

Community Connections Support Services

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Annual Complaint Review

Background

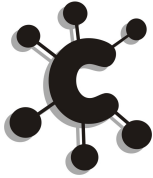
Community Connections Support Services began providing supports for people living with a disability in 1991. For many years, CCSS operated as a very 'flat' organization that provided a limited amount of supports in a few areas of service. As such, any complaints that were filed during those years were done so with the Director of the agency and usually in a very informal manner. Complaints were typically dealt with immediately and solutions were implemented as soon as possible without much need for analysis or documentation.

Today

Over the past number of years, CCSS has expanded its services and has become one of the largest agencies throughout the Kootenay and Central Okanagan that provides a number of different services to people living with a disability. As a result, a management support team has been established and CCSS has dedicated much effort to quality improvement and accountability to ensure excellent services for the people we support.

Over the past number of years, it became obvious that existing policies and procedures for receiving, addressing and tracking complaints were in need of significant upgrade if the agency were to be successful in supporting people receiving services, employees, stakeholders and the general public in dealing with complaints. As a result, CCSS formalized its policies and procedures for Complaint Management and has provided for several methods by which a concerned party has the ability to file a complaint.

It is the agency's intention to continue to stream-line this process and ensure that all relevant information is captured, addressed and analyzed in the interest of identifying trends, possible causes, solutions and areas of service requiring improvement. We feel that in doing so, our agency can operate with a higher level of transparency, accountability and focus on quality improvement.



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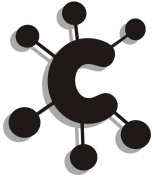
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Findings for 2012

CCSS has received a total of 21 documented complaints for the period of September 2011– August 2012. A number of these complaints remain classified as 'Open Files' due to on-going investigation / monitoring required in each circumstance but are included within this report.

Identified Trends

1. Stakeholder formal complaints regarding the conduct of a CCSS employee or contractor in relation to the safety and well-being of persons served.
 - a) Complaint: Person supported in Home Share was seen engaging in reckless and potentially dangerous behaviour while accessing her community.
 - b) Complaint: A complaint regarding possible neglect of a person supported in Home Share Services was received from that person's family member.
 - c) Complaint: Possibility of person supported in Home Share being exposed to / supported to engage in inappropriate behaviour.
 - d) Complaint: A person supported in Home Share was not given adequate medical attention for on-going medical needs.
 - e) Complaint: A person supported in Home Share accused her Provider of physical abuse.
 - f) Complaint: A Home Share Provider was accused of taking advantage of the people they support as well as providing inadequate housing.
 - g) Complaint: A Home Share Provider was accused of neglect and abuse of one of the people supported in their home. (Remains Open)
 - h) Complaint: A Home Share Provider was accused by the person they support as well as day supports of abusive behaviour. (Remains Open)
 - i) Complaint: A Home Share Provider was accused of not doing enough to advocate for or liaise with medical professionals regarding the person supported.
2. Funder formal complaints regarding CCSS procedures.
 - a) Complaint: Critical Incident Reports not filed on time and follow up not communicated with CLBC.
 - b) Complaint: No formal process to address Dual-relationship roles and provide for Safeguard Planning.
 - c) Complaint: Non-compliance with new Work flow Plan.

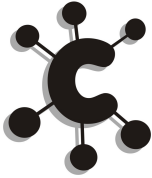


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- d) Complaint: Adequate hiring practices and screening.
 - e) Complaint: Failure to follow through with allegations of abuse in a Home Share placement in a timely way and failure to further investigate existing supports with same Home Share Provider (Open complaint)
 - f) Complaint: Failure to follow reporting process by which PGT is notified and set to action regarding rights of person served being compromised (Open complaint)
 - g) Complaint: Inadequate communication with all relevant parties
3. Employee or contractor formal complaints regarding CCSS procedures.
- a) Complaint: Family member of a person supported in Home Share found it unnecessary for CCSS to seek consent for services from person supported.
 - b) Complaint: Home Share Provider accusing CCSS of inaction as it relates to funding levels.
 - c) Complaint: Home Share Provider accusing CCSS of not responding to her concerns regarding insurance issues.
 - d) Complaint: CCSS leadership accused of failing to address personnel issues in a residential resource (Open complaint).
 - e) Complaint: Home Share Provider accusing CCSS of failing to address issues pertaining to another agency's screening process.
4. Employee or contractor formal complaints regarding other employees or contractors.
- a) Complaint: A CCSS employee's conduct in the workplace was reported as abusive and unprofessional by several other employees in the same resource (Open complaint – also identified in 3.d.)
 - b) Complaint: CCSS Community Support Workers reported difficulty working with a Home Share Provider of a person supported (Open complaint-also identified in 1.h.)
5. Person Served formal complaint regarding CCSS employee or contractor
- a) Complaint: Person served has asked to be moved from existing Home Share placement due to alleged abuse (Open complaint – also identified in 1.h and 4.b.)
 - b) Complaint: Person served has reported sustaining abuse from Home Share Provider (Open complaint – also identified in 2.e.)
 - c) Complaint: Person served has requested assistance in preventing abuse of his funds by a family member (Open complaint – also identified in 2.f.)



