



## Complaints Process

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Central West LHIN

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Ontario

Local Health Integration  
Network

Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé



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## Purpose

The Central West LHIN is committed to an effective, person-centred complaints resolution process. This policy outlines the LHIN's approach for responding to, recording, resolving and monitoring complaints. **The LHIN will refer all complaints, where appropriate, about an HSP to the HSP.** All referrals will include a request that the LHIN be advised regarding how and when the complaint was resolved.

## Policy

- The Central West LHIN will have a process in place for responding to complaints received from the public (Appendix A).
- The Central West LHIN will have a review process in place to record, review and assess complaints made to it.
- This policy applies to complaints about service received from an HSP funded by the LHIN, and complaints about actions taken or not taken by the LHIN.
- Complaints about the actions or performance of the LHIN CEO will be referred to and addressed by the Board of Directors. The LHIN CEO and staff will resolve all other complaints without the necessity of referral to the Board of Directors.
- This policy applies to all staff of the Central West LHIN.
- This policy applies to telephone, email and online, written correspondence and in person forms of stakeholder communications.

## Commitment

The Central West LHIN will ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle public complaints professionally and efficiently. Central West LHIN staff will:

- Treat complainants in a polite and courteous manner.
- Respond to all complaints in a timely and efficient manner.
- Ascertain details necessary to understand the full nature of the complaint, and to ensure the complainant receives the service they expect.
- Attempt to resolve the matter at first point of contact.
- Complete and submit to the Director, Communications and Community Engagement accurate records of complaint using the *Complaint Intake Form* (Appendix B), so it can be investigated (if and as required) tracked and reported.



## Guiding Principles

The Central West LHIN is committed to the following a set of guiding principles as they relate to the complaints resolution process:

- **Visibility** | Information about ‘how and where’ to bring complaints forward will be made available to all members of the public and LHIN staff.
- **Accessibility** | Complainants can easily access the Central West LHIN to bring forward matters of inquiry and/or complaint.
- **Responsiveness** | All matters shall be acknowledged upon receipt and all efforts made to respond to matters in a timely manner, preferably within three business days.
- **Objectivity** | Each complaint will be addressed in an objective and unbiased manner.
- **Confidentiality** | Personally identifiable or health-related information should be available only where needed and only for the purposes of addressing the complainant. Complainant information will be protected from disclosure unless consent is provided.
- **Person Centered Approach** | A person-centered approach will be adopted. The rights of complainants to disagree will be respected and supported by providing and promoting an accessible, timely, fair and friendly process for the intake and management of all matters brought forward.
- **Accountability** | The Central West LHIN will ensure that systematic assessment and reporting of complaints is completed on a regular basis.
- **Continuous Improvement** | Analysis of complaints will help drive improvement of the Central West LHIN’s local health care system.

## Privacy/Confidentiality

While in the course of obtaining information from the complainant, personally identifiable or health-related information may be disclosed.

**Personally identifiable or health-related information should be recorded only where needed and only for the purposes of communicating with the complainant. When completing the “Complaint Intake Form”, health related information should be included in general terms so as not to identify the personal information of the complainant.**

Complainant information will be protected from disclosure unless consent is provided.

## Procedure

The Central West LHIN complaint resolution process is a “two way” process designed to provide complainants with a means of bringing matters forward while, at the same time, providing LHIN staff with a structured process by which to respond and resolve such matters in a courteous, timely, effective and appropriate manner.



## Responsibilities

### CEO

The Central West LHIN CEO will ensure the LHIN has a process in place for the investigation, tracking and reporting of complaints.

### Director, Communications and Community Engagement

Delegated by the CEO, is responsible for the operational implementation/application of this policy including...

- Review and resolve all complaints received by the Central West LHIN.
- Bring forward (where/when required) contentious and/or unresolved complaints in consultation with the LHIN's Senior Executive Team.
- Draft and submit for review/approval (where/when required) all LHIN written responses to complaints.
- Conduct a monthly review of complaints and identify any trending, systematic and/or emerging issues that can assist in the overall improvement of the local health care system, and provide a summary, quarterly, of findings in the Communications and Community Engagement Report submitted for inclusion in the monthly CEO Report to the Board of Directors.
- Ensure LHIN staff are informed of the complaint process including use of the Complaint Intake Form.
- Ensure the integrity of information being entered into Complaint Intake Forms by LHIN staff.
- Establish and maintain a list of LHIN-funded HSP staff responsible for handling complaints.

