



SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE Inc.

CLIENT COMPLAINT & APPEAL POLICY & PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Sussex Neighbourhood House aims for a high standard of client satisfaction, and as such acknowledges all client feedback – both positive and negative – as a means of improving service provision.

Client feedback will be sought through a range of methods including the evaluation process undertaken at the end of each program offered.

All client complaints and/or grievances will be taken seriously and dealt with in a respectful and equitable manner, making every effort to reach an outcome acceptable to all parties.

PROCEDURES

Those involved should attempt to resolve all verbal and/or written client complaints initially through discussion and conciliation.

Sussex Neighbourhood House should maintain a register of complaints which will allow identification and detail of the following issues:

- Submission date of complaint
- Nature of complaint
- Date/s when cause of complaint occurred
- Proposed action/process agreed upon
- Timeline for action
- Signatures of all parties involved in process
- If the complaint or grievance has been conveyed by a student/trainee to the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE), the staff member is to fairly and equitably resolve the complaint within 5 working days.
- The privacy and security of such information should be ensured.

If a complaint/grievance is associated with assessment results, the Adult Education Co-ordinator, in consultation with the assessor/trainer, should review the initial assessment and/or identify alternative assessment methods, and notify the learner accordingly.

If a complaint/grievance is associated with childcare or Children's Services and cannot be resolved through discussion with those involved, or the Manager, the matter should be put in writing to the Committee of Management, with the letter being addressed to the Chairperson, and marked Confidential.

If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute amicably, then the parties must within ten [10] days hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator. Both parties should agree on the choice of mediator, who can be either the Manager, or a mediator from the State Dispute Resolution Branch.

All applicants shall be given the opportunity to formally present his or her case to the mediator

The mediator must be:-

- a person chosen by agreement between the parties involved
- in the absence of an agreement:
 - In the case of a complaint between member of the House and another member, the Manager of Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc. will mediate, OR
 - In the case of a complaint between a member and Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc. staff member, a mediator appointed or employed by the State Dispute Resolution Branch (Dept. of Justice) will mediate

The mediator cannot be a member who is party to the dispute.

The parties to the dispute must in good faith attempt to settle the matter by mediation.

The mediator, in conducting the mediation must:

- give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard
- allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party
- ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process.

The mediator must not determine the dispute.

Appeals

Upon completion of a resolution process for a complaint or grievance, the client/student may wish to dispute the outcome of a resolution/assessment and seek a reassessment. All appeals are requested to be submitted in writing

If the appeal is in respect of an assessment, a reassessment is conducted within a reasonable timeframe by an independent third party assessor. The appellant will be given the opportunity to formally present his/her case. This is designed to ensure fairness and consistency and underpins the continuous improvement process

If the appeal is to dispute the outcome of a complaint/grievance process other than an assessment, the appeal will be scheduled to be heard by an independent person or panel, inviting the appellant to formally present his/her case

Upon a decision being made, the appellant is provided with a written statement of the appeal outcomes, including reasons for the decision. All decisions are documented in the Appeals Register.