

Complaints Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

UHC – Hub of Opportunities (UHC) will provide a clear and accessible process for individuals to raise inquiries, concerns, and complaints, ensuring that all issues are addressed fairly, transparently, and in a manner consistent with UHC’s mission, vision, and values. This approach fosters trust and accountability while protecting individuals from retaliation or reprisal.

UHC will ensure that the complaints process is accessible, confidential where possible, and communicated to clients, volunteers, students, staff, donors, and members of the public.

2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of UHC to enable all clients, volunteers, staff and members of the public to raise inquiries, concerns, and complaints without fear of reprisal. UHC is committed to addressing complaints in a timely, consistent, and informed manner, ensuring thorough investigations and resolutions. This policy ensures UHC's responses are aligned with its mission, vision, and values and promotes a culture of accountability and respect.

UHC will document, track, and review complaints to identify trends, improve services, and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Incidents - Any occurrence, condition, or situation arising in the course of work that resulted in or could have resulted in injuries, illnesses, damage to health, or fatalities.
- 3.2 Complaints - Any statements, whether written or verbal, indicating Dissatisfaction with services or products received from UHC, or that such services or products are considered unacceptable.
- 3.3 Concern -An issue or situation that causes worry about an individual or UHC operations or services.
- 3.4 Inquiry - A request for information, clarification, or assistance that does not express dissatisfaction.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all Board members, employees, and volunteers to report concerns about all suspected violations of UHC’s policies or actions that in some way reduce the dignity of clients we support.
- 4.2 The CEO and/or designate will respond to inquiries, concerns and/or complaints appropriately, resolving complaints in a timely, fair, respectful and consistent manner.

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4.3 The Board of Directors is responsible for oversight of the complaints process and for addressing complaints related to the CEO.

5.0 RETALIATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Any person who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith will be subject to discipline, up to and possibly including termination of employment or volunteer position.

6.0 UNFOUNDED AND MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offence.

7.0 RISK LEVEL OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints will be addressed based on their potential impact and categorized as low, medium, or high risk to determine the appropriate response and level of oversight.

7.1 High Risk

- Impacts the reputation of UHC, the provincial association (i.e. Link2Feed) or the affiliate food bank.
- Impacts the reputation of a donor.
- Impacts the safety of the public, an employee or a volunteer at UHC.
- Unsafe or high-risk food handling practices
- Breach of UHC policies or ethical standards.
- Suggestions of legal/financial wrongdoing.
- A threat to involve the media.

7.2 Medium Risk

- Issues related to our communications (advertising, programs, etc.)
- Quality of service provided by UHC and/or food bank staff/volunteers.
- Issues related to how donated funds are invested.

7.3 Low Risk

- General comments/complaints about UHC, fundraising, communications etc.

8.0 PROCEDURE

8.1 An individual may appeal a decision or outcome using the complaints process outlined below. If a complaint involves suspected misconduct, fraud, financial impropriety, or legal violations, it will be handled in accordance with the Whistleblower Policy.

8.2 Internally:

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- UHC will maintain and monitor a complaint box accessible to employees, volunteers and clients. The CEO and/or designate will monitor this box.
- Complaints may also be submitted verbally, by e-mail, by telephone, or in writing. Staff or volunteers receiving a verbal complaint will document the complaint using the incident report form.
- All complaints will be directed to the CEO or designate for initial review, except where the complaint involves the CEO.
- If not satisfied with the designator's response, the complaint should be directed to the CEO, and if not satisfied with the CEO's response, the complaint may be taken to the Chair of the Board of Directors, who will involve other members as appropriate.
- If the complaint originates from the CEO, it will be addressed by the Chair or the Vice Chair as appropriate.
- Anonymous complaints may be accepted; however, investigation may be limited if insufficient information is provided.
- Volunteers and/or staff will use the Incident Report Form for any Complaints.
- All complaints must be copied to the CEO.
- The CEO will report a summary of complaints to the board as part of their monthly reporting obligations.
- All complaints made to the Chair will be documented and reported to the Board.
- Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.
- The CEO/designate or Board Member who received the complaint will notify the complainant, acknowledging receipt of the complaint. Acknowledgement will occur within three business days.
- The initial response to a complaint will occur as soon as possible and not more than 3 days from receiving the complaint.
- The CEO/designate or Board Member may contact the complainant to clarify the complaint.
- Every effort will be made to review and respond to a complaint within 10 business days.
- If additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the delay and provided with an updated timeline.
- All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if warranted by the investigation.
- Actions taken should be recorded and dated, and the documentation should be filed with the accompanying complaint and any supporting documents.

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- Complaint records will be retained in accordance with UHC's records retention and privacy practices.
- All complaints will be followed up with the complainants, explaining the actions taken and outcomes.
- The CEO/designate or Board Member will correct any inaccurate personal information and/or bring forward recommendations for amendment to policies and procedures based on the complaint outcome.
- Debrief of medium and high-risk complaints will be reviewed to identify if there is a required change in UHC's policies, processes, programs, etc., to reduce the opportunity of a similar situation or complaint.

9.0 Further Dispute Resolution Process

9.1 Via Feed Ontario

- Individuals can verbally communicate the complaint to the Member Relations Co-coordinator or the Executive Director of Feed Ontario.
- UHC must be given 10 (ten) business days' notice by Feed Ontario that the matter is being brought forward for discussion.

9.2 Via Food Bank Canada's Customer Experience Hotline

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, an issue can be escalated to Food Bank Canada's Customer Experience Hotline (refer to "*Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline Overview*"). The appointed person at Food Banks Canada will consider whether or not due process was followed and if the complaint warrants further response. This will not necessarily change the decision or final outcome. If due process was not followed, the outcome may be changed.

10.0 PUBLIC POSTING AND ACCESSIBILITY

10.1 UHC will ensure that its Complaints Policy and Procedures are publicly accessible to clients and external stakeholders. These materials will be made available:

- On UHC's website; and/or
- In printed form at UHC's service location(s), in an area visible and accessible to clients.

10.2 Food Banks Canada's Customer Experience Hotline information will be publicly posted:

- At UHC's service location(s) in a visible and accessible location; and/or
- On UHC's website, alongside the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

10.3 UHC will review publicly posted complaints information periodically to ensure it remains accurate, visible, and accessible

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11.0 REFERENCES

11.1 Supporting Documents

- Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline Overview
- Incident Report

11.2 Cross-Reference Board Policies

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Conflict Resolution
- Whistleblower Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors: Alta Keenly
Date: March 17/2026