### Timeline and Response

All complaints shall be acknowledged upon receipt and the Central West LHIN shall make every effort to respond in a timely manner within three business days of receipt.

- Where the process will require more than 48hrs, communication shall be made so as to keep the complainant informed of ongoing efforts to appropriately refer and/or resolve the matter.
- The LHIN shall respond, unless otherwise indicated, to all inquiries and complaints in the manner by which the complaint was received.

### Media

All media inquiries shall be directed to the Director, Communications and Community Engagement.



## Intake/Assessment

- All complaints received through individual or general email (centralwest@lhins.on.ca), from online at www.centralwest LHIN.on.ca, written correspondence or voicemail shall be forwarded to the Director, Communications and Community engagement for action.
- Should a member of the Central West LHIN staff receive a live complaint, either on the phone or in person, they shall make every effort to:
  - Treat the stakeholder in a polite and courteous manner.
  - Acknowledge the matter with a sense of understanding and empathy.
  - Obtain as much information as possible: name, contact information, preferred method of contact, matter at hand and desired outcome.
  - Attempt to resolve the matter as first point of contact (this may involve transferring the complainant to a more appropriate staff member or to an HSP).
  - Assure the complainant that the matter will be addressed and that, if further action is required, someone will be in contact with them to further address the matter.
  - Complete and submit a Complaint Intake Form, via email, to the Director, Communications and Community Engagement such that the matter can be investigated, tracked and reported and resolved.
- Upon receipt, the Director, Communications and Community Engagement (or designate) shall assign the complaint an Issue #, enter the complaint into the Complaint Tracking Log and commence an investigation into the matter by identifying the most appropriate subject matter expert and/or approach.
- Complaints of the following nature shall be made known to the LHIN Senior Executive Team:
  - Serious in nature
  - Involve potential litigation
  - Involve potential investigation by a professional college
  - Involve potential investigation by police
  - Involve an ethical dilemma
  - Involve potential media involvement.

## Investigation/Approach

Staff shall not attempt to provide answers to inquiries/complaints for which they are not certain of the answer. In such instance, staff are asked to gather as much information as possible, complete a Complaint Intake Form and submit the form to the Director, Communications and Community Engagement for action.

Similarly, all inquiries and/or complaints received by email, from online, through written correspondence or left on voice mail shall be forwarded to the Director, Communications and Community Engagement for subsequent action.



## Response/Escalation

Once an investigation has revealed a complete understanding of the matter, desired outcomes and those factors which will contribute to a meaningful and appropriate response, the Director, Communications and Community Engagement (or designate) shall draft a response in collaboration with any subject matter experts. The Director, Communications and Community Engagement will circulate, for review and approval, all responses prior to responding to any complainant.

Responses shall be shared with HSPs on an as needed basis.

