

<b>Service Complaints</b>	
Service Complaints	Department: All Departments
Date Approved: March 9, 2023	Date Revised: April 29, 2025
Source Reference: Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017), O. Reg. 155/18 s. 22-23, s.119; Ombudsman Act (1990)	

## **POLICY**

Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services recognizes that service users have a right to express their concerns so that they may be heard and addressed appropriately in a manner consistent with both legislation (Child, Youth and Family Services Act 2017, Section 119) and the Agency's Vision, Mission, Relationship Statements and Philosophy.

The Agency will respond to all service user complaints except for the following:

1. Complaints regarding issues that have been decided by the court.
2. Complaints regarding issues that are currently before the court.
3. Complaints regarding issues that are subject to another decision-making process under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 or under the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

All employees of the Agency will facilitate initial complaints, which can be relayed verbally or in writing. A management employee will acknowledge, debrief, and seek resolution of the initial complaint.

If attempts to resolve the initial complaint are unsuccessful, for further review complaints must be written on the provincial 'Formal Complaint to a Society's Internal Complaints Review Panel' form (006-3249, Formal Complaint To A Society's Internal Complaints Review Panel (ICRP) - Forms - Central Forms Repository (CFR)). A review panel will be convened to seek resolution with the service user.

All service users will be informed of the service complaint process at the initiation of service and at regular intervals throughout the course of service.

## **PROCEDURE:**

1. A person may make a complaint to an Agency relating to a service sought or received by that person from the Agency in accordance with the regulations (Child, Youth and Family Services Act, Section 119 (1)).
2. A complaint may be made to the Agency utilizing the person(s) preferred method, which includes but is not limited to email, telephone, letter, online form, or in-person.

3. Where possible, resolution is encouraged on a person-to-person basis with the involved employee.
4. If the complainant is not comfortable addressing the concern on a person-to-person basis, the complainant may wish to make a service complaint to the employee's direct report or another employee of the Agency with whom the complainant feels comfortable speaking with.
5. The Agency employee receiving the service complaint will:
  - a) Summarize and document the individual's complaint and share the steps that will be taken in response to the complaint.
  - b) Relay the information to [servicecomplaints@nog.ca](mailto:servicecomplaints@nog.ca) without delay.
6. An Agency employee will review the submitted information and log the service complaint. If eligible, the complaint will be relayed to the most appropriate management employee. If ineligible and if contact information for the complainant is present, a letter will be composed identifying the decision and reasoning and will be relayed within seven (7) days of receipt.
7. If eligible, the assigned management employee will:
  - a) Acknowledge the complaint via a letter to the complainant within two (2) business days of processing, having received and read, the complaint. The acknowledgement must advise the complainant of their right to have a third-party present (withstanding legal counsel) as a resource person at any future meetings.
  - b) Debrief with the person(s) to whom the complaint relates, and/or the child or youth who made or is the subject of the complaint, and/or any witnesses to the conduct of the complaint. The parties requiring debriefing are contextual to the content of the complaint.
    - i. Debriefing must be completed within seven (7) days of assignment of the complaint or as soon as possible if outside the seven day window. The date and time of each debriefing, the name (and applicable titles) of the parties debriefed, and any other efforts made to conduct debriefing must be recorded within complaint documentation.
  - c) Meet with the complainant and resolve the complaint within ten (10) business days of acknowledging the complaint via a letter.
  - d) Provide the complainant with an update on the status of the complaint review every fifteen (15) days while the complaint is active. This is determined based on the date that the complaint was submitted to the Agency.
8. If resolved, the assigned management employee will:
  - a) Compose and relay a resolution letter to the complainant outlining the context of the complaint and steps agreed upon to achieve resolution, as agreed by all parties.

- b) Compose a briefing note identifying dates, time periods, and parties to relevant events within resolution, including all debriefs and efforts to debrief. The briefing note will identify the timeline for receipt of the complaint, acknowledgement, the resolution meeting and resolution letter. The briefing note should also incorporate the original context of the complaint and steps agreed upon to achieve resolution. Please note this briefing note should be composed in a manner addressed to the complainant or an external party. If so requested, this briefing note will be provided to the complainant.
  - c) Relay all complaint documentation to [servicecomplaints@nog.ca](mailto:servicecomplaints@nog.ca) for tracking and archival purposes.
  - d) Compose a non-identifying case note in the case management file most appropriate to the complainant remarking the topic of the complaint and resolution.
9. If unresolved, the assigned management employee will:
- a) Advise the complainant of their right to further review by an internal complaint review panel.
  - b) Provide, give direction to, or assist the complainant in completing the ICRP form (Formal Complaint To A Society's Internal Complaints Review Panel (ICRP) - Forms - Central Forms Repository (CFR)).
  - c) If possible, relay the completed ICRP form to [servicecomplaints@nog.ca](mailto:servicecomplaints@nog.ca).
  - d) Provide the complainant with a service complaints pamphlet and describe the internal complaints review panel process.
10. A panel will be composed of two (2) management employees (one [1] senior manager, and one [1] other management employee) randomly selected from a prior pool identified by the Chief Executive Officer and one (1) party external to child welfare services. The external party may also be a non-services manager or supervisor, an Agency Knowledge Keeper, or an external agency representative.
- a) All panel members will be screened for conflict of interest and no member of the panel may have direct involvement with the complaint or have had direct service involvement with the complainant's case.
11. A meeting will be scheduled by the panel chairperson with the complainant within fourteen (14) days of receiving the ICRP form.
- a) The time, location and meeting format will be decided by the complainant.
  - b) As noted, the complainant may identify a resource person to attend where said person is not legal counsel.
12. The panel chairperson may schedule more than one (1) meeting with the complainant if further information or continued discussion is required to support resolution. Additional meetings must occur within the fourteen (14) day timeline between complaint receipt and resolution timeline.
13. If resolved, a summary of the meeting and agreed upon actions will be relayed to the complainant within fourteen (14) days of the resolution meeting.

- a) A copy of the letter authored by the panel chairperson will also be relayed to the service complaints email alias (servicecomplaints@nog.ca) within the same period.

14. If unresolved, the complainant will be provided with information for:

- a) The Child and Family Services Review Board ([Child and Family Services Review Board - Tribunals Ontario](#)).
- b) The Ombudsman's Office ([Home - Ontario Ombudsman](#)).
- c) The Information Privacy Commissioner of Ontario ([Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario](#)).

15. A summary of rights-based complaints received each month will be relayed to MCCSS via the SOR-RL platform on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day of the following month.