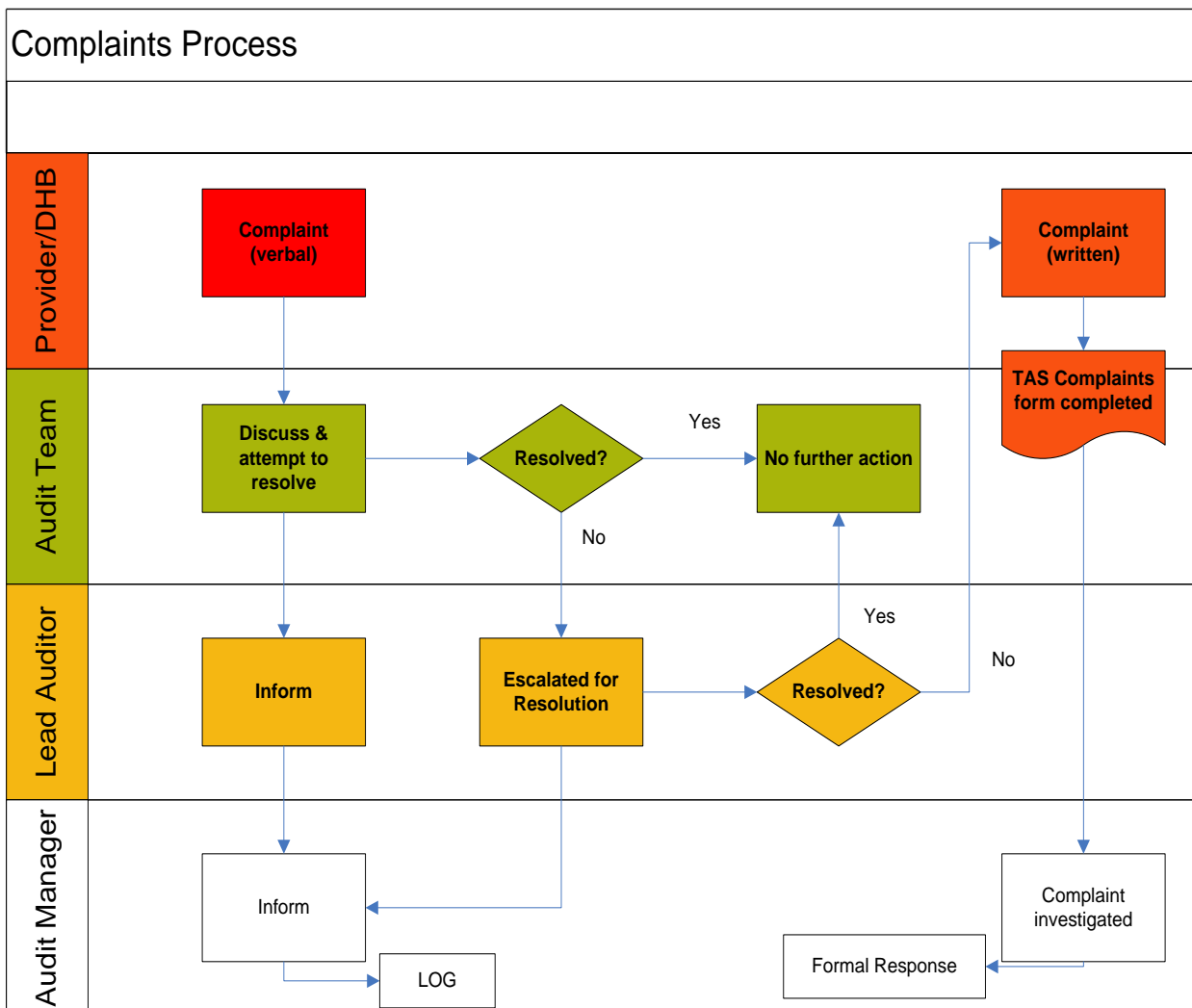
Complaints and Appeals Policy

Purpose

TAS recognises the importance of ensuring that complaints and appeals made by providers, MoH or DHBs are recorded and appropriate action taken. As such the following protocol and procedures have been established.

