

Complaints Resolution Policy

Domain: Quality Management
Effective: August 2016

Purpose

This policy sets out the direction for the Langley Association for Community Living employees who receive and respond to complaints. It applies to complaints about LACL services, employees and business practices. The complaints can be received from individuals who receive service, family members, personal support network members, community members, community businesses, or others.

The complaint resolution policy is a formal safeguard established to protect the vulnerability of individuals served by LACL. This policy reflects LACL's culture of respect, transparency, responsiveness and learning. The policy forms one element of a comprehensive approach to quality assurance and is related to and complemented by other LACL policies on abuse and neglect investigations, privacy, theft, fraud and corruption, external reviews, dissatisfaction with service and/or supports.

Operational Context

LACL promotes natural, informal problem-solving efforts with individuals and their families, and/or support network on a regular and day to day basis. This is the preferred route for addressing concerns. The complaints resolution process begins when the person has formally submitted a complaint. The complaints resolution process does not negate, replace, take away from or undermine these efforts.

When such efforts are unsuccessful, LACL informs people that they have a right to file a complaint through the complaints resolution process under this policy. The complaints resolution process begins when the person has formally submitted a complaint.

Definitions

Complaint: A concern about LACL services or responses that have been formally communicated to the Manager of Quality Assurance.

Complaints Resolution Process: The specific procedures that LACL follows in receiving, responding to, and resolving complaints.

Individual: A person who receives service from the Langley Association for Community Living.

Support Network: Individuals who have a relationship with an individual served by LACL. This could be family members, an employee, friends, community members, CLBC representative.

LACL Principles

LACL respects the following principles when responding to and resolving complaints.

Accessibility: Individuals, families and support networks have access to clear information about how the complaint resolution process works, and can make a complaint in a variety of ways. The process is sensitive to the culture, language and communication style of the person making the complaint. In some cases, an individual may request the support of another person that he/she feels can assist him/her with communication.

Person-centred Approach: The concerns and interests of an individual served are at the centre of the complaint.

Responsiveness: The complaints resolution process is open, respectful, supportive and non-judgmental. It is completed as promptly as possible, resulting in a timely decision for the individual and/or family involved.

Administrative Fairness: The process is transparent and applied fairly and consistently across the organization. Decisions are documented and communicated to the person making the complaint.

No Retaliation: Anyone making a complaint is able to do so in a safe and comfortable way, free from actual or threatened negative consequences, regardless of what the complaint is about, who it is directed to, or the eventual outcome.

Policy Compliance: The complaints resolutions process and resulting decisions are consistent with LACL policies and standards and practices.

Directive

Any concern, complaint or breach of ethical conduct, no matter how minor, must be dealt with in a prompt, effective and professional manner. Concerns and complaints or breaches that are major, or expressed as major, must be reported and documented to ensure effective communication and follow through. The individual who is making the complaint is made aware that this action will not result in retaliation or barriers to service.

Rights and Responsibilities

LACL respects that people making complaints have the following rights:

- To request the review of a decision affecting them or their family member.
- To access information about the complaints resolution process.
- To access advocacy and support during the complaints resolution process.
- To receive information about how and why a decision was made.
- To respond to the reasons for a decision, and where possible, the information used to make that decision.
- To have their views heard, considered and respected.

LACL expects that people making complaints fulfill the following responsibilities:

- File a complaint as promptly as possible after the decision or action they are concerned about has occurred.
- Provide information to support their complaint, including any new or additional information they become aware of.
- Respect the rights of individuals supported by LACL.
- Respect the confidentiality of an individual's personal information and the obligation of LACL to protect that confidentiality.
- Act in good faith (to be fair and open) during the process.

Continuous Quality Improvement

LACL records, tracks and follows up on all complaints; reports and analyzes this information; and uses it as part of the overall continuous quality improvement process to improve services and performance. LACL views each complaint as an opportunity not only to address a particular concern, but also to learn and improve as an organization. Our commitment to acknowledging errors is viewed as strength of the Langley Association for Community Living.

Complaints Resolution Procedure

The focus is on resolving the complaint as quickly as possible.

Step 1: Upon receipt of a formal written complaint, the Manager of Quality Assurance Review will respond within 14 days. LACL encourages and supports the Manager of Quality Assurance to resolve the complaint at step 1. Where resolution is not possible, the complaint moves to Step 2.

Step 2: The Executive Director reviews the complaint and facilitates a resolution within 20 days. If a resolution cannot be reached at step 2, the complaint moves to step 3.

Step 3: The complaint is reviewed by the Board of Directors for a final decision within 60 days.

The complaints resolution process is subject to the timeframes set out in this policy. These timeframes may be exceeded by agreement with the person making the complaint, or in situations where there is significant delay caused either by the person making the complaint or as a result of the involvement of another mechanism or process.

Relationship to other Processes

If at any stage, LACL becomes aware that a complaint should be directed to another process, either internal or external to LACL, the Manager of Quality Assurance, after consultation with the Executive Director will direct the complaint to the appropriate organization or process.

At any stage, the person making a complaint may choose to take their concerns to the following provincial independent review mechanisms. LACL works cooperatively with these agencies to resolve issues raised.

Advocate for Service Quality

Assists with complaints resolution and provides advocacy and support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee

Assists individuals and their families with adult guardianship issues or managing personal or financial affairs.

Communication and Documentation

The Manager of Quality Assurance communicates to the person making the complaint about the progress of the complaints resolution process, any decision about a complaint and reasons, and any future steps LACL intends to take. The Manager of Quality Assurance documents all actions and correspondence related to the complaints resolution process.

References

LACL Policies

1.5 Code of Ethics
3.12 Abuse and Neglect
4.15 Conflict of Interest
4.16.1 Association Confidentiality
4.22 Theft
8.13 Fraud

Related Materials

LACL Website
Abuse and Neglect - A Guide for Self-Advocates
Plain Language Guide to Supported Decision Making
Self-Advocate Guide to Services
Family Guide