

Alternative Response

What is an alternative response?

An alternative response is a complaint management process used by the department where the conduct of a full [investigation](#) or [Internal Review](#) may not be required.

An alternative response is flexible and includes a facilitated discussion; face to face meeting; or provision of a written and or verbal explanation.

Use of an alternative response will be appropriate in circumstances where a timely outcome to the complaint is required, or will better suit and achieve the outcomes you have requested.

What are the different types of alternative response?

The types of alternative responses used will depend on the nature of the complaint you are raising and the outcomes you have requested. The following are possible ways an alternative response may be conducted:

- *Telephone call:* if your complaint is fairly straightforward, it may be easier to resolve this through a telephone call to you and or other relevant persons where required. Written follow up will be sent to you to summarise actions and resolution.
- *Face to face meeting:* similar to mediation or a facilitated discussion, this involves all parties willing to come together to discuss and understand your complaint, and achieve agreed resolution. Typically a meeting or series of meetings will be organised and you can bring a support person or advocate.

- *Written response:* this method is appropriate in circumstances where resolution of your complaint would be best achieved through providing you with written information and other relevant facts that help to clarify the matter at hand. A written response can be a stand-alone process or could follow on from a telephone call or meeting. This method can be a good option if the information we need to provide you with is more complicated or extensive.

How long will an alternative response take?

Depending on the complexity of a complaint (please refer to [Making a Complaint](#) factsheet for more information on complexity), an alternative response can take 15 business days, 45 business days or up to 6 months.

These timeframes will allow the department necessary time to gather all relevant information and provide you with a detailed response.

How will I know what is happening?

The contact details for your complaints officer will be provided to you at the commencement of your complaint.

Your complaints officer will provide you with regular updates, including any delays that may impact on timeframes. How often you are updated and how you will receive this update will be negotiated with you at the commencement of your complaint.

If you have any questions regarding the progress of your complaint, you can always contact your complaints officer.

What is expected of me in the conduct of an alternative response?

You can expect that the department will be prompt, fair and professional in its management of your complaint.

The department expects that you will provide us with necessary assistance and cooperation. This includes making yourself available and or contactable where appropriate; and providing necessary information when it is requested of you.

The department also expects that you will engage with the complaints officer in a courteous and respectful manner.

What can I do if I am dissatisfied at the conclusion of the alternative response?

If you remain dissatisfied at the conclusion of the alternative response, you have the right to seek an Internal Review by the department.

The Complaints and Investigations Unit is responsible for the conduct of the Internal Review.

An Internal Review is a systemic way of looking back on how a complaint management process was undertaken.

A request for an Internal Review must be made within 12 months after you have been provided with an outcome of the alternative response.

You can contact the Complaints and Investigations Unit to request an Internal Review by email to feedback@communities.qld.gov.au or by phone on 1800 491 467.

Do you need more information?

For more information about how the department manages complaints, you can contact the department's Complaints and Investigations Unit on:

- Email: feedback@communities.qld.gov.au
- Phone: 1800 491 467
- Online feedback form: <https://www.qld.gov.au/contact-us/complaints/>
- Post: Complaints Unit, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, GPO Box 806, Brisbane Q 4001

Please also see other fact sheets available: Making a complaint; Public Interest Disclosures; Complaints Investigation; Internal Review.

Other resources include: Complaints Management Policy; Complaints Management Procedure.