

Dispute Resolution

Policy

Self-advocates, families, community members, and other stakeholders have the right to access a dispute resolution process that is effective and respectful. The intent of the dispute resolution process is to determine the nature of the issue and to work towards effective solutions.

Where disputes involve ConneXions' representatives, the dispute resolution process will be started at the next level of authority. For example if the dispute involves a Program Manager, the resolution process would start at the director level.

The dispute resolution process must be initiated no later than thirty (30) days after the action, event, or circumstance or thirty (30) days after the complainant first becomes aware of the action, event, or circumstance.

Self-advocates and their families have the right to retain an independent advocate or representative to act on their behalf. The Director of Children and Family Services will, when requested, provide support and resources to self-advocates and their family members.

ConneXions recognizes that disputes may arise and can be resolved without negatively affecting the services being offered.

There will be no reprisal or retaliation by ConneXions against any person who complains.

Purpose

To provide a process where self-advocates, families, staff, community members, and other stakeholders are fairly heard and represented. The dispute resolution process is based on the following three principles:

1. The establishment of good working relationships based on ongoing, open communication and trust will prevent most conflicts from arising;
2. When conflicts do occur, the individuals involved will most often have the ability, through mutual respect and communication, to resolve the issues among themselves.

3. All parties involved have a genuine commitment to resolve conflict in a respectful manner. The resolution process recognizes the other party's feelings and perspectives while working toward a mutually satisfactory outcome.

Procedure

The dispute resolution process is used when self-advocates, families, staff, community members, and other stakeholders feel their concerns are not being adequately addressed through direct communication with ConneXions' representatives.

A copy of the dispute resolution procedure is available to all stakeholders. Alternate formats are also available as required.

Effective dispute resolution encompasses the following steps:

1. All disputes will first be addressed directly with the appropriate ConneXions representative. Every effort will be made to resolve issues at this level. When receiving a complaint from a stakeholder that cannot be resolved immediately, the ConneXions representative, or stakeholder will complete the *Complaint Record Form (CRF)*. The original *CRF* is given to the appropriate Program Manager. The Program Manager will then provide copies to the Complainant, Department Director and Executive Director.
2. The Manager will meet and discuss the concern with all parties within fourteen (14) days of receiving the *CRF*. The agreed resolution is recorded on the *CRF*, copied to the complainant, the appropriate Department Director and Executive Director.
3. If a resolution cannot be achieved within thirty (30) days of the manager receiving the *CRF*, the complainant can request the involvement of the appropriate Department Director.
4. Upon receiving this request the Department Director will meet and discuss the concern with all parties within fourteen (14) days. The agreed resolution is recorded on the *CRF*, copied to the complainant, and forwarded to the Executive Director.
5. If a resolution cannot be reached within twenty (20) days of the Department Director receiving the *CRF*, the complainant can request the involvement of the Executive Director

6. The Executive Director will respond to the complainant within ten (10) days of receiving the *CRF*. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's response, the complainant can request the involvement of the Board of Directors or an independent third party.
7. The resolution determined by the Board of Directors or the independent third party is considered final.
8. If the complainant is not satisfied, it is recommended that the Advocate for Service Quality be contacted. The Advocate for Service Quality can be reached at

2nd Floor-555 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1C8

Phone (604) 775-1238
9. The Executive Director of his / her designate will provide resources and liaise with the relevant government ministry should the issue represent a resource problem. If necessary, they will also support the individual with a disability and/or their family to access an independent advocate.
10. All completed *Complaint Record Forms* are forwarded to the Director-Chair of the CQI Committee for review. A copy of *CRF's* will be kept in the program and the original document archived.

ConneXions recognizes that some complaints will be forwarded anonymously. Anonymous complaints will be accepted and addressed with the understanding that the efficacy of the solution may be impacted in the interest of anonymity.

Approved: _____