

## SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS BY A COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER

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Policy Section: General Organizational  
Sub-Section: Ethical Conduct  
Number: 105.7  
Related Standards:

Reviewed:  
Approved:  
Approved:  
Approved:

See also:  
Risk Management Plan

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### POLICY

Closer to Home Community Services (CTH) promotes open communication and encourages community stakeholders<sup>1</sup> to report any unethical actions of employees or the organization as a whole. With this in mind, members of the community or community stakeholders will be made aware of their right to lodge a complaint.

CTH will respectfully, fairly, and transparently deal with complaints received from members of the public/community stakeholders who are invested in the organization and believe that the organization or their employee(s) has been unfair or inappropriate in their behaviour or treatment of others. Members of the public or community stakeholders may submit a written complaint without fear of retaliation.

Informal complaints are defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions or lack of action by CTH as an organization or an employee or volunteer acting on behalf of CTH. For example, many inquire or matters of simple error that can be corrected to the satisfaction of the person with the concern.

A formal complaint is distinct from an inquiry, feedback or a suggestion. To launch a formal complaint, an individual must submit his/her concern in writing (letter, fax or email) and identify him or herself. All formal complaints will remain confidential unless an investigation requires otherwise, and services provided will not be affected. The formal complaint process is structured to be fair and equitable; to receive, investigate, respond to, and document the outcomes of a formal complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> Community stakeholder is defined as any organization or individual member of the public (e.g. partners/members/donors) that has a relationship with Closer to Home

The organization will endeavor to correct or resolve any problem brought to its attention in a timely manner.

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## **PROCEDURE**

### **I. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

1. Anyone who has a concern is encouraged to talk with the employee who is most connected with the situation to resolve it before it becomes a formal complaint;
2. Departments may establish protocols and responsibilities for handling informal complaints as they arise;
3. Employees should keep Managers apprised of such complaints as they arise. If the matter is not resolved, the person may make a formal complaint which will be recorded on the Community Stakeholder Complaint tracking sheet

### **II. FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

1. A formal complaint must be in writing (letter, fax or email);
2. All formal complaints will be given to the designated Manager who will endeavor to resolve the concern or problem within 48 hours ;
3. If the designated Manager is unable to resolve the concern or problem, the Associate Director(s) will review and endeavor to resolve the formal complaint within 24 hours of receiving it;
4. If the Associate Director(s) is unable to resolve the concern or problem the complaint will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer;
5. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), will outline the actions to be taken and recommend the next step:
  - i. The complainant will receive a verbal or written response outlining the next steps within 24 hours of the CEO receiving the formal complaint
6. The CEO will review the complaint and unresolved issues and respond to the complainant in writing or request a meeting within three (3) business days of receiving the formal complaint.
7. If the complainant is unhappy with the decision or solutions offered by the CEO, they may take their written complaint to the Board of Directors:
8. The Board of Directors will review unresolved issues and a written response will be provided within five (5) working days;
  - i. If the complainant feels the response is unfair they may request an external review by the Ombudsman's Office;
  - ii. The complainant will be provided with the contact information upon request;

9. The formal complaint documents will be filed in the administrative office and will be reviewed and analysed annually, including actions for change needed for performance improvement by the Compliance Coordinator and Associate Director(s).

### **III. REPORTING OF ALL COMPLAINTS**

1. All informal complaints will be tracked, recorded and tabulated quarterly by the Compliance Coordinator and reported to the Associate Directors;
2. All formal complaints will be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer
3. The CEO will then report all complaints to the Board of Directors quarterly, unless it is determined that the Board of Directors needs to know immediately, in which case the CEO will report immediately.