

<b>Manual: Policy &amp; Procedure</b>	<b>Section: Section 5 # 5.3</b>
<b>Subject: Client Concerns and Complaints</b>	<b>Date Approved: January 2005</b>
<b>Approved by: Board of Directors</b>	<b>Date Reviewed: May 2015</b>

**Principle:**

The Anne Johnston Health Station operates a client-centered model of service delivery, and is committed to providing the best possible services to the individuals, groups and communities that it serves. The Anne Johnston Health Station is committed to respecting and supporting the competence and integrity of its clients, staff and volunteer service providers. The Anne Johnston Health Station believes that organizational improvement can be best achieved by encouraging client feedback and ensuring that this feedback is utilized for the purpose of continuous quality improvement.

**Policy:**

A process is in place to address client concerns and complaints in a systematic and responsive fashion which seeks to quickly and effectively resolve the client's concern/complaint. The process will seek to include staff and volunteer service providers within established steps in resolving the concern/ complaint.

Every effort will be made to respond to client concerns as soon as an issue is raised and the goal will be to find immediate resolution. When this is not possible, the procedures for addressing a concern/complaint are clearly articulated by the organization and the steps outlined in the procedures will be followed in an expedient manner.

**Procedures:**

To address client concerns and complaints the following steps are to be taken:

Throughout the process, staff and volunteers should take notes documenting issues, actions and resolutions. It is not necessary for clients to document concerns/complaints in order for the concern/complaint to be reviewed. At any point in the process, the staff person responding to the complaint shall bring to the attention of the Executive Director any complaints that may have a negative impact on the organization's financial, legal, security or public affairs including situations where the person with the complaint acknowledges having or planning contact with the media.

The Executive Director will immediately advise the Chair of the Board of any such complaints/concerns.

### Step One:

If the complaint is received by the staff person or volunteer providing the services, the client and staff or volunteer will review the complaint within 24 hours.

If a staff person or volunteer is approached by a client who has a complaint regarding another staff person, they will advise the relevant Manager or the Executive Director who will contact the person to whom the complaint is being directed. In such instances, the staff person providing the service will be alerted to the existence of the complaint unless the client has asked that the information be kept confidential.

In receiving a complaint, the person providing service may involve or consult the manager at any stage. A resolution is recommended to the complainant.

### Step Two:

If there is no successful resolution, the client has the opportunity to have the relevant Manager review the complaint.

If the client calls a Manager, Executive Director or members of the Board of Directors directly without going through step one, the Manager, Executive Director. If the call goes directly to a Board Member, the Member should let the complainant know that the day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the Executive Director and that the Board Member will advise the Executive Director of the complaint. The Board Member will provide the contact complainant with the contact information of the Executive Director and follow up by contacting the Executive Director to inform him/her of the call.

If the complaint has come through Step One, the Manager will generally have initial contact with the client by telephone. If a resolution of the complaint cannot be reached over the telephone, a meeting may be arranged with the Manager to review the complaint and reach resolution. The preferred method of resolution is to get all parties together but, if the parties are unwilling, they will be met with separately. The results of the meeting will be documented by the Manager and will be forwarded to the client and staff member/ service provider as soon as possible after the meeting.

If the Manager and the service provider fail to resolve the complaint, the client shall be informed of the right to seek resolution through a meeting with the Executive Director. The name and number of the Executive Director shall be given to the client if he/she wishes to pursue the complaint.

The Executive Director should be informed of the complaint by the Manager or the Service Provider once a complaint enters into step three if it has not already been brought to her/his attention.

### Step Three:

The Executive Director will review the information from the previous attempts to resolve the complaint and will arrange a meeting with the staff person/service provider involved. The Executive Director will meet with the client to review the complaint, if requested by the client and if she/he deems it appropriate. The meeting will provide an opportunity to review the complaint/concern and seek a satisfactory resolution.

A summary of the meeting and follow up steps will be documented and forwarded to the client and involved staff person/ service provider within 7 days of the meeting with the client and or after the complaint was received.

### Step Four:

If the Executive Director does not resolve the complaint, the matter will proceed to the attention of the Chair of the Board of Directors who may appoint a task group of Board members to hear the complaint. The task group will be made up of three members of the Board of Directors. The task group will meet and review the preceding attempts to resolve the complaint and will arrange separate meetings with the client and involved service provider. Within two weeks the task group will send a letter to the client setting out any agreement reached, or failing this, the committee's decision regarding the complaint.

### Documentation of Client Concerns/Complaints:

A complaint/concern form (attached) will be completed by the service provider or the manager involved with a client concern/ complaint, recording a summary of the issue presented and the follow up plan. These forms will be passed on to the Executive Director and completed within one week of the complaint/concern being resolved.

All complaints/concerns will be collated by the Executive Director and reviewed with staff on a quarterly basis. The names and identifying details of these complaints will be removed from these summaries in order to provide anonymity for clients and service providers.

The purpose of such reviews will include identifying common issues and trends and identifying mechanisms for continuous improvement.



**CLIENT CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS / COMMENDATIONS FORM**

**Date:**

**Person receiving concern/complaint/commendation:**

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**Description of Concern / Complaint / Commendation Received:**

**Action Taken Concerning Concern / Complaint / Commendation:**

- For File information
- Advise Staff Person and Program Manager
- Advise Executive Director
- Advise Executive Director
- Advise Task Group of the Board of Directors

Additional Information Regarding Actions Taken About Concern / Complaint / Commendations:

**Client was contacted about outcome of concern / complaint / commendation and informed about any next steps:**  yes  no

Please explain reasons why client was not contacted:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Receiving the Concern/Complaint/Commendation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director