

Community Connections Support Services

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Annual Complaint and Allegation Review 2014

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.

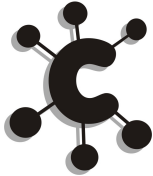
It became obvious that existing policies and procedures for receiving, addressing and tracking complaints and allegations were in need of significant upgrade if the agency were to be successful in supporting people receiving services, employees, stakeholders and the general public in dealing with complaints. 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.

Findings for 2014

CCSS has received a total of ten (10) documented complaints for the period of September 2013–August 2014. In addition, CCSS conducted ten (10) investigations regarding allegations against contracted Home Share Providers.

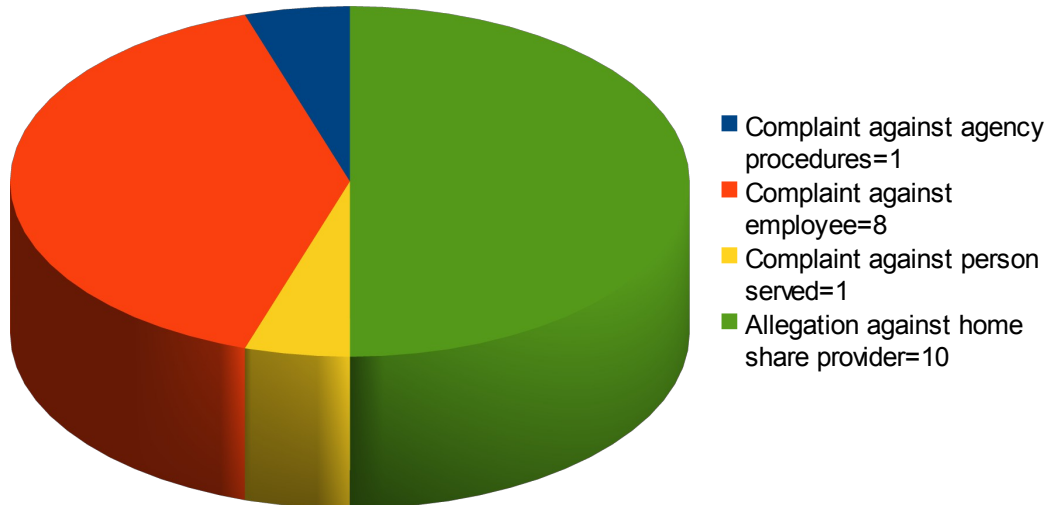
A breakdown of the complaints and allegations are illustrated below.



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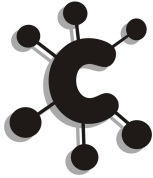
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Complaints

CCSS received and responded to ten (10) formal complaints during this reporting period. Specifics regarding each complaint, procedures used to determine an action plan, and follow up are all captured within each formal response to complaint. Detailed information can be made available upon request and with the consent of parties involved. The following trends have been identified:

- Complaints against agency (1): regarding agency procedures and responsiveness
- Complaints against person served (1): inappropriate conduct on public transit
- Complaints against Employee (8):
 - lack of professionalism
 - financial misconduct
 - neglect to follow through on contractual obligations
 - inappropriate use of restraint
 - inappropriate use of behavioral management techniques
 - breach of Code of Ethics
 - lack of leadership (2)



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Allegations

During the period between September 2013 – August 2014, CCSS investigated a total of ten (10) allegations against Home Share Providers contracting with the agency. Specifics regarding each investigation, procedures used to determine an action plan, and follow up are all captured within each formal Investigation Report. Detailed information can be made available upon request and with the consent of parties involved. Allegations were registered and addressed in the following areas:

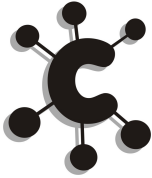
- allegation of abuse (6)
- allegation of neglect (2)
- allegation of insufficient support
- allegation of inappropriate support (ie. language)

In all cases, investigations were conducted with relevant parties to establish facts and develop action plans. Where applicable, Home Share Providers received support from their Home Share Coordinators and the agency to follow applicable CCSS Policies and Procedures. CCSS continues to implement a formal investigation process whereby interviews are conducted, findings are determined and recommendations are established. Comprehensive investigation reports are written and shared with all relevant parties. In addition, investigation summaries are provided to the party being investigated. 'Open Complaint' files are regularly reviewed to ensure that all on-going investigations are conducted within agency established time-lines and all parties are kept informed as to the status of the investigation. Where resolution has been reached by way of ending Home Share contract or satisfying recommendations arising from the investigation, 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.

What We've Learned

Analyzing complaints and allegations within this reporting period has led to the following changes / improvements to existing procedures:

1. The management support team has spent time discussing and reviewing the necessity to ensure that we are an agency that is responsive to the needs of our stakeholders. As a consequence, we have begun to actively track action plans and response time-lines in the following areas:
 - complaints and allegations
 - requests for service
 - data and information requested by our funder
 - reporting on follow up for critical incidents



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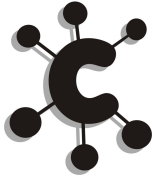
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- reporting on follow up for investigations
 - We have met with our funder and continue to work at streamlining our procedures regarding complaints and allegations as many of the allegations we receive are communicated to us by CLBC.
2. The agency continues to provide training to employees in areas such as behavioural support and NVC techniques. We consider this to be an important area of focus and have been quick to respond to any concerns regarding employee conduct, as it relates to behavioral support and its appropriate implementation.
 3. We've recognized that the majority of allegations against our home share providers typically fall into the areas of abuse or neglect. While not all of these allegations are found to be substantiated, we have understood the necessity of filing critical incident reports on these allegations and have implemented this procedure.
 4. We have amended our procedures for investigations to include interviews with family, when possible, as they can at times provide back-ground information that may not be forthcoming from other sources but remains relevant to the issue at hand.
 5. The management support team has had discussions and reviewed demonstration of leadership at the agency. Part of this process has informed a change in service area outcomes tracking, demonstrating a direct and proactive approach in service provision and establishing and maintaining a presence of leadership in areas such as responsiveness and accountability.
 6. The agency has recognized the necessity to formalize disciplinary procedures and has consistently implemented a formal approach to dealing with these issues.
 7. Cross-training of home share coordinators has begun to address investigation procedures where it is not possible for the Service Coordinator to manage the file and the interviewing process.

Areas needing performance improvement

While much effort has been made to address complaints and allegations fairly, comprehensively, and within time-lines; the process continues to be informed as we deal with allegations and complaints in an on-going way. We continue to remain open to amending current practices to ensure best practice and welcome feedback in this regard.



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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. On-going evaluation of current CCSS policy and procedures for managing complaints and allegations.
2. Continue with cross-training efforts within Home Share services.

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 six (6) formal commendations from the period of September 2013-August 2014.

1. We received a compliment from our funder for our progressive and comprehensive approach to home share provision.
2. One of our home share providers expressed gratitude for outstanding support provided by CCSS to herself and the person she supports.
3. A home share provider complimented the agency on its work ethic and responsiveness.
4. We also heard from a health care professional commenting on outstanding supports provided to a person supported by the agency.
5. An employee sent us a comment of praise in creating a position for and the work done by the Health and Safety Coordinator.
6. A home share provider expressed gratitude for our attempts to simplify documentation requirements, specifically the ISP.

Copies of commendations can be made available upon request.

Complaints Review Generated:
Generated by:

November 2014
Jacqueline Burnham
Quality Assurance Manager