

SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT:			DOCUMENT#
COMPLAINT/FEEDBACK PROCESS REGARDING SUPPORT/SERVICES			SDP - 007
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Community Living Elgin recognizes that a complaints/feedback process is an important part of providing quality supports that are responsive to people's needs and that support continuous improvement in our service delivery.
- 1.2 Community Living Elgin recognizes and respects the right of people; their families and/or their guardian to question or express dissatisfaction about the supports/services they receive and to appeal any decisions that are made with respect to the provision of that support.
- 1.3 People receiving services, their family, and guardian, or advocates are encouraged to freely and openly discuss any complaints or feedback about the services being provided by Community Living Elgin. No person in service, family member and other interested parties should fear retribution towards themselves when following the complaint/feedback process.
- 1.4 Community Living Elgin will take all complaints seriously and will review and investigate all matters and attempt to resolve all complaints unless through investigation they are deemed to be frivolous or vexatious.

2. DEFINITION

- 2.1 **Supports/Services** - Community Living Elgin provides a variety of supports and services listed as the following: Residential, Supported Independent Living, Community Access Programs, Respite, Family Support Worker, and Ontario Early Years Centre programs.
- 2.2 **Feedback** - may be positive or negative (including complaints) and is related to the services and/or supports that are provided by Community Living Elgin. Feedback may be solicited (such as information and comments collected through satisfaction surveys or a comment box) or unsolicited (such as a letter from a person or family member about the services and supports provided). Feedback may be formal (like the survey or letter noted above) or informal (such as a verbal complaint expressed to a staff person).
- 2.3 **Complaint** - is an expression of dissatisfaction related to the services and/or supports that are provided by Community Living Elgin. A complaint may be expressed by a person who is receiving support or a person acting on their behalf, or by the general public regarding the services and supports that are provided. A complaint may be made formally or informally (as defined above). A complaint does not include feedback on matters unrelated to Community Living Elgin and the services and supports provided.
- 2.4 **Retribution** - any act that would put at risk someone's services and supports or negatively impact them as a result of submitting a complaint/feedback.
- 2.5 **Conflict of Interest** - any situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person due to personal, professional or agency interests.
- 2.6 **Frivolous** - characterized by lack of seriousness; trivial; inappropriately silly.
- 2.7 **Vexatious** - brought without sufficient grounds purely to cause annoyance; solely to harass or subdue an adversary.

3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1 When a person begins receiving services; they are given the *Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin* form with the applicable staff and supervisors' contact information inserted. This form will be reviewed on an annual basis during the Person Centred Planning meeting.

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- 3.2 People also are given the “How Can We Help You” handbook where their right to feedback about the services they receive is clearly outlined. This handbook is updated and reviewed annually with each person.
- 3.2 When a person is receiving services from the Family Support Workers or Respite they will receive the *Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin* form at time of intake with the applicable staff and supervisor contact information inserted.
- 3.3 At the Ontario Early Years Centre, the *Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin* form will be posted in a visible location for families to see (with the applicable staff and supervisor contact information inserted).
- 3.4 Feedback will be solicited from the people that we support on an annual basis through the Person Centred Planning process and through their voluntary participation in the self advocate group “Our Choice Matters” Satisfaction surveys may also be used to request feedback about the supports and services provided on an occasional basis.
- 3.5 Feedback will be solicited from families through satisfaction surveys and also through the Person Centred Planning process.
- 3.6 Results from any surveys completed will be shared with the people we support, staff and families through email, newsletters and/or Community Living Elgin’s Outcomes Management Report.
- 3.7 The general public, families or the people that we support can provide feedback by phone, by mail, email or face to face at our business office (number and address is published). Also, our website has a process where anyone can provide feedback about our supports and services.
- 3.8 All complaints about the provision of the support provided to the person should be discussed with the person’s primary Support Coordinator, in the area that gave rise to the complaint if the person is comfortable in doing so and if there is no conflict of interest.
- 3.9 If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person and/or family at the primary Support Coordinator’s level then the family or person supported will be encouraged to contact the personnel as listed on the *Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin* form, who will be available to review the situation and offer possible solutions. However, at anytime, a person can contact anyone on the Complaint Procedure Form.
- 3.10 All complaints or feedback will be acknowledged within 48 hours of receiving by the designated staff.
- 3.11 If an extensive investigation is needed, the person making the complaint or providing the feedback will be informed that this is occurring and will be given a timeline for further response. An update will be provided within 7 days.
- 3.12 At no point should any person investigate a complaint or feedback if they have a conflict of interest in the matter at hand. (i.e. – a person whom a complaint is made against will not be a part of the investigation or response.) In this case, a person’s immediate supervisor or designate will take the lead on the review, documentation, investigation, resolution and notification.
- 3.13 To ensure that the review process is free of any coercion, intimidation or bias, the Executive Director or senior management designate will be informed of the status at each step of the process. If there is a conflict of interest for the senior member of management, the President of the Board of Directors will be kept informed of the status at each step of the process.
- 3.14 Responses will be provided in the format that the complaint was received. (i.e. – if verbal – response will be verbal; if written, the response will be written etc).

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- 3.15 If the complaint is not satisfied by the internal compliant process then the person and/or family and public will be encouraged to file a complaint to the external bodies as listed on the *Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin* form.
- 3.16 All complaints/feedback given will be gathered by the applicable senior director and documented for discussion at a Senior Management meeting.
- 3.17 Roles and Responsibilities:
 - a) Any person who receives a complaint/feedback has the responsibility to document the information, then either begin to investigate the complaint/feedback or relay the information to the appropriate person for investigation, resolution and response.
 - b) For the people who are supported by Community Living Elgin, they have a responsibility to bring forth any complaints/feedback about the supports and services to the agency with the expectation that they will be responded to as indicated in this policy. They can do this on an individual basis or through the self advocate group "Our Choice Matters"
 - c) The President of the Board of Directors will be requested to investigate, resolve and communicate to the person who lodged the complaint/feedback if that complaint is about the Executive Director or about a decision of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be kept informed of all formal complaints about the supports and services Community Living Elgin provides.
- 3.18 Any complaint/feedback regarding alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse that may constitute a criminal offence will be reported to the police for their investigation. (SDP-005 & Ontario Regulation 299/10)
- 3.19 MCSS/MCYS Serious Occurrence reporting procedures will be followed if applicable (based on the nature of the complaint).
- 3.20 Annually, Community Living Elgin will review and analyze all complaints/feedback given to evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and procedures and make revisions as necessary.
- 3.21 Information about any complaints/feedback will be included as part of the Ministry's Risk Assessment process.
- 3.22 Community Living Elgin will provide a copy of our written policy and procedure to any person who requests it.

4. CROSS REFERENCE

HRP-017 Communication Protocols
 Policy Directive for Support Agencies effective June 2012
 SDP-005 Abuse, Prevention and Reporting

FORMS ASSOCIATED

Complaint Procedure for Community Living Elgin