

**SUBJECT:** Complaint Handling Policy  
**SECTION:** Ethical Policies  
**POLICY NUMBER:** E4  
**DATE POLICY ISSUED:** May 2013  
**DATE POLICY REVIEWED:**  
**APPLIES TO:** Anyone Making a Complaint other than a Staffperson or Client (please see appropriate policies)

## **Policy Statement**

Cambridge Shelter Corporation believes that when a complaint is made or concerns are registered, that it provides an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better service. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and in a timely manner, and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously. This policy is not designed to apportion blame or to be used as a disciplinary tool.

Most complaints and concerns, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant without a formal complaint process being initiated. The goal of this policy is to ensure that those making a complaint or expressing a concern are listened to and that their concern/complaint is acted upon promptly and fairly.

## **Definition**

A complaint shall be deemed to mean any oral or written statement alleging a grievance involving the conduct, business or affairs of Cambridge Shelter Corporation or any employee, representative, officer or director.

## **Procedure**

### **1. Oral Complaints**

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, will be taken seriously.
- Oral complaints should be directed to the Executive Director or their designate.
- All contact with the complainant will be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- If the complaint is being made on behalf of a service user (i.e. member of a client's family), it must be verified that the person has permission to speak on behalf of the service user. If there is any doubt, it should be assumed that the service user's permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint.
- The Executive Director, after hearing the complaint, will suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint.
- If the suggested resolution is not acceptable to the complainant, then they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the organization.
- The complaint will then be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Board Governance Committee for resolution. A written resolution will be sent to the complainant.

### **2. Written Complaints**

- When a complaint is received in writing, it will be directed to the Executive Director or their designate.
- The Executive Director will contact the complainant (if contact information is provided) and suggest a resolution for the complaint, or ask for further clarification before suggesting a resolution.
- If the resolution is satisfactory, a written copy of the resolution will be sent to the complainant.
- If the resolution is unsatisfactory, the complaint will be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Board Governance Committee for resolution. A written resolution will be sent to the complainant.

If an oral or written complaint raises potentially serious matters, legal advice may be sought before responding to the complainant and an internal investigation may be undertaken. A written response will be sent to the complainant within 28 days. If the issues are too complex, or the investigation cannot be completed within 28 days, the complainant will be informed of any delays.

All oral and written complaints will be documented and reported to the Board monthly.