



## NEXUS Community Support Society Agency Policies and Procedures

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<b>Policy Name:</b>	Responding to Individual and Family Complaints
<b>Policy Number:</b>	RR012
<b>Policy Section:</b>	Rights and Responsibilities - RR
<b>Applies To:</b>	All Direct Support Personnel; Non-Unionized Employees
<b>Policy Purpose:</b>	<p>To continuously improve all facets of service delivery by addressing individual and family complaints seriously, fairly, and in a timely manner.</p> <p>To support employees in the complaint resolution process.</p>
<b>Policy Statement:</b>	<p>During the Intake meeting, the individual and the family/caregiver have the complaint process explained to them as outlined in the Client Handbook. An outline of the process provided is included on page 6 of this policy for reference.</p>

The action of filing a complaint will not result in retaliation or barriers to service for the individual served.

### **Informal Complaints**

Supervisors take a proactive approach upon learning that an individual or family is unhappy/dissatisfied with services. Concerns and complaints are to be treated seriously, fairly and in a timely manner. The supervisor immediately follows up with the individual and/or family with the intention of finding a creative resolution that meets the needs of all parties.

**If a complaint is made directly to an employee, the employee must inform the supervisor immediately. The supervisor will make the decision on how to proceed.**

## **Formal Complaints**

A complaint becomes formal when:

- .. the individual making the complaint directly contacts the Supervisor;
- .. the Supervisor informs the CEO that they are unable to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the individual and/or family;
- .. the complaint is made directly to the CEO or a Director of the Board;
- .. the issue is escalating or has escalated in part;
- .. the issue has the potential to be media sensitive;
- .. the individual/family is pursuing other methods of complaint resolution, which are potentially disruptive to the Supervisor/program, or daily operation of the Society, and/or;
- .. the complaint is about the collection, disclosure or access to personal information of the individual's records and is made to the Society's Privacy Officer.

The Society responds to all formal complaints raised by the supported Individual and/or family (or any person designated by the Individual to make such complaints). The Society makes every effort to resolve the problem appropriately. If the individual and/or family require support they may be referred to an advocate. The Society will assist in this referral to an advocate

Information released by the Society regarding complaints is consistent with the Privacy Information and Protection Act (PIPA), Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), and Society policies.

The CEO (as Privacy Officer) may conduct an investigation when the complaint is related to the collection, disclosure or access to personal information. The Privacy Officer may refer the Individual and/or family to the Office of the Information Privacy Commissioner to investigate or provide mediation assistance if the complaint is related to the

privacy of personal information. See Policy RR003 for further information.

If an individual/family pursues other methods of complaint resolution to the disruption of employees and the daily operations of the agency, the CEO will meet directly with the individual/family.

The Society will involve other appropriate organizations and/or individuals when necessary to resolve a complaint or refer the individual and/or family who are making the complaint to the appropriate organization or individual for advocacy and/or legal advice.

The Society's response will be in writing.

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**Procedure Defined:**

**Informal Complaints**

- When an individual/family member shares with any employee that they are dissatisfied with the service the employee will explore the issue with the individual/family, find a solution, and document the process.
- When the employee is unable to resolve the issue they will inform their Supervisor.
- The involved Supervisor will contact the individual/family immediately and, if the individual/family wishes, arrange to meet as soon as possible.
- Children and Youth in care will be provided with information on contacting the relevant authorities such as:
  - The child's social worker;
  - The Representative for Children and Youth;
  - The Ombudsperson;
  - The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner; and
  - The local licensing office (if applicable).

Also see Policy RR003

- .. The Supervisor will offer the individual/family member the services of an advocate and one will be arranged if requested.
- .. The Supervisor works with the individual/family to find a jointly acceptable solution within 10 business days of hearing the complaint.
- .. Once a jointly acceptable solution is found, the Supervisor implements the solution and informs the complainant, in writing, of the outcome.
- .. If the Supervisor is unable to find an acceptable solution, the Supervisor notifies the CEO. At this time the complaint has become a Formal Complaint and the Supervisor must provide details of the complaint in a written statement using the outline shown at the end of this policy.
- .. The services of an advocate will be offered to the individual/family.

### **Formal Complaints**

- .. As above, the Supervisor advises the CEO of the details of a complaint in a written statement.
- .. Throughout the process, copies of all correspondence to the individual/family are placed on the individual's file.
- .. The CEO fully explores the issue by:
  - Reviewing the relevant documentation,
  - Discussing the issue with the individual/family on the phone or meeting directly with the individual/family,
  - Discussing the issue with the involved Supervisor
- .. After fully exploring the issue the CEO may:

1. Identify and implement a solution that is agreeable to individual/family and the involved supervisor,
2. Facilitate a problem solving meeting with all the involved parties, and/or
3. Recommend to the Board of Directors that the Society retain an external mediator

- .. The CEO will provide the individual/family with a Response to the Formal Complaint in 10 working days from the date the complaint was filed. This Response must be completed as a written statement using the outline shown at the end of this policy.
- .. Following the resolution of the complaint the CEO contacts the individual/family and involved supervisor in one month to ensure that the issue remains fully resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.
- .. A written review of formal complaints will be prepared annually by the Administration Department to determine trends, improvements to be made, or actions to be taken.

#### **Referrals to the Ministry or Contracting Agency.**

- .. If a problem cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the individual/family, the CEO refers the individual/family to the appropriate Ministry or contracting agency representative where applicable.
- .. If the individual resides in an Adult Services Licensed facility, they may contact Interior Health Licensing Direct at 1-877-980-5118. If the individual does not feel that their concerns were resolved based on the response of

Licensing Direct, they can follow the Decision Review process outlined on [www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca).

**Formal Complaint Outline:**

Ensure details are included such as:

- Individual's name or family member/caregiver's name
- Name of employee who initially received complaint
- Date the original complaint was received
- The initial concern/issue
- Possible causes of concern/issue
- Any changes to the original concern/issue
- Names of all people involved
- Steps made to resolve the concern/issue
- Any results of the actions taken

**Response to a Formal Complaint Outline:**

Ensure details are included such as:

- Individual's name or family member/caregiver's name
- Date the concern/issue was originally received
- Date the Formal Complaint was originally received by the CEO
- Supervisor/Employee involved
- Explanation of complaint
- Results of any investigations
- The Society's decision and reasons supporting its decision
- Details regarding whom the family may contact if they are not satisfied with the Society's response

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**Approval Status**

Approved

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