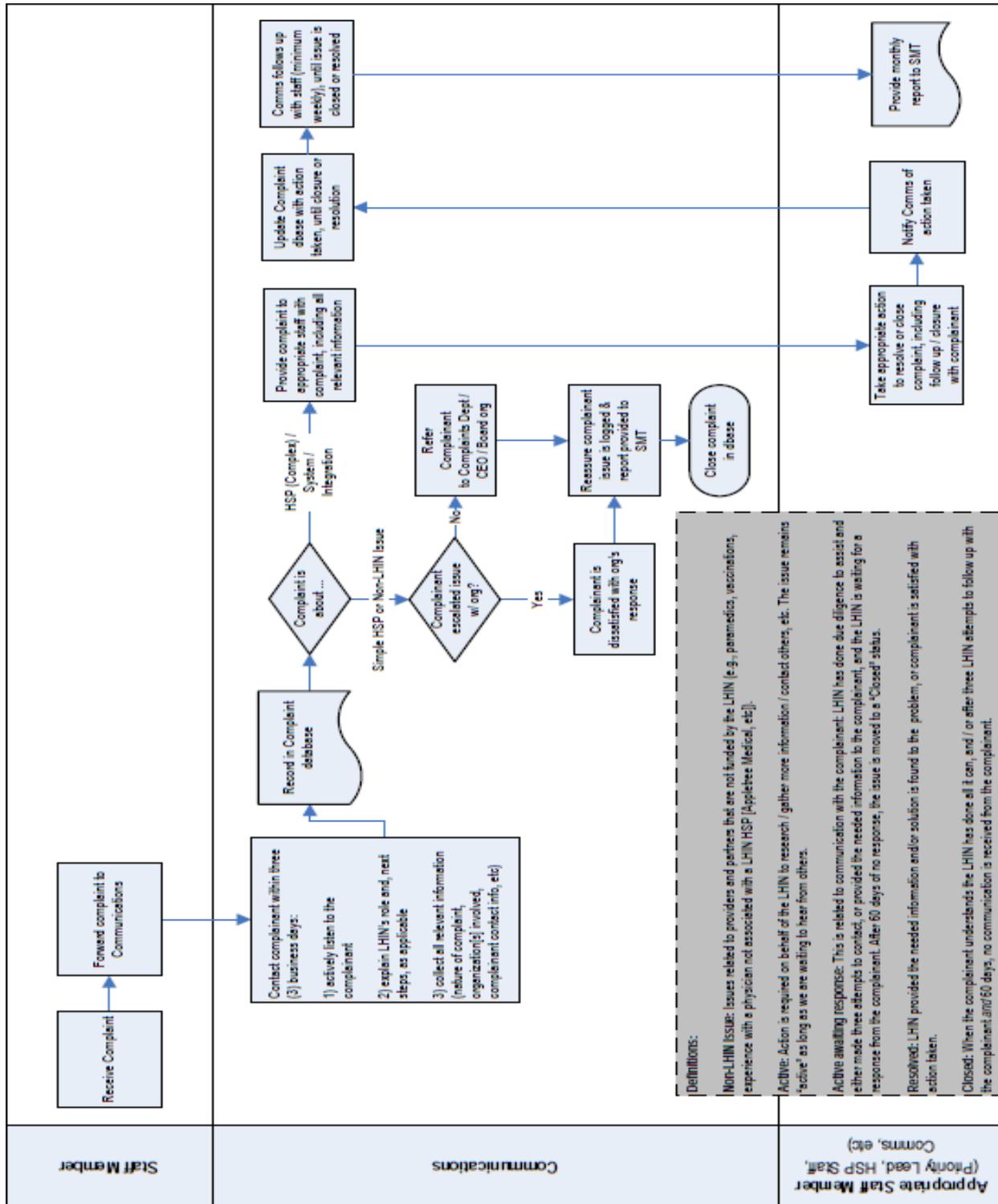
Responses shall be provided to the complainant in the manner by which the complaint was received. It may be that the subject matter expert is the best person to offer a verbal reply to a complainant. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, all written and verbal responses will be carried out by the Director, Communications and Community Engagement.

## Tracking and System Improvement

The Director, Communications and Community Engagement will assess, on a quarterly basis, all complaints entered into the Complaints Tracking Log, to identify any trending, systematic and/or emerging issues that can assist in the overall improvement of the local health care system. Findings will be included in the Communications and Community Engagement Report submitted for inclusion quarterly in the monthly CEO Report to the Board of Directors.



## Appendix A – Process Flow Diagram





## Appendix B – Complaint Intake Form

**Central West LHIN**  
**RLISS du Centre-Ouest**

CONFIDENTIAL

Issue #:	Open Date:	Opened by:	
Title:	Resolve Date:	Permission to Share:	
Status:	Open/In Progress/Closed/referred to HSP/Status Date		Assigned to:

**Complainant Information**

Name:	Email:	
Phone:	Address:	
Community of Care	Brampton, Caledon, Dufferin, Malton, north Etobicoke or west Woodbridge	
Method of receipt :	Phone/Email/Letter/In person	
Method of correspondence:	Phone/Email/Letter/In person	

**Complaint Information**

(Please include nature of complaint, organizations and persons involved and what resolution looks like for the complainant.)

**Next Steps/Resolution**

**Ontario**  
Local Health Integration  
Network  
Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé

Complaint Intake – Central West LHIN