

STATEMENT of POLICY and PROCEDURE

Approved by:

Board of Directors

Date:

01/26/2016

Motion:

012616-4

APPLICATION:

This policy and procedure applies to complaints received by CMHA Mid Island related to our activities, programs, services, or to the conduct of staff or volunteers. Complaints can be made by clients, by employees or by volunteers.

A. Guiding Principles

- CMHA Mid Island is committed to providing high quality programs and services. Any complaint will be used to assist in improving our services and any related policies and procedures.
- CMHA Mid Island is committed to providing a respectful environment for all clients, employees and volunteers. This policy is a vehicle for ensuring such concerns are addressed and any future incidents prevented.
- 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 are advised of their options to have their complaint addressed by a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- Updates are provided to complainants during review processes.

B. Types of Complaints

A number of different types of complaints can be made under this policy. Generally a complaint is the result of dissatisfaction with a service provided by CMHA Mid Island or to treatment received from another client, an employee or a volunteer. Common types of complaints include:

i. Service:

Service complaints are focused on the services being provided and may be related to perceived inadequacies, service changes, errors, failure to follow policy/procedure or any other matter related to the services being offered.

ii. Failure to Maintain a Respectful Environment

This type of complaint can result from disrespectful behaviour between any person involved with CMHA Mid Island, client, volunteer or employee. This can include, but is not limited to, yelling, name-calling, visual displays of anger, and other behaviours most reasonable people would recognize as inappropriate in a

service, volunteer or working environment.

iii. Human Rights Related Harassment:

Harassment is defined as a deliberate course of action that ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome by the recipient, which serve no legitimate service or work related purpose, and is based on a human rights ground. The grounds covered by the Human Rights Code of British Columbia include: age, race, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, disability marital status, family status, political beliefs or conviction of a criminal or summary offence unrelated to employment.

iv. Violations of Code of Ethics Policy

All employees and volunteers are expected to act with a high degree of integrity and ethics. A detailed Code of Ethics is provided to guide the conduct of employees and volunteers. Any complaints that the CMHA Code of Ethics Policy has been violated will be addressed under this policy.

v. Violations of Conflict of Interest Policy

All employees and volunteers are expected to refrain from engaging in decisions related to other members of CMHA Mid Island (employee, volunteer or client) when there is a close personal relationship. A detailed Conflict of Interest Policy is provided to guide the actions of employees and volunteers. Any complaint that the CMHA Conflict of Interest policy has been violated will be addressed under this policy.

C. Complaint Receipt and Handling

A complaint can be made verbally or in writing, however, complaints of a serious nature should be made in writing. It will be at the discretion of the person addressing the complaint whether written details of a complaint are required when a complaint is not provided in writing.

When a complaint filed under this policy is covered by a relevant section of the Collective Agreement between Health Services & Support Community Subsector Association and Health Employers Association of B.C, the steps outlined in the Agreement will apply and will supersede this policy if there is a conflict.

i. Complaints from Clients

Any staff member receiving a complaint from a client should determine whether it is a concern that they can easily resolve themselves. If the complaint can be resolved at this level by an employee the matter will proceed no further. However, a supervisor should be informed of the complaint and of how it was resolved.

If the complaint cannot be resolved, the complainant should be directed to the appropriate person, usually the supervisor of the service or program relevant to the complaint.

The supervisor, program manager or Executive-Director who receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or another employee. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded as well as a summary of the complaint.

ii. **Complaints from Employees**

An employee with a complaint that is to be resolved under this policy should file the complaint with their immediate supervisor. If the complaint concerns an immediate supervisor the complaint should be made to the next level supervisor/manager, usually the Executive-Director.

Employees with complaints regarding the behaviour of a client or another employee are encouraged to address the concern directly with the other party. It is acknowledged, however, that this may not always be possible or advisable. When the complaint is in relation to a client the decision on whether the employee should attempt to resolve the concern directly with the client should be made in consultation with a supervisor.

iii. **Complaints from Volunteers**

A volunteer with a complaint should bring their concern to the attention of the relevant employee they are working with, or their immediate supervisor. Members of the Board of Directors of CMHA with a complaint should file the complaint with the President of the Board. Should the complaint involve the Board President the complaint should be filed with the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

D. Resolving the Complaint

Every effort should be made to resolve any complaint received in a timely fashion. Any complaint received in writing should be acknowledged in writing within 5 business days and resolution should occur within a further 21 business days, whenever possible. It is recognized that a complaint that alleges serious misconduct may require more time to investigate and resolve.

All complaints will be investigated in a fair and unbiased manner. Any person who could reasonably be perceived as biased or as being in a conflict of interest will not be involved in the investigation or the resolution of a complaint.

If a supervisor or manager is unable to resolve a complaint it should be referred to the Executive-Director for resolution.

All complainants must be kept informed regarding the handling of the complaint, the expected timeframe as well as the outcome. CMHA Mid Island will inform a complainant about steps taken to address their concern, unless the privacy of a client, employee or volunteer would be violated by the provision of such information. The complainant will also be provided with information related to the right of appeal, should there be any dissatisfaction with the resolution provided.

E. Right of Appeal

Any complainant dissatisfied with the resolution of the complaint has the right to appeal to the next level in the organization, usually the Executive-Director or the Board of Directors. Appeals should be made in writing, outlining areas of dissatisfaction with the resolution provided.

F. Documenting the Complaint

It is necessary to keep a record of any complaints received, how the complaint was investigated and the resolution offered to the complaint. The Executive-Director will be responsible for developing a record-keeping process for employees, for developing and implementing a tracking and reporting system and for the timely reporting of serious complaints to the Board of Directors. A summary report of all complaints should be provided to the Board on an annual basis.