

## Complaints, Appeals & Dispute Resolution

There are rules and laws that have to be followed when WJS Canada investigates a complaint. A complaint will not result in any reprisals or barriers to service. When a formal complaint is investigated as a “critical incident” we fill out a report and send it to the office of our funder.

If there is a complaint of child abuse or if someone suspects that a child is being abused, we also must tell Child Protection. Where there is suspected or observed neglect, abuse or any other unlawful act against a person, WJS Canada involves the police as a part of the reporting process. These situations must be reported immediately to the manager of the program.

Individuals who are not satisfied with the care and/or treatment received in or by WJS Canada programs, providers or management may complain/appeal as follows:

### The Complaints Process

Step 1: If you can, try and talk to the person about it. Please also move on to Step 2.

Step 2: You are encouraged to discuss any concern right away with the Program Manager from which you receive services. If your concern is not resolved within 5 days after you speak to the Program Manager, if you do not feel safe talking to the Program Manager, or if the Program Manager is part of your concern, please move on to Step 3.

Step 3: If your concern was not resolved after speaking to the Program Manager, you are encouraged to submit a formal complaint to the Program Director. The Program Manager will provide you with the Program Director’s contact information.

To start a formal complaint, fill out the Person Served Complaint Form, and fax or email it to the Program Director or to our Central Admin office in Maple Ridge, BC. Be sure and tell them as much as you can about your concern and mention any people who are involved. After receiving the Form, WJS Canada staff will respond in person, by telephone, or by email to let you know the Form was received and to gather any further information that is needed to address your concern.

The Program Director will address the matter within 10 days of receiving the written complaint and notify you in writing. If your concern is not resolved, please move on to Step 4.

Step 4: If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Step 3, you can contact the Regional Services Director for your province and region to request a meeting. The Program Director will provide you with the Regional Service Director’s contact information. The meeting should be held within 15 days. If you wish, you may ask a neutral person to assist in presenting your concern.

Note: Where possible you will get a written decision about your complaint in 30 days after WJS Canada/SOY has received their Persons Served Complaint Form. If it is something that is very serious and you are worried about your safety, we will talk with you about being in a different place or having different people support you until we have the investigation done. The CEO and National Management Team are kept informed regarding an investigation and any report is kept confidential.

## The Appeal Process

There are different things that can happen after the decision is made, If you're not satisfied you can "challenge" the decision and a different decision might be made.

- You might get an apology from the person who treated you unfairly.
- WJS Canada might change some of its rules.
- WJS Canada might provide more training to staff.

If you are not satisfied with the decision made, you can contact the CEO for a review and final decision. We cannot ensure that you will be completely satisfied with the outcome of the process. What we can ensure is that your concern will get fair consideration and we will do everything we can to resolve your complaint. We support the decision-making process, but we are also open to reviewing these decisions.

If you are still not satisfied you can get someone else outside of WJS Canada to help you. You have the right to arrange for assistance from whomever you wish at any time during the presentation of your concerns, including a legal guardian, a social worker, or other advocate. Of course, you always have the right to take your concerns to appropriate review processes, such as an ombudsman or other procedural review bodies.

You are served by the organization and have the right to ask for an internal appeal of any aspect of the service you receive, including:

1. Acceptance into services
2. Types of services provided (including specific incidents)
3. Limitations on services; and
4. Termination of services

At the time of application for services (for individual-initiated involvement) or admission into services (for externally-initiated services), we tell you about your right to appeal, your avenues of appeal, both internal and external, the appeal process, and the time limit for appeal. An appeal may confirm or alter a decision made at any prior level of the appeal. Appeals also will not result in barriers to service or any form of retaliation.

## Other Issues

When the complaint resolution includes HR actions, WJS Canada complies with privacy legislation by not releasing specific information relating to actions taken or persons involved. In these cases, results will be described in general terms with no identifying information.