



Complaints and Disputes Resolution Policy & Procedure

Reviewing and approving this Policy Manual		
Frequency	Person(s) responsible	Approval
Reviewed and updated as required or at least reviewed every 3 years	EO, Board P&P Sub-committee	Board

Updates, Approvals and Amendments	
Adopted by Board of Directors on	30 March 2017
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Other relevant documents



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1. Complaints and Disputes Resolution

1.1 Complaints and Disputes Resolution Policy

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative Ltd (SNCC) is committed to ensuring that any person or organisation using SNCC's services or affected by its operations has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision of the organisation and to have their concerns addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability and transparency.

The organisation will provide a complaints and disputes resolution procedure that:

- a) Is simple and easy to use;
- b) Is effectively communicated and promoted to all service users and stakeholders;
- c) Ensures complaints or appeals are fairly assessed and responded to promptly;
- d) Is procedurally fair and follows principles of natural justice; and
- e) Complies with legislative requirements.

SNCC will:

- a) Consider all complaints it receives;
- b) Treat all complainants with respect, recognising that the issue of complaint is important to the complainant;
- c) Maintain confidentiality of parties involved, keeping any information private to those directly involved in the complaint and its resolution;
- d) Ensure advocacy is available to clients who make a complaint and require support;
- e) Resolve complaints, where possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant;
- f) Deal with all complaints in a timely manner;
- g) Keep parties to the complaint informed of progress of the complaint;
- h) Ensure that Board members, staff, volunteers and students are given information about the complaints procedure as part of their induction and are aware of procedures for managing client feedback and complaints;
- i) Ensure all service users, stakeholders and members are aware of the complaints policy and procedures;
- j) Ensure that a complainant is not penalised in any way or prevented from use of services during the progress of an issue; and
- k) Ensure that feedback data (both positive and negative) is considered in organisational reviews and in planning service improvements.



1.2 Complaints and Disputes Resolution Procedure

If a complaint is made by a service user, either verbally or in writing, the following procedure must be followed:

Step 1

If the complaint relates to maintenance of facilities or resources, details of the complaint are taken by the staff member receiving it, and, if possible, resolved immediately or if not possible, referred to the Executive Officer for follow up action.

Step 2

If the complaint is more than a matter requiring maintenance, the complainant is requested to present the complaint in writing. In cases where verbal complaints are made, then the staff member or Board member who first becomes aware of the complaint should encourage the complainant to put it in writing addressed to the Executive Officer. If it appears that the complainant will have difficulty in putting the complaint in writing, they shall be assisted to find an appropriate advocate.

Step 3

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing by the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer will also ensure that the complainant has had access to and understood SNCC's Complaints and Disputes Resolution Policy.

Step 4

On receiving the complaint, the Executive Officer will discuss it with relevant staff members, or other people involved with the complaint. If it does not appear that the complaint can be simply resolved through discussion between the Executive Officer, the relevant staff member and the complainant, the matter will then be referred to the Board.

Step 5

The Board will establish a Complaints Sub-Committee consisting of two Board Members and the Executive Officer. This Sub-Committee will ensure all parties involved have read this policy and will then convene a meeting within 14 days with the complainant and/or their representative and all other parties involved in the complaint. Others may apply to attend or be invited to attend the meeting on agreement of both parties. All meeting participants must agree to confidentiality (refer Code of Ethics Policy). A copy of the written complaint must be circulated to all parties at least twenty-four hours before the meeting.



Step 6

The Complaints Sub-Committee will set the ground rules for discussion of the issue, work towards a mutually acceptable resolution of the complaint and encourage the development of agreements between participants with a time frame for their implementation and review, if appropriate.

The Sub-Committee may decide to:

- a) Schedule more than one meeting to resolve the matter;
- b) Request the Board engage a mediator to assist in the resolution of the matter;
- c) Refer the matter to the full Board for resolution; and
- d) Request that the Board seek legal advice.

Every attempt must be made to reach a satisfactory resolution to the complaint for all parties involved.

Step 7

If no resolution to the satisfaction of all parties has been reached, the complainant will be provided with information on how to access external complaints mechanisms, such as the Community Services Commission.

Step 8

All meetings of the Complaints Sub-Committee must be minuted and these minutes must be tabled at the following Board Meeting. The minutes must list the names of all present, the purpose of the meeting and the outcome. All proceedings of the meeting must be kept confidential unless agreed otherwise by those attending the meeting.

Step 9

If the complaint involves proven concerns about a paid employee in the course of their duties, then the Disciplinary Procedures Policy will be initiated.



Complaints & Disputes Resolution Process Diagram