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Actions Taken

Specific remedial actions for each complaint are noted within each individual complaint file and can be made available for review upon request.

1. *Stakeholder formal complaints regarding the conduct of a CCSS employee or contractor in relation to the safety and well-being of persons served.*

In all cases, investigations have been conducted with relevant parties to establish facts and develop action plans. Where applicable, Home Share Providers have received support from their Coordinators and the Agency to follow applicable CCSS Policies and Procedures. CCSS has developed a formal Investigations policy and reviews 'Open Complaint' files regularly to ensure that all complaints are addressed and all relevant parties are communicated with as to the outcome. Where resolution has been reached by way of ending Home Share contract, the matter has been considered 'Closed'. In cases where investigations have been inconclusive, CCSS continues to monitor outcomes for the people supported and/or has assisted in developing Safeguard Plans to ensure the safety and success of the people supported.

2. *Funder formal complaints regarding CCSS procedures.*

CCSS has remained open to revisiting and changing policies and procedures to ensure effective communication with CLBC and all other stakeholders. Changes to policy and procedures have included: Complaints Management, Investigations, Incident Reporting, Dual-relationship and Safeguard Planning, Reporting on Infringement of Rights, ISPs, and Exit Planning. CCSS has also taken measures to consistently address on-going issues (ie. Complaints, incidents, etc) to ensure that matters are adequately documented, addressed in a timely way, and communicated to relevant parties.

3. *Employee or contractor formal complaints regarding CCSS procedures.*

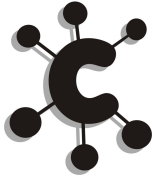
CCSS has addressed the majority of these complaints by educating the complainants on the agency's commitment to existing CCSS responsibilities, functional lines of communication and the agency's Policies and Procedures.

4. *Employee or contractor formal complaints regarding other employees or contractors.*

Where applicable, CCSS has encouraged all parties to follow functional lines of communication in accordance with the agency's Conflict Resolution and Lines of Communication Policy. Where complaints have been identified as belonging to a larger complaint (complaint threads), all relevant parties have been informed and the matter has been investigated.

5. *Person Served formal complaint regarding CCSS employee or contractor*

All noted complaints remain 'Open' and are currently being investigated. In one case, the



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person served was moved out of the existing Home Share placement and is no longer actively registering a complaint. In this case, there remains another person supported in the existing placement necessitating on-going investigation / monitoring and safeguard planning. In the other 2 cases, both of the people supported have family members that have been named as their Committee. CCSS along with CLBC are currently investigating options available to the person served within the legal parameters established by order of Committee.

Areas needing performance improvement

Although many efforts have been made to stream-line and standardize the agency's complaint management process and make those procedures known to all persons served, employees and stakeholders, the processes are not currently followed consistently.

Community Connections Support Services is striving to manage conflict and complaints in a much more positive fashion. Often, complaints are not viewed as an opportunity for growth but rather a criticism of work that is currently being done. This can lead to delay in responsiveness or the appearance of reluctance to be open to make necessary changes.

A prevailing trend or theme as it relates to complaints at the agency appears to be about communication. Although personnel and contractors of CCSS strive to provide consistent, person-centered, values-based supports, information is not always communicated to concerned parties in a way that can better illustrate the quality of supports. Communication with those outside the agency as well as inter-agency communication is imperative to ensuring consistency, responsiveness and accountability.

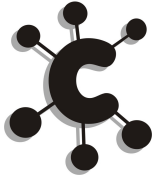
Actions To be Taken

Community Connections Support Services is committed to continuous quality improvement and intends on addressing need areas in the following ways:

1. Training for Management Support Team regarding Conflict Resolution, Complaints and Investigation, Personal vs. Professional.
2. Training for all personnel in reporting requirements / responsiveness.
3. Developing Policy, Procedures, Templates to address emerging issues.

Supporting Documents

Copies of all complaints reflected in this report can be made available upon request.



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Formal Commendations

While we recognize the necessity of collecting and analyzing trends from the complaints we receive, we believe that there is value in acknowledging any formal commendations received in the same time period, as it also directs the agency to continue to focus on quality improvement. CCSS received 3 formal commendations from the period of September 2011-August 2012.

All three commendations received, focused on CCSS providing supports that were thought to be over and above stakeholder's expectations. Areas of support were identified in Home Share and Respite Provision and comments reflected stakeholder's experience of receiving exceptional support, having their concerns addressed in a timely and respectful way and being treated with value by personnel at Community Connections Support Services.

Copies of commendations can be made available upon request.

Complaints Review Generated:
Generated by:

September 14, 2012
Jacqueline Burnham
Quality Assurance Manager