



	REPORT NO.: 2018-66
MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2018	DATE PREPARED: OCTOBER 5, 2018
SUBJECT: CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2018-66 (CAO's Office), we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board approve the Corporate Complaints Policy, as presented;

AND THAT we authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to make amendments to the Policy with respect to housekeeping items, as may be required from time to time.

REPORT SUMMARY

To present The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information related to the implementation of a Corporate Complaints Policy.

BACKGROUND

Complaints and other forms of feedback provide valuable information on levels of client and tenant satisfaction and provide TBDSSAB with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service.

Feedback which is recorded and handled effectively will provide valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, coordinating a consistent approach for resolution, reducing the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity in a way which respects and values the person's feedback, can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence about a service. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint policy and process will assist TBDSSAB to achieve this.

COMMENTS

TBDSSAB Corporate Complaints Policy will provide clear and consistent guidelines for complaints received by TBDSSAB. Adherence to this policy is intended to provide an

effective and efficient framework to ensure all complaints are handled fairly and in a timely manner.

The development of the draft policy was informed by research into the best practices of other public sector organizations in Ontario, in particular, school boards, universities, hospitals, and social service providers. This research was especially useful in shaping the definition of a complaint, as distinct from requests for service or other kinds of feedback, as well as determining exemptions, including anonymous complaints and any form of litigation.

The TBDSSAB Corporate Complaints policy also draws on Divisional procedures and practices currently in place for complaints. The policy formalizes roles and responsibilities should a complaint be unresolvable at the front-line level or otherwise fall outside of the currently existing protocols. Since some Divisional policies and procedures are legislated requirements, such as the Ontario Works (OW) Review Process, their inclusion is not necessary and are thus exempt from the draft policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no direct financial implications associated with the approval of the Corporate Complaint Policy.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the Corporate Complaint Policy will ensure a clear and consistent framework for TBDSSAB to handle complaints, and should be approved.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

Attachment #1: [Draft Corporate Complaints Policy](#)

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<i>APPROVED / SIGNATURE:</i>	 William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
<i>SUBMITTED / SIGNATURE:</i>	 William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

POLICY	CATEGORY/SECTION BOARD - GENERAL
	SUBJECT CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

AUTHORITY

Governance and Procedural By-law-01-2017

INTENT OF POLICY

- To establish a framework for receiving and handling complaints in a clear, consistent and effective manner
- To ensure TBDSSAB Board and staff members are aware of what to do if a complaint is received
- To ensure all complaints are handled fairly and in a timely manner.
- To ensure complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are maintained

DEFINITIONS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a TBDSSAB program, service, or staff member, where a person believes that TBDSSAB or its staff has not provided a service experience to the individual's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is expected.

A complaint is distinct from:

- Request for a service: A general or specific request for service or request for information regarding TBDSSAB made by an individual that is resolved at the point of service delivery (i.e. Tenant calling Housing Maintenance to report a problem). Although a complaint could be made if TBDSSAB fails to deal with these effectively.
- Feedback: An opinion, comment and expression of interest in a TBDSSAB program of service by an individual
- Compliment: An expression of approval for a TBDSSAB service, staff member, program, product or process
- Suggestion: An idea submitted to TBDSSAB by an individual with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes
- Ontario Works (OW) Review Process: OW clients have the opportunity to request an Internal Review and a further review by the Social Assistance Benefit Tribunal under the OW regulations

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Some complaints are exempt, including:

- Anonymous complaints: Anonymous complaints are difficult, if not impossible, to assess or investigate and will not be dealt with through the complaint handling process
- Complaints by employees: Alternative procedures are available to employees to initiate complaints within the organization
- Complaints about services (i.e. Tenants cannot use the formal complaints procedure to complain about rent increases or rent levels)
- Complaints involving any form of litigation

Formal Complaint Process

In order for a complaint to enter the formal documentation, investigation and resolution process, it must meet one of the following criteria:

- The complaint could not be resolved at the front-line staff level
- The complaint was initially addressed or directed to a Management level or above

Who Can Make a Complaint

- TBDSSAB tenants, clients and service users
- Any member of the public
- An advocate (Service Users may decide to ask someone to help them make their complaint. Service Users must complete the appropriate consent form to designate the advocate. The consent form must be received by TBDSSAB before the complaint will be discussed with the advocate.

Who Can Not Make a Complaint

- TBDSSAB Board members should not advocate on behalf of a complainant
- TBDSSAB staff members

POLICY

To enable the timely consideration of a complaint, specific details of the incident, conduct, or behaviour giving rise to the complaint should be provided.

Complaints can be made:

- In person
- Over the phone
- Online (Via Contact Us email address on website)
- In writing (Via letter or email)

TBDSSAB encourages complaints, where possible, to be submitted in writing (online, email or letter).

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All complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively. The complaint resolution process is a part of a quality culture where complaints are an opportunity for improvement.

Complaint Service Standards:

- Positive attitude toward dealing with feedback, compliments and complaints and respect for the complainant
- Reinforce the commitment of TBDSSAB to quality service delivery and encouragement for provision of feedback on what is and what can be improved

The initial complaint will be acknowledged as received within 2 business days. If the complaint does not provide enough information for assessment and investigation, the complainant may be contacted for more details.

If enough details are provided, a complaint will be assessed, investigated and a response will be provided in writing within 14 days. More complicated complaints may require more time to investigate. TBDSSAB will communicate its expectations where a longer period is required.

Complaints on Social Media

As social media influences others, it is important TBDSSAB treats a complaint on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as seriously as a face-to-face complaint. The target time to acknowledge a social media complaint is 24-48 hours. Complaints on social media are distinct from an opinion or comment and must include an identifying name.

STANDARDS OF APPLICATION

Roles and Responsibilities

The Supervisor, Communications & Engagement is responsible for receiving, and directing formal complaints to the appropriate Division; monitoring the status of complaints; and ensuring a response in accordance with the service standards.

Managers and Directors are responsible for documenting, investigating and ensuring a response to complaints about services which fall within their Division. Complaints about staff are to be processed by that staff member's immediate supervisor unless otherwise requested.

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Staff is required to have knowledge and understanding of: the purpose of receiving complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.

RELATED POLICIES

BRD-01:103 – TBDSSAB Board Members, Non-Members of Board Committees and Advisory Tables Code of Conduct

RELATED PROCEDURES

Complaints Procedure

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