

Concerns and Complaints

Policy

Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County is committed to providing our stakeholders, including clients, employees, volunteers, the general public and funders with a high level of service in conjunction with carrying out our mandate. The purpose of the complaints policy is to create a transparent and fair method of responding to public complaints. This policy and procedure applies to complaints received by Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

Guiding Principles

- It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants have the right to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County uses complaints to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.

Types of Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- Perceived failure to observe policy or procedures;
- Concern that an error was made by staff member; or
- Dissatisfaction with the service provided by a staff member.

Standard

The agency's Website (www.cfssc.ca) posts information for the public and clients regarding the Concerns and Complaints Policy and the procedure to follow to present any concerns or dissatisfactions.

In addition, the agency's Welcome Information Sheet: Client Rights and Responsibilities section informs clients about their right to present any concerns or dissatisfactions that they may experience with the service provided to them. The "Client Concerns and Complaints Agency Procedures" brochure shall be available to all clients, upon request, at both agency locations.

Guidelines and Procedures

For Concerns and Complaints from the public:

How to Report a Complaint:

By phone: Please call our Barrie office at 705-726-2503 or our toll free number 1-888-726-2503

By mail: Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County
20 Anne Street South,
Barrie ON
L4N 2C6

How Your Claim Will Be Dealt With:

Generally complaints are received through Reception who are assigned to triage inquiries to the appropriate Supervisor/Senior Manager. The Supervisor/Senior Manager will either respond by sending a formal letter, email, or telephone the individual.

Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it will be escalated to the Executive Director.

Complaints about the Executive Director, Board members and Board Policy will be directed to the Board President.

Timeliness: A complainant will receive contact from the appropriate person within the organization within 3 business days even if an appropriate solution to the problem requires additional time.

Reporting Back: If the issue cannot be resolved right away, the appropriate staff person/board member will respond as soon as the matter has been reviewed. All concerned parties will be advised of the results of the review.

Confidentiality: Complaints are kept confidential when received. However, complaints that go forward will require that if an individual is the subject of the complaint that that person and other persons involved must be advised in order to fully and fairly review the complaint.

For Concerns and Complaints from Clients (past or present):

The following procedure is available to a client who has a concern/complaint about the service that he/she has received at the Agency. The client may have a support person accompany him/her at any time when meeting with Agency personnel. A related

document, *Client Concerns and Complaints – Agency Guidelines and Procedures*, provides the procedures/steps available to a client who has a complaint about the services received at the Agency.

STEP 1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

The client will be encouraged to raise his/her concern/complaint directly with his/her clinician. This provides the client and clinician with an opportunity to work together to find a solution to the problem. The outcome of this process will be brought to the attention of the staff's Supervisor.

If the client or clinician is not satisfied with the outcome of their discussion, either or both may request the involvement of the staff's Supervisor to facilitate the problem-solving process.

If the client feels uncomfortable about discussing his/her concern/complaint directly with his/her clinician, the client may call the Agency and request contact with the staff's Supervisor to discuss his/her concern/complaint.

The client can expect to speak with a Supervisor/Manager within five (5) working days after the request has been made. If this is not possible, the Supervisor will respond to the client in writing to explain the delay.

During this dialogue, every reasonable effort will be made to find a mutually agreeable solution to the concern/complaint. It is expected that most issues can be resolved at this level.

STEP 2: FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

First Stage: The Client Meets with the Clinical Manager

When the client's concern/complaint is not satisfactorily resolved through the informal resolution process, or when the concerns raised by the client are, in the opinion of the Clinical Manager, of a more serious nature, the client will be asked to submit his/her concern/complaint to the Clinical Manager in writing.

When the written concern/complaint is received, the Clinical Manager will contact the client within five(5) working days to schedule a meeting and answer any questions that the client may have. If this is not possible, the Executive Director will respond to all parties in writing to explain the delay and offer meeting times.

Within five (5) working days following the client's meeting with the Clinical Manager, the staff in question will be informed about the nature of the client's concern/complaint and will be asked to provide a verbal response then a written response. The staff may wish to be accompanied by a support person during this process. Supporting documentation from a clinician may be requested, (including case notes and any other appropriate documentation), to facilitate the review.

The Clinical Manager will then review the client's concern/complaint and the staff's response. Within ten (10) working days of the meeting with the staff, the Clinical Manager will prepare a written response. The client will be invited to come in to hear the Agency's response, and will be provided with a written copy of this response. The staff will receive a response from the Agency about the outcome of the review.

It is at this stage that a file will be opened with the client's written concern/complaint and the Agency's written response.

The Clinical Manager will keep the Executive Director informed.

Second Stage: Discussion with the Executive Director

If the client's concern/complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at this point, the client, the staff, the Clinical Manager may request the involvement of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will meet with the client, the staff, the Clinical Manager within fifteen (15) working days of the request for his/her involvement in the problem-solving process. If this is not possible, the Executive Director will respond to all parties in writing to explain the delay and offer meeting times.

Within ten (10) working days after this meeting, a letter from the Executive Director will be mailed to the client, (where appropriate), and verbal feedback will be given where necessary, that summarizes the results of the meeting and the Executive Director's decision regarding the client's concern/complaint.

The staff will receive a written response from the Agency about the outcome of the review.

Reporting Concerns and Complaints to the Board of Directors

The Executive Director will immediately inform the President of the Board of Directors about any concern/complaint that may put the Agency at risk.

Quarterly the Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors about any concerns/complaints, and other risks, that have arisen, the actions taken and the result.

The Executive Director will monitor the complaints, track the themes of concerns/complaints, monitor the outcomes of the concerns/complaints procedures and report any findings to the Board of Directors.