



POLICY 34

Prisoner, Offender and Public Complaints Management

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Category: Corporate Services

Version: 01 **Approval Date:** 08/04/2013 **Review Date:** 08/04/2016

Directorate/Unit: Governance & Executive Support **Document Sponsor:** Director, Governance & Executive Support

Application: All of DCS **Classification:** Public Document

Authority: [Public Sector Act 2009](#)

Policy Statement	This Policy is designed to guide a transparent, accessible, efficient, fair and accountable complaints handling system across the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) for prisoners, offenders and members of the public.
Relationship to DCS Strategic Plan	This Policy complements the values of the DCS Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014 and the DCS Business Plan 2012 -2013 – commitment to, ‘Ensure the services we deliver are efficient, effective and accountable’.
Rationale	DCS has a strategic objective to ensure we exhibit the highest standards of ethics and behaviours. This policy will facilitate opportunity across DCS for continuous improvement and a high standard of service delivery.
Scope	<p>This policy applies to employees within the South Australian Department for Correctional Services and all staff employed by engaged service providers. The policy relates to complaints regarding services and/or actions provided by DCS to prisoners, offenders and members of the public.</p> <p>This policy does not apply to the following types of complaints:</p> <p>(a) complaints made about the alleged conduct of staff that if sustained could constitute misconduct (where these types of matters are covered by the Policy (Employee Conduct) and are to be managed in accordance with relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).</p> <p>(b) complaints about the conduct or performance of staff that would otherwise be dealt with as an issue relating to performance management (where these matters are also to be managed according to relevant procedures already in place within the Agency and/or engaged service provider);</p> <p>(c) matters where there are other rights of review or appeal which are required to be managed in accordance with other established legislative or contractual requirements, procedures, or processes (e.g. Breaches of prison regulations).</p>

Guiding principles we will adopt for the management of complaints:

- be courteous, protect the complainant’s confidentiality and privacy and offer whatever assistance needed to lodge a complaint;
- recognise the right to be heard without fear or retribution;
- promptly acknowledge and be fair, objective and professional in the assessment of complaints;
- endeavour to resolve matters to the satisfaction of all parties within the constraints of legislative and policy requirements;
- allocate resources to support the complaints handling process and ensure all documentation is stored within the departmental recordkeeping system (in electronic or paper format, as appropriate);
- use customer feedback to continually improve DCS services and/or actions; and
- advise any complainant who remains dissatisfied with the outcome or management of their complaint about their rights to review process as described in the relevant Standard Operating Procedure, including access to the Ombudsman.

The Department will adopt various strategies to ensure that this Policy is embedded into complaints management practice across all relevant sites. Strategies include:

Information Accessibility

All relevant persons will, without prejudice, be provided with clear, simple, information regarding how to make a complaint and where to direct different types of complaints.

The Department will ensure that information about making a complaint is prepared in formats which enable all persons to understand the complaints systems. The information will be provided freely and proactively to enable a timely, effective complaint mechanism.

The Department will continually monitor and investigate the potential for trialling systems to improve information, support and advice to prisoners, offenders and members of the public in accordance with the Department’s Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014.

Efficiency

The Department will periodically review the operational focus, resourcing and training available for the complaint process to build a more proactive and consistent service to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a timely, efficient manner. Training of DCS staff on complaints procedures and systems will be delivered to relevant staff on a continual needs basis.

Any Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or related documents relevant to the complaints process will be reviewed in accordance with

<i>WARNING – UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED - THE CURRENT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS KEPT ON THE DCS INTRANET</i>		
File: CEN/12/1584	Name: Policy 34 - Prisoner, Offender and Public Complaints Management	Version: 01
Created: 05/11/2012	Modified: DD/MM/YYYY	Approved: 08/04/2013

[SOP 063 – Management of Policies and Procedures](#) and [Guideline 01 - Management of Policies and Procedures](#). A SOP will underpin a comprehensive review of all relevant Local Operating Procedures (LOPs) and/or Local Interpretation Statements (LISs) to establish consistency and minimum standards.

Fairness

The Department will ensure that any complaints SOPs and any associated LOPs and/or LISs contain relevant impartiality, confidentiality and transparency clauses. Any complaint progress information and outcomes will be fully communicated to complainants.

Accountability, Oversight and Governance Standards

Complaints data collection, analysis and reports will be presented to relevant Directors/Managers on a regular basis and at Quarterly Executive meetings for review. Complaints data will be included in the DCS Annual Report.

The Department, where applicable, will maintain a reporting system directly to the Ombudsman on matters referred and will ensure follow-up and trend monitoring of relevant complaints.

Confidentiality

Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant should be available where needed, however, only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within DCS and will be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer or complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.

Performance Indicators

Complaints dealt with and resolved within appropriate timelines (Internal Audit). Complaints data discussed and compared with Ombudsman SA complaints.

Approved

.....
David Brown
Chief Executive
08/04/2013

<i>WARNING – UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED - THE CURRENT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS KEPT ON THE DCS INTRANET</i>		
File: CEN/12/1584	Name: Policy 34 - Prisoner, Offender and Public Complaints Management	Version: 01
Created: 05/11/2012	Modified: DD/MM/YYYY	Approved: 08/04/2013



ences

[Australian Standard – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations \(ISO 10002:2004, MOD\)](#)
[Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia \(Revised 2004\)](#)
[Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector](#)

Legislation

[Public Sector Act 2009](#)
[Correctional Services Act 1982](#)

DCS Related Policies and Procedures

[Policy 00 - Employee Conduct](#)
[Policy 08 – Humane Care](#)
[Policy 15 – Risk Management](#)
[Policy 31 Records Management](#)

[SOP 063 – Management of Policies and Procedures](#)

[Guideline 01 - Management of Policies and Procedures](#)

Forms/Templates

[N/A](#)

Glossary

(Define words and acronyms that may not be commonly known to the reader)

- Offender** **Means a person referred to DCS by a Court, Parole Board or the Prisoner Assessment Committee for case management**

- Prisoner** **Means a person committed to a correctional institution pursuant to an order of a court or a warrant of commitment**

<i>WARNING – UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED - THE CURRENT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS KEPT ON THE DCS INTRANET</i>		
File: CEN/12/1584	Name: Policy 34 - Prisoner, Offender and Public Complaints Management	Version: 01
Created: 05/11/2012	Modified: DD/MM/YYYY	Approved: 08/04/2013