



Document type	PUBLIC COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE		
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1.0 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

As a high profile organisation that creates varying expectations in the minds of the public, there can be a range of complaints that are made to the Society. We understand that by having an effective complaints handling practices, we can work toward proactively resolving complaints. With this procedure RSPCA WA is committed to:

- address public complaints with sensitivity, promptness, impartiality and in alignment with our organisational values
- treat all complaints as confidential - personal identifiable information regarding the complainant will be made available to the Complaints Officer and Responsible Manager and, where essential, other members of RSPCA WA, but only for the purpose of addressing the complaint within the Society
- provide the public with a mechanism for reporting issues
- outline the process for resolving public complaints, where the purpose of the resolution is to provide a comprehensive response to the complainant and achieve a final outcome whilst applying our organisational values

RSPCA WA understands that by having an effective Public Complaints Management Procedure we will:

- be the ‘first port of call’ for managing complaints
- enable public complaints to provide the Society with an early warning of trouble spots
- identify where the Society may not be meeting its customers’ expectations by reviewing complaints data
- further enhance our quality control measures by reviewing feedback
- utilise information from complaints in setting service benchmarks for the Society
- utilise information from complaints in identifying information, policy, process and service deficiencies

This procedure complies with relevant legislation (as amended from time to time) and establishes the response standards and steps that a member of the public can anticipate from RSPCA WA.

2.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- The Associations Incorporations Act 1987
- The Charitable Collections Act 1946
- Related policies and procedures, such as Equal Opportunity Workplace Policy, Disciplinary Guideline, Behaviour Standards in the Workplace Policy, Social Media Policy and the Code of Conduct
- RSPCA WA Values

3.0 SCOPE

This procedure will apply to and be made available to members of the public, RSPCA WA employees, contractors and volunteers.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Complainant - a member of the public who has lodged or is considering lodging, an issue or complaint.

Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Society, its staff or volunteers, which has affected an individual or a group and a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints as defined in this procedure, are therefore not:

- reports of animal cruelty (where a separate procedure exists)
- requests for services
- requests for information or explanation of policies or procedures

Complaints Officer - an employee of RSPCA WA who has been appointed as the person to manage public complaints, in accordance with this procedure.

Responsible Manager - a manager within RSPCA WA who is responsible for a function of RSPCA WA which relates to the complaint.

5.0 PROCEDURE

The RSPCA WA Public Complaints Management Procedure focuses on the following:

- accurately collecting and recording complaints
- being open to complaints and always providing a response to the Complainant
- acknowledging receipt of the complaint to the Complainant
- assessing the complaint for validity and its potential impact
- allocating the complaint to the best person to deal with it



- resolving the complaint as soon as practically possible
- investigating complaints and making a decision on how to deal with it, in line with our organisational values
- providing information to the Complainant regarding our processes to manage complaints
- advising the complainant of the outcome of their complaint and justifications for any decisions made by the Society
- reviewing and analysing complaints to establish if there are any trends or obvious matters that could be changed to stop complaints occurring and improve customer service

5.1 Lodging a complaint

Immediate complaints, where a RSPCA WA representative is present

For immediate issues, where an employee of RSPCA WA is present and available, we encourage members of the public to raise their concerns directly with our staff.

If the issues cannot be resolved immediately through this discussion, the complainant is encouraged to complete and lodge a *Public Complaints Form* to our Complaints Officer (see *Appendix A*). Once a form has been lodged, the Complaints Officer will coordinate the steps contained in this procedure to work toward resolution and communicating an outcome to the Complainant.

Other complaints

For all other complaints, normally where access to a RSPCA WA representative is limited, we encourage the Complainant to complete our Public Complaints Form. Once completed, we request that the Complainant emails the form to: complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au or posts it to: The Complaints Officer, c/- RSPCA WA, PO Box 3147, Malaga, WA 6945.

If the Complainant is unable to access or complete the Public Complaint Form, we request that they contact our reception by telephone on (08) 9209 9300, where a form will be emailed or posted to the Complainant.

Regretfully we cannot guarantee investigations, formal responses and outcomes relating to verbal complaints. For this reason, if the Complainant expects a formal response, a Public Complaint Form should be completed.

5.2 Process for resolving a complaint

Complaints lodged with the Complaints Officer will be managed according to the following steps:

- a) The complaint will be receipted by the Complaints Officer to the Complainant within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint.
- b) The Complaints Officer will log the details of the complaint to the Society's *Complaints Register*. This register is confidential and is only accessible to the Complaints Officers and the CEO.
- c) In most cases, the Public Complaints Form is sent to the Responsible Manager to investigate.



Where the complaint may relate to the Responsible Manager, it will be elevated to the next level of management. In the case of Executive Management, the complaint will be sent to the CEO. In the case of the CEO, the complaint will be sent to the President.