Complaints Protocols

The following process is followed when a complaint is received from either a provider, MoH or DHB in the course an audit. Providers are informed of the complaints process in their notification letter.



Note: Any complaint about the audit process, audit team members or outcome of the audit can be made directly to the Audit Manager. A resolution will be sought and communicated within seven days of complaint.

Complaints Procedure

If complaints about the audit team or audit process occur at any time during the audit process, particularly the site visit, they should, in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Lead Auditor.

It is preferable if the Lead Auditor can resolve the complaint before it becomes a formal complaint.

- Take all complaints seriously.
- Discuss the complaint with the person who is complaining in private (if possible).
- Document what the complaint is about.
- Document what the complainant would like to happen as a result of their complaint.
- Assess the complaint, and if the action can be achieved easily, without affecting the audit, take action (this is a judgement call).
- If action cannot be taken, ensure that the complainant knows that action is beyond your authority, and that it will be referred to the Audit Manager.
- Always advise complainants that there is a formal complaints process in place at TAS if they wish to make a formal complaint. Advise them of the Audit Manager's contact details.
- Advise the Audit Manager immediately.

Formal Written Complaint Procedure

All complaints will be taken seriously and a resolution sought. Complaints will be managed where possible verbally and resolved at the time the complaint is raised. Should a complaint be raised formally in writing, the following procedure will be followed:

Acknowledgement:

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged to the complainant within five working days (in writing, email or by phone), giving an outline of the expected process for on-going communication and complaint resolution.

Investigation of complaint:

An investigation of the complaint will occur within 10 working days of the lodging of the complaint.

Resolution/outcome of the complaint investigation:

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant within 10 working days at the conclusion of the initial investigation.

The complainant will be informed if additional time is required to further investigate the response and will communicate any delays and reasons for delays with the client every 30 working days as necessary.

Documentation of the complaint:

All formal written complaints will be logged in the complaint register, with the date it was received, complaint outline, the complainant, response timeframes (initial and post investigation), person responsible for following up the complaint and the resolution of the complaint.

All complaint documentation, including the complaint, its investigational and any communication relating to the complaint will be held in the complaint folder.

NB: The Director Audit & Assurance will be informed of all formal complaints received and their resolution.

Non-Resolution of Complaints

Where non-resolution occurs and involves an audit and its findings, at the time an audit report is required to be submitted in accordance with HealthCERT submission requirements, the non-resolution will be referred to MoH for any further action or closure as appropriate.

The complainant at any stage may refer the complaint to the TAS Board, Ministry of Health, JAS-ANZ and /or the Health and Disability Commission.

Refer to TAS Complaints form (Complainant) (refer to template folder: MT-025) and TAS Complaints Investigation form (refer to template folder: MT-026).

Appeals Procedure

TAS has a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals (e.g. dis-agreement on audit. TAS is responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process.

TAS ensures that the persons engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who carry out the audits or make the certification decisions by ensuring the TAS Director Audit and Assurance is responsible for managing the appeals process and includes the receipt, acknowledgement, review and investigation, resulting outcome and communication of these processes with the person making the appeal.

Any submission, investigation and decision on appeals will not compromise in any discriminatory actions against the person making the appeal.

The appeals-handling process includes at a minimum the following:

- An outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions need to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals.
- Tracking and recording of appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them.
- Ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken.

TAS is responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal received and acknowledges receipt of the appeal. Progress reports are provided to the person who made the appeal and once a result is finalised, this is communicated to the appellant. The decision to be communicated to the appellant is made by, or reviewed and approved by, an individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.

TAS is required to give formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals handling process.

Please note timeframes for managing the appeal, documentation of the appeal, review, and communication with the appellant follows the same documented process as specified in complaints procedure and protocols above.