

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Neighbourhood Group Community Services (TNGCS) is committed to providing the best possible services to communities which it serves. TNGCS is also committed to respecting and supporting the competence and integrity of its employees.

## Policy

In order to provide the best possible service to TNGCS communities, there must be a process in place to register complaints from members of the community in a systematic fashion, which protects the integrity of staff and attempts to resolve the complaint. The most common complaints have historically been from service users or program participants, followed by complaints from neighbours.

Throughout these processes, employees should take notes documenting issues, actions and resolutions.

## Procedures

### 1. Step One

- If a complaint from a service user is received directly by the employee providing the service, they should discuss the complaint together with the service user as soon as possible and try to resolve it. The employee should also make the service user aware of the TNGCS policy and the name of the employee's supervisor if further action is required.
- If a complaint by a service user is received by another employee or volunteer, they should (a) inform the service user of the TNGCS policy, (b) encourage the service user to speak to the employee providing the service first if possible, (c) ask if they can inform the employee providing the service, and (d) provide the name of the appropriate supervisor. The employee providing the service should be alerted to the existence of the complaint.
- In hearing a complaint directly or indirectly, the employee providing the service should consult their supervisor.
- If a complaint is general in nature, then it should be directed to Step Two or Step Three to be dealt with by a manager or director

## **2. Step Two**

- If there is no successful resolution in Step One, the service user will have an opportunity to have the supervisor review the complaint. Once the supervisor is involved, there are no anonymous complaints – the service user must identify themselves – and the complaint cannot be kept confidential from the employee providing the service. At first contact, the supervisor should learn more about the complaint and the services being provided before taking any action. If the complaint is serious and involving accusations of violence, threatening, sexual abuse, or realistic fears of retaliation, the supervisor will act with the safety of the service user as a top priority. The supervisor will also seek assistance from Human Resources in investigating alleged incidents of serious employee misconduct.
- If the nature of the complaint does not put the service user or employee at risk, the preferred method of complaint resolution is to get all parties together to discuss the situation.
- If the parties are unwilling or safety is a concern, the supervisor will meet with all parties separately. At this stage, the supervisor will speak to the employee providing the service in order to investigate the complaint. The supervisor will advise the client in writing of the results of the meeting/investigation. If the employee and supervisor fail to resolve the client's complaint, the service user should be informed of their right to seek resolution through a meeting with the director. The service user should be informed of the name and work phone number of the director if they wish to pursue the complaint.
- The Director/VP should be informed of the complaint by the supervisor or manager and receive a copy of the written response to the service user or community member.

## **3. Step Three**

- The Director/VP will review the complaint to determine if the supervisor has properly and fairly followed the TNGCS complaint policy and process. They will not re-investigate the complaint unless there is reason to believe that the supervisor has not acted properly.
- The Director/VP will meet with the service user or community member and review the process of the complaint. They will also provide a final written response to the service user or community member of any actions that have resulted from the complaint.
- The VP will send a copy of this written response to the supervisor and to the President & CEO for information. The President & CEO may debrief any complaint that has broad implications with the Board of Directors or Management Team and may include recommendations in the next Risk Management Template. The President & CEO should bring to the attention of the Board of

Directors any complaints that have a negative impact on the organization's financial, legal, reputational, or public relations.

- At any time, the service user has the option of making a formal complaint to the funder of the specific program, ie. Children's Services for Child Care, or the Ministry of Health for Seniors Services.
- TNGCS will offer the services of the Conflict Resolution Mediators for disputes/conflicts. The Conflict Resolution and Training (CRT) department has professional mediators who can work with both parties to come to an agreement.
- Annually, the CEO will summarize all of the complaints for the Board of Directors in a report.