

Complaints, comments, and suggestions Procedure

Previous update: January 2022

Current update: October 2024

Next update due: October 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.2 Upmo is committed to providing high quality services to students, and to treating everyone whom we come in contact with well, and fairly, at all times.
- 1.2 If you feel that that has not happened, you have the right to make a complaint. We welcome complaints, suggestions, and comments as they offer us a chance to improve services. Your complaint or suggestion may well improve things for everyone. And if we are doing something right, it's good to know that too!

2. How to make a comment or suggestion

- 2.1 If you want to make a comment or give us a suggestion about a service you can tell your keyworker or case manager (if you're a student), or the manager for that service. If the suggestion is about anything else, please contact either the Communications Officer or the Head of Operations, who will know the best person for you to take your idea to.

3. Making complaints

- 3.1 Where there is a complaint, Upmo wants to find out what has happened and to put right any mistakes we might have made as quickly as possible.
- 3.2 Upmo recognises that making a complaint can be difficult for some people, and we will always investigate and deal with complaints in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- 3.3 You can make an anonymous complaint, but please remember if you do, we will not be able to give you any feedback and might not be able to investigate properly as it will be hard for us to get enough information.
- 3.4 You can also use someone to advocate for you, if you wish, just let us know who you would like to help you.
- 3.5 If you want to make a complaint, you can use our complaints form which might help make it easier for you to describe your complaint. We would prefer you to use this form if possible as it asks for all the information we need to properly investigate your complaint. However, we are aware that this might be difficult for some people, and you can tell us about your suggestion, comment or complaint by phone, email or by letter if that works better for you.
- 3.6 We will always take steps to make things better, and where possible we would prefer to improve things rather than being punitive as to how we deal with things.

4. What is a complaint?

- 4.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with something that has happened (or maybe hasn't happened but should have!)

5. How to make a Complaint

- 5.1 There are four levels of complaint:
 - Informal
 - Formal
 - Appeal
 - Complaint to an organisation outside of Upmo

6. What happens with different levels of complaints

6.1 Informal

- You can approach the person whose action you are not happy with, or their manager if you are not comfortable to talk to the person directly. They may be able to deal with the complaint on the spot. The person you've mentioned it to must make a record of what you have said, and what they did, and whether you're happy with that, then they must send that record to a senior manager to review.

6.2 Formal complaints

- If you do not feel that your concern has been addressed, you can make a formal complaint
- You should contact the manager of the service you are not happy with and say you want to make a formal complaint. You will need to give a clear explanation about what happened, and it needs to be written down by yourself, or someone who is helping you to make the complaint, such as a friend or advocacy worker, or it can be recorded. You will also need to give your contact details so that they can follow this up with you.
- The manager will come back to you to say that they have received the complaint within 48 hours.
- The manager will then investigate, ensuring that everyone gets a chance to record their side of what happened.
- The person who is investigating will come back to you with a reply and suggestion how to resolve the complaint within 2 weeks, unless there is a reason why the complaint cannot be investigated (e.g. the person being complained about may be on holiday). If this is the case, the person investigating your complaint will contact you and tell you a new timescale and will then get back to you with a reply within the new date given.
- If an Upmo staff member or volunteer is the subject of the complaint, they have the right to ask for support from a staff representative or non-legal companion.
- The investigation will identify the events and issues leading up to and including the circumstances of the complaint and this will be compiled into a written report. This will be kept on an electronic file, along with all other written records and correspondence relating to the investigation.

6.3 Appeal

- If you are not happy with the response to the complaint, you can appeal in writing, (or other means of communication e.g. tape recording for people who cannot read or write) stating reasons. Your complaint will be dealt with by senior managers (or Board members) who are senior to the manager who previously investigated your complaint - they are the called investigating 'panel'.
- The panel will meet with you and examine the appeal within 10 working days.
- As before, students may have help from a friend, family member or advocacy worker to take the complaint, and any staff member being investigated may have help from a friend or non-legal representative.
- The panel will consider any evidence provided, and any concerns about how the matter has been dealt with and may call witnesses to provide evidence. If this means it takes longer to investigate, you will be told this and how long it is expected to take.
- The panel will decide whether the response was appropriate and may make recommendations for further action if necessary. The panel will tell you of their decision in writing within five working days of the meeting and their decision will be final. Upmo will not carry out any more investigation into the matter.

6.4 Complaining outside of Upmo

- If you are unhappy with the final response, there are organisations outside of Upmo whom you can ask to investigate further.
- **For people who live in, or whose service is funded by East Lothian:**
East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership – Duty social work team - Tel: 01875 824090
- **For people who live in, or whose service is funded by Mid Lothian:**
Midlothian Social Work Department, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith, EH22 3AA
Tel: 0131 270 7500

- **For people who live in, or whose service is funded by City of Edinburgh Council:**
Edinburgh Social Work Advice and Complaints service, 1.7 Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG Tel: 0131 553 8395,
Email: socialwork.complaints@edinburgh.gov.uk
- **And for anyone:**
Care Inspectorate, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive
Dundee, DD1 4NY Tel: 01382 207 100, Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot
- If your complaint is about the way a staff member who works in the services has behaved, you can also complain to the SSSC. You can find the right part of their system if you go onto the website www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practice-/raising-a-concern.

Complaints Form

Date of complaint:	
Nature of complaint:	
Details of person making the complaint (i.e. name and contact details)	
Please tell us what happened	
Which part of what happened are you complaining about?	
What would you like us to do, if our investigation finds that the complaint is correct?	