

North Simcoe Victim Services views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organization that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicize the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at North Simcoe Victim Services knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of North Simcoe Victim Services.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from first responders, clients, donors, volunteers or community agencies who have a legitimate interest North Simcoe Victim Services. A complaint *must be received* by email or in writing.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively and confidentially, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Executive Director and Chair of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will document the complaint and follow up with complainant.

Resolving Complaints:

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Executive Director and/or Board Chair within ten (10) business days. On receiving the complaint, the staff/board of director records the details of the complaint. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to make inquiries and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within ten (10) business days of the complaint having been received. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within twenty (20) business days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Step 2 - Second Stage

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at the First Stage, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at the Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The request for Board-level review should be acknowledged within ten (10) business days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Executive Director or Chair of the Board may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior level person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within twenty (20) business days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final and binding.

At its sole discretion, the Board reserves the right to set-aside this complaint process – in its entirety – if it feels that the organization requires the involvement of legal counsel and/or if it is responding to a complainant who has already engaged legal counsel prior to the complaint process being completed.



COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

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**Telephone: 705-325-5578
Email: exdir@ns-vs.com
Charitable Donations Number:
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**Donations can be made online
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