

LANGLEY ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

9.8 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

PURPOSE

To ensure that incoming complaints are handled in a prompt, effective and professional manner.

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.

PROCEDURE

Complaints are any concerns or breaches in ethical conduct that are expressed or brought forward to an employee of Langley Association for Community Living, formally or informally, by:

1. an individual receiving service;
2. a family member and/or a person from the individual's support network
3. a community member;
4. an employee of the Langley Association for Community Living; or
5. someone from an outside agency.

Whether the issue is in a licensed or unlicensed facility, it is imperative that the following standardized procedure is followed to ensure effective dispute resolution:

STEPS TO EFFECTIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

Step 1: Complaints are Professionally Received

Complaints come to the Langley Association for Community Living both formally and informally.

It is the responsibility of the employee to listen carefully to the person making the complaint and respond accordingly. If it is an issue that can be promptly addressed in the conversation, the employee should do so and they are not required to complete the attached form. They are required to inform the Supervisor about the complaint. If the issue is one that requires further investigation or action, the employee must inform the complainant that someone (name specific person) will contact them as soon as they have had the opportunity to look into it. The goal in this step is to ensure that the person making the complaint is satisfied that they have been heard and that follow-up action will ensue. The employee needs to proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: All Complaints must be Documented

The employee who receives the complaint is responsible for ensuring that question 1 on the “Complaint Resolution” form is filled out and bringing it to the attention of their immediate Supervisor. Question 1 (“Complaint/Concern/Breach of Ethical Conduct” and “Immediate Action Taken”) must be completed carefully so that the Supervisor is able to accurately assess the urgency of the issue.

Step 3: Assessing the Urgency of the Complaint

It is sometimes difficult to assess the severity or urgency of a complaint. What may be a complaint requiring immediate attention to one individual or personal network members may be an expression of a minor concern by another. For example, if a parent of an individual requiring 24-hour care tells staff that the individual is not receiving appropriate personal care; this is a complaint that requires immediate attention. Yet if the family of another individual who is quite independent expresses a concern regarding the individual’s personal care, this would probably be deemed more minor in nature and possible motivational factors would be considered. When determining whether a concern is deemed “major” or “minor”, the following must be taken into consideration, as well as:

- a) who is making the complaint,
- b) what is the nature of the concern, and
- c) in what manner the person making the complaint would like it addressed.

When a complaint regarding an individual we support arises, where no protocol or plan is currently in place to support the concern, the individual in consultation with their personal network would determine if a new “result to be accomplished” needs to be added to the individual’s Personal Service Plan.

Employees are expected to be decisive and responsive in providing support, particularly when dealing with concerns that arise. Staff is encouraged to, when in doubt, err on the side of caution and over-respond rather than under-respond.

Step 4: The Most Appropriate Association Representative Deals with the Complaint

If it is an issue that the Supervisor is able to deal with, he/she should promptly do so. If the situation warrants the immediate attention of the Supervisor and he/she is not on shift, the Support Worker must notify the Supervisor by phone. The Supervisor will provide direction as to how to proceed with the complaint. If the employee is unable to reach the Supervisor by phone, he/she must contact the Manager of Quality Assurance for further direction. If it is an issue that the Manager of Quality Assurance should address, it is the responsibility of the Supervisor to forward the completed form to the Manager of Quality Assurance. In some situations, the Executive Director is the most appropriate person to respond. The Manager of Quality Assurance will make this determination and initiate the response with the Executive Director. If the Manager of Quality Assurance and Executive Director are unable to resolve the complaint, the Board of Directors has the final responsibility in doing so or if LACL is unable to resolve the dispute, a representative from Community Living BC will be brought in to assess the dispute.

The Manager of Quality Assurance will ensure that the person expressing the complaint, including the person served/family, is provided with information regarding Community Care Facilities Licensing and the Patient Care Quality Review Officer in the event the Complaint is in regards to a Licensed home.

Step 5: Documentation of the Complaint

All actions taken by the Supervisor and/or the Manager of Quality Assurance to address a written complaint must be documented on questions 2 and 3 of the Complaint Resolution form. Resulting recommendations or actions must also be documented in the site Staff Communication Book and/or the Individual Log Notes.

Once the complaint is addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, the form is distributed as follows:

- a) the original Complaint Resolution form is submitted to the main office for filing in the central Langley Association for Community Living files
- b) a copy is maintained on file at the individuals home or service,
- c) a copy is distributed to the Manager of Quality Assurance for filing in either the individual's file or the program file (whichever is appropriate).

Timelines:

Once a complaint has been submitted, where possible, the complainant should wait no longer than 14 days to be contacted by the Manager of Quality Assurance.

All documentation associated with the complaint is to remain on file for a minimum of two (2) years following the complaint.

ASSOCIATED FORMS

- Complaint Resolution Form
(U:\FORMS – CLIENT\COMPLAINT RESOLUTION FORM)