The Responsible Manager will complete their investigation within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint, unless otherwise advised to the Complainant and the Complaints Officer. If the investigation is delayed, the Responsible Manager is required to provide reasonable justifications for the delay to both the Complainant and Complaints Officer.

- d) At the conclusion of the investigation, the outcomes of the investigation are documented on the Public Complaints Form. The Form and the investigation notes are returned to the Complaints Officer.
- e) The Complaints Officer is responsible for reviewing the investigation and the outcomes, ensuring that actions are consistent with the values of RSPCA WA. The Executive Manager will provide a formal response to the complaint, called the *closure letter*, which is sent to the Complainant within twenty (20 working days) by the Complaints Officer. A copy of the completed Public Complaints Form will be sent to the Complainant with the closure letter.

Where a complaint has not been resolved in the timeframes outlined in this procedure, or if the Complaints Officer is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved, the complaint will be immediately escalated to the CEO.

The Complaints Officer will log the actions taken and outcomes of each complaint and investigation on the Complaints Register.

- f) The Complaints Register is sent to and reviewed by the CEO or his appointed delegate on a regular basis. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the CEO, the CEO has the authority to reopen any investigations and appoint delegates as appropriate and necessary to manage the complaint. If the CEO elects, and after informing the Complainant in accordance with privacy legislation, external advice or assistance may be engaged by RSPCA WA.

Complaints which are determined by the Complaints Officer to be of a serious nature and may relate to the conduct of one or more of RSPCA WA's staff or volunteers, may be managed in accordance with RSPCA WA's staff and volunteer performance management policies and procedures. Any outcomes regarding disciplinary action of employees and volunteers, are managed with a high level of confidentiality and therefore details of outcomes affecting RSPCA WA representatives will not be disclosed to members of the public, including the Complainant.

5.3 Complaints not resolved to the satisfaction of Complainant

Where a complaint has been closed by the Complaints Officer and the Complainant has received a closure letter and a copy of the completed Public Complaints Form, but is not satisfied with the actions and outcomes taken by RSPCA WA, we encourage the Complainant to contact the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer is responsible for escalating the Complaint to the CEO.



If the Complainant is still not satisfied with the actions and outcome of their complaint following the review of the CEO, the Complaints Officer should be contacted again, whereupon the complaint will be escalated to the Board.

If the Complainant remains unsatisfied with RSPCA WA's actions and outcomes, we encourage the Complainant to lodge their concerns with the Department of Commerce - Consumer Protection. RSPCA WA is committed to working with relevant authorities to ensure that we have taken all required and appropriate steps to ensure that we are addressing any concerns raised by the public.

5.4 Management of misleading or vexatious claims

Misleading or vexatious claims are where a complaint is made and it is proven (as a result of an investigation) to be false and intentionally misleading.

Misleading and vexatious claims are taken very seriously by RSPCA WA. Where a complaint is found by RSPCA WA to be vexatious or intentionally misleading, relevant external authorities may be engaged by RSPCA WA to support the management of such claims.

5.5 Flowchart

A flowchart highlighting this procedure is at [Appendix B](#), for ease of reference.

END



COMPLAINANT DETAILS

Title

Miss
 Ms
 Mrs
 Mr
 Other

First name

Surname

OFFICE USE ONLY

Reference No.

Email address

Phone

NATURE OF COMPLAINT

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care | <input type="checkbox"/> Pound |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail & Society Stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog training | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspectorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Wills & bequests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>Please specify</i> _____ | | |

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

Date of incident

Person/s involved

Time of incident (approximately)

Provide a detailed description of the incident and preceding events (attach a separate sheet if more space is required)

DECLARATION

I acknowledge that I have been able to access a copy of the RSPCA WA 'Public Complaints Management Procedure'. I have read the procedure and understand that any information provided by me that is proven to be intentionally false or misleading may be reported by RSPCA WA to the relevant authorities. I declare that the information provided by me is accurate, based on my knowledge of the incident.

Name

Signature

Date

When complete please send this form to **RSPCA WA Complaints Officer** by:

POST PO Box 3147, Malaga WA 6945 **EMAIL** complaints.officer@rspcawa.asn.au **FAX** (08) 9248 3144

Please refer to clause 5.2 of the *Public Complaints Management Procedure* for information on the process to resolve a complaint.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date and time received by RSPCA WA

Reference No. *Please refer to complaint form*

Date received by Complaints officer

Date lodged in Complaints Register

Date receipt letter sent to Complainant

Date forwarded to Responsible Manager

RSPCA WA RESPONSIBLE MANAGER

Description of actions taken

Recommendation for resolution

RSPCA WA Responsible Manager's approval for closure of complaint

Name and position

Date

Signature

RSPCA WA COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Date actions lodged in Complaints Register

Date of final review

Date closure letter sent to Complainant

Where complaint cannot be closed or resolved,
date elevated to CEO / Board

RSPCA WA Complaints Officer's approval for closure of complaint

Name

Date

Signature

Appendix B: Public Complaints Management Procedure Flowchart

