This flowchart shows how the four-tiered approach to complaint handling can work in practice.

**FRONTLINE RESOLUTION**

- Acknowledge a complaint within 3 days of receipt
- Assess the complaint and determine how it should be dealt with
- Are the issues raised...

  - **Complex, serious or systemic**
    - Allocate the matter to the relevant Departmental Manager for investigation and advise the complainant of the process
    - Obtain relevant evidence and maintain a complete record of the investigation
    - Make an *objective* and *fair* decision on the weight of the evidence available
    - Prepare a report/outcome letter setting out the steps taken and the reasons for the decision
    - Where the investigation identifies an error, take appropriate remedial action
    - Resolve the matter and advise the complainant of the outcome. Is the complainant still aggrieved?
    - NO: Record and close the matter
    - YES: Consider whether an internal review is appropriate
      - If appropriate, allocate the matter to the relevant Director or CEO for internal review and advise the complainant of the process
      - Review the complaint process to date and make an *objective* and *fair* decision on the weight of the evidence available to either confirm, vary or reverse the outcome, as appropriate
      - Advise the complainant of the internal review outcome and any avenues of external review
      - Record and close the matter

  - **Unlikely to be easily resolved**
    - Resolve the matter and advise the complainant of the outcome. Is the complainant still aggrieved?
    - NO: Record and close the matter
    - YES: Consider whether an internal review is appropriate
      - If appropriate, allocate the matter to the relevant Director or CEO for internal review and advise the complainant of the process
      - Review the complaint process to date and make an *objective* and *fair* decision on the weight of the evidence available to either confirm, vary or reverse the outcome, as appropriate
      - Advise the complainant of the internal review outcome and any avenues of external review
      - Record and close the matter

  - **Easily resolved**
    - Resolve the matter and advise the complainant of the outcome. Is the complainant still aggrieved?
    - NO: Record and close the matter
    - YES: Consider whether an internal review is appropriate
      - If appropriate, allocate the matter to the relevant Director or CEO for internal review and advise the complainant of the process
      - Review the complaint process to date and make an *objective* and *fair* decision on the weight of the evidence available to either confirm, vary or reverse the outcome, as appropriate
      - Advise the complainant of the internal review outcome and any avenues of external review
      - Record and close the matter

**INVESTIGATION**

- Complainants should be advised of their right to complain to the Victorian Ombudsman

**EXTERNAL REVIEW**

- The Victorian Ombudsman can receive complaints about the administrative actions of state government agencies and councils

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**NOTE:** All details of the complaint and action taken to resolve it must be entered onto Council’s customer request system.