

Complaints and allegations: Initial response process



Purpose

This process supports and is to be read in conjunction with the Complaints and allegations policy (POL-0003) & with the use of Tools TOO-0002 + TOO-0003.

When to follow this process

This process must be followed each time a complaint or allegation is received in relation to the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod by a person acting on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod.

Process for people who receive a complaint/ allegation and the complainant/victim is an adult:

1. Receive:

On receipt of an **oral** complaint/allegation which may be made in person or by telephone.

- 1.1 Follow the process recommended in the *Oral complaints/allegations response sheet (TOO-0002)*.
- 1.2 DO NOT ask any investigative questions of the person making the complaint/allegation or seek any additional information regarding the complaint/allegation other than the information volunteered.
- 1.3 If the person making the complaint volunteers information including their name, contact details, availability and brief details of the complaint/allegation, record all the information provided in the Complaints/allegations report – adult (TOO-0004)
- 1.4 **Record and refer:** Use the *Complaints/allegations quick referral guide (TOO-0003)* to discern the appropriate person or persons within Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod to notify regarding the complaint/allegation.
- 1.5 Notify the appropriate person or persons within the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod of the complaint/allegation by telephone and email. Attach the Complaints/allegations report – adult to your email and ensure you receive an email 'read receipt'. Save the receipt in an email folder.
- 1.6 Email a copy of the complaint/allegation and any Complaints/allegations report – adult to complaints@ucaqld.com.au.
- 1.7 **Recognise rights:** Keep all details of the complaint/allegation STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the Privacy policy (POL-0001).



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2. Receive:

On receipt of a **written** complaint/allegation (may be made in writing, whether by giving a document or by sending the writing by facsimile, email or another form of communication):

- 2.1 Record and refer: Use the Complaints/allegations quick referral guide (TOO-0003) to discern the appropriate person or persons within Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod to notify regarding the complaint/allegation.
- 2.2 Notify the appropriate person/s or persons of the complaint/allegation by email and telephone.
- 2.3 Forward the written Complaints/allegations report – adult to the appropriate person/s:
- 2.4 if received by email, forward by email;
- 2.5 if received in the post or by hand delivery, scan and email the written complaint to the appropriate person/s and also give that person (or one of them) the original written Complaints/allegations report – adult.
- 2.6 Email a copy of any written complaint/allegation and any Complaints/allegations report – adult to complaints@ucaqld.com.au.

Process for people who receive a complaint/ allegation and the complainant/victim is a child (a person under 18 years):

Follow the process outlined in Child Safe Church Responding to abuse and harm (PRO-0004). Prioritise the immediate safety of the child. In some cases the person or a ministry agent may need to call for emergency medical aid or call for assistance from the Queensland Police Service.

3. Process if neither the alleged perpetrator nor the alleged victim have any association with the Church:

The receiver of the complaint, either directly or through a delegate is to contact the person who made the complaint/allegation to discuss an appropriate response.

- 6.1 The person is to be asked how the Church can assist them.
- 6.2 Possible support options include the provision of telephone numbers and contact details of support services both within and outside the Church, and discussion of the requirement to report the allegations to relevant the police and/or statutory authorities.



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Dictionary

Each term used in this process has the same meaning as in the Complaints and allegations policy (POL-0003).

References and related documents

- Uniting Church in Australia Regulations – particularly Part 5 (Church Discipline)
- Uniting Church in Australia Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice
- Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod Child Safe Church policy and procedures
- Privacy policy (POL-0001)
- Complaints and allegations policy (POL-0003)
- Complaints and allegations Initial Response Report (TOO-0002)
- Complaints/allegations quick referral guide (TOO-0003)
- Child safe church- Responding to abuse and harm process (PRO-0004)(child)



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Document Review History

Version Number	Reviewed by	Endorsed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Review Date
1	Irene Waters People and Projects manager	Qld Synod Royal Commission Task Group	Gary Doyle General Secretary	02 June 2015	02 June 2017
	Complaints legal counsel	Presbytery ministers			
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