INVESTIGATION FOR EARLY RESOLUTION

Does the information in the complaint indicate a potential for early resolution?
- Complaint appears quick and easy to resolve
- Low number of documents
- Issue/s not complex

NO → Commence standard investigation process

YES ↓

Determine the issue/s for investigation
- Frame issue/s into allegations of defective administration that can be proved or disproved

Determine what outcome/s the complainant is seeking
- May be implied in the substance of the complaint

↔ **Contact complainant**
- Clarify issue/s of complaint
- Clarify outcome/s sought
- Advise of our process
- Advise what issue/s will be investigated

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Determine what information is needed to resolve the complaint
- Eg. verbal advice; copy of relevant documentation

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Consider whether early resolution appropriate?
- Limited material required
- No complex systemic issues

NO → Commence standard investigation process

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Gather Information from the agency
- Request documentation if relevant

Determine the agency's view
- Does the agency consider there has been defective administration?
- If so, has the agency already taken action to resolve the complaint?
- If no action already taken, what action does the agency propose to take to resolve the complaint – explore outcomes if appropriate

↔ **Contact agency**
- Usually by phone or email
- Speak with contact officer or senior officer
- Explain the issue/s being investigated
- Clarify the agency's understanding of the matter

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Analyse information and evidence
- Gather further information from the agency or the complainant if necessary

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Is the complaint resolved?
- The complainant is satisfied that the matter is resolved or the outcomes sought by the complainant have been achieved
- The Ombudsman is satisfied that there was no defective administration or that the agency has taken reasonable action to resolve the complaint

NO → Discontinue investigation

NO → Proceed with standard investigation process

YES ↓

Advise complainant and public authority of outcome
- Send final letter to complainant
- Advise agency of outcome by telephone, email or letter

↔ Consider own motion investigation for systemic issues

This flowchart should be read in conjunction with the Investigation of Complaints flowchart