



COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCESS

PURPOSE

The intent of this policy is to ensure that concerns people may have with CLBC are dealt with in a fair and timely manner. It is also to create an environment where staff is supported in making decisions that meet the needs of people being supported by CLBC.

Complaints can be initiated when an individual or family is dissatisfied with a service provided by CLBC or disagrees with a decision made by a CLBC staff member. Individuals may make a complaint if they believe they have not been treated fairly or respectfully.

Individuals or families who have complaints related to contracted service providers are encouraged to discuss these directly with the service providers. Each contractor must have a system for responding to complaints. Where an individual or family is reluctant to go directly to a service provider with a complaint, they can discuss it with CLBC staff or process a CLBC complaint.

OVERVIEW

The policy has four internal steps starting with the individual and staff involved and moving to the manager, vice presidents and CEO. At each step the process is documented and if unresolved moved to the next step outlining the current status of the complaint.

At the end of the internal process, unresolved issues can continue to be taken to the Advocate for Service Quality, the Provincial Ombudsman, the Officer for Children and Youth, the Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian.

When managers receive a complaint, their role is to ensure that the views of the person making a complaint are fully heard and wherever possible an acceptable resolution is found for the individual and CLBC. The complaint policy includes guiding principles and quality assurance processes.

HOW MIGHT CLBC RESPOND AFTER REVIEWING A COMPLAINT?

- an explanation
- provision of a service;
- a change of the initial decision;
- confirmation of the original decision;
- additional training for staff;
- a change in operational practice to try to prevent a similar event from occurring; and
- in some cases, a change in policy or practice.

STEP 1: Discuss the issue with the staff person

CLBC staff is expected to resolve complaints with individuals. Individuals are encouraged to discuss concerns with the staff person they dealt with.

If the issue cannot be resolved the staff will:

- document the issues and proposed resolution and forward the complaint to the Manager or Designate.

STEP 2: Manager Review

The Manager receives a summary from both the staff and individual, of agreed points, unresolved issues and proposed resolution. In most situations the staff person will continue to be involved in the resolution process.

The Manager or Designate will:

- review the complaint, the process followed, and the decision of the staff person;
- provide advice and options if possible;
- contact the person making the complaint within 10 working days to discuss the issues and to develop a plan to address them;
- document the review and efforts to reach a solution;
- communicate with the individual, by telephone and in writing if requested advising of decisions and reasons;
- determine if the individual is satisfied with the decision.
 - When people are satisfied, ensure the individual and staff discuss future plans and any new issues which might have arisen during the manager's involvement.
- Unresolved complaints will be moved to Step 3 for Vice Presidents review. The manager will briefly outline in writing the outcome of their review highlighting the resolved issues or work underway to achieve resolution, and those outstanding. The letter will be forwarded to the Vice President with a copy to the person making the complaint.

STEP 3: Vice Presidents Review

Unresolved complaints after Step 2 will be sent to the appropriate Vice-President.

The V-P will:

- review background material and provide specific advice or direction to the manager and staff involved;
- assign staff to conduct an internal review
- inform the person in writing of any changes in decisions with reasons;
- determine if the individual is satisfied with the review.
- document unresolved complaints and forward to the Chief Executive Officer, with a copy to the person making the complaint.

STEP 4: Chief Executive Officer Review

The CEO has final decision-making authority.

- will review all materials and provide specific action to be taken.
- will write to the individual outlining final decision and reasons
- advise of external complaint resources such as the Ombudsman or the Advocate for Service Quality for dissatisfied individuals.
- will provide a monthly summary of all complaints and their outcomes to the Board of CLBC.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide CLBC's approach to managing and resolving complaints:

Accessibility and consistency: Every CLBC office will provide the same information on how the complaints process works and will follow the same steps to resolve them. All offices will encourage individuals and families to resolve problems with the staff member involved.

Person-Centered: The concerns and interests of an individual or family will guide the complaints resolution process, regardless of who is making the complaint.

Culturally responsive and inclusive: CLBC staff is expected to be responsive and sensitive to the culture, language and heritage of all individuals or families who are participating in a process to resolve a complaint.

Administrative Fairness: Every individual or family has a right to understand why and how a decision was made and to be given the opportunity to respond. Individuals will be given information about the next stage in the process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of local discussions.

Right to Advocacy and Support: Individuals and their families have the right to involve an advocate, relative, or friend to support them through the complaint process.

Timeliness: All concerns expressed about service delivery will be reviewed as quickly as possible. The total length of time from receipt of a complaint to its resolution through the four steps will be no longer than 30 days.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

CLBC is committed to providing adults with developmental disabilities and children with special needs as well as families, advocates and service providers with quality service. In working towards this goal, CLBC will:

- ensure staff respond to phone or Email messages within 48 hours;
- ensure information about the complaint process is widely available and well understood;
- ensure individuals and families are provided with information about additional community resources which might assist them;
- ensure any review of a decision is carried out in a manner that is respectful, collaborative and clearly understood
- be open to reviewing actions and decisions to ensure the best practice possible in responding to individuals and families

- learn from the information gained from the complaint resolution process and use it to improve service quality
- make every effort to resolve conflicts at the local level at the time they arise.

CLBC will maintain records of all complaints and their outcomes and will use this information to continually improve services, policies and staff training. CLBC will ensure that service providers have methods for receiving and responding to complaints.

Independent Reviews

The following are external resources for individuals and families dissatisfied with the CLBC complaint process:

1. The Advocate for Service Quality for People with Developmental Disabilities is independent from the direct service delivery system of CLBC and can assist with resolution of concerns and complaints. The office may assist individuals and families in understanding how the complaints system operates and provide information on relevant community resources. The advocate can be reached in Vancouver at 604-775- 1238.
2. If an individual or family believes that CLBC has been unfair, they can ask the provincial government Ombudsman's Office to review their concerns. The Office of the Ombudsman can be reached by phone at 1-800-567-3247 or through the website at www.ombud.gov.bc.ca.
3. Any person who is concerned that their privacy has not been respected by CLBC has a right to ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner for an independent review. The office can be reached by phone through Enquiry B.C. or through the Website <http://www.oipcbc.org/>.
4. The Child and Youth Officer does not review individual cases but can initiate an independent review of systemic issues and concerns. The office can be reached through Enquiry B.C. or through the website www.gov.bc.ca/cyo.