

## Policy # 1004

### COMPLAINTS

**PREAMBLE:** BeConnected Support Services (BSS) encourages all individuals receiving services, families, members, advocates, and community members (our stakeholders) to bring forward concerns or complaints they may have about the Agency. When concerns or complaints are brought forward, BSS is committed to resolving the matter in a timely and appropriate manner.

Employees and Volunteers who wish to bring forward a concern/complaint can do so following Policy 4021, *Conflict Resolution*.

**DEFINITIONS:** **Concern:** information which may become a complaint in the future if not addressed.

**Complaint:** Any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction or discontent from a person served or stakeholder of BeConnected

**Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO):** The Complaint Resolution Officer for BSS is the CEO or their designate. If the complaint is made against the CEO the DPSQ will take on the role of CRO. The CRO investigates all complaints that cannot be addressed at the Coordinator level unless to do so would interfere with a concurrent investigation by the police, a regulatory body, or another authority. In such cases, the CRO will liaise with the investigators, as appropriate, to ensure an accurate and thorough conclusion to the investigation.

**POLICY:** BSS has a formal procedure for resolving concerns or complaints brought forward by persons receiving or requesting services, family members, friends, advocates, and community members (our stakeholders). This procedure shall be communicated to stakeholders upon intake and on an on-going basis.

BSS encourages all individuals to feel safe in reporting their concerns and complaints. Bringing forward a concern or making a complaint will not result in retaliation, harassment or barriers to service.

**Confidentiality:** A complainant is required to identify him or herself when making a complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated. Where possible and as appropriate, the Complaints Resolution Officer and/or designate will maintain confidentiality for both the complainant and persons named in the complaint.

Information from the complaint will be conveyed to the funder, regulatory bodies and/or legal/family representative where the complaint is serious and relates to the well-being of supported individuals.

Non-identifying information relating to the complaint may be used in reports for the

purposes of improving the overall quality of service BSS provides.

## **PROCEDURE:**

**Concerns:** BSS encourages stakeholders with concerns to seek an informal resolution with the BSS designates at the level where the concern first arises (e.g. Coordinators for concerns relating to programs). Where this is not possible/plausible or where resolution has not been achieved, stakeholders are encouraged to pursue the matter with more senior designates (i.e. DPSQ). The concern is to be documented on a Problem Solving Form (M016) and forwarded to the DPSQ.

**Complaints:** Complaints may be brought forward through BSS's formal Complaints Resolution Process. Complaints may be expressed verbally or in writing. Stakeholders are encouraged to bring their complaints forward as soon as possible to ensure a timely response and resolution. Upon receiving a complaint:

1. Verbal complaints - staff should begin the documentation by completing the upper portion of the Complaint Form (P017); Written complaints – proceed to next step
2. Acknowledge the complaint; thank them for their information and inform the complainant that their concerns will be forwarded to the Coordinator who will contact them.
3. Place the completed complaint form in a sealed envelope and leave on coordinator's desk. The Coordinator will conduct an investigation and develop a solution within two (2) working days of receiving complaint.
4. The Coordinator will contact the complainant acknowledging receipt of complaint and present a proposed solution. If the proposed solution is acceptable/agreeable to both parties, coordinator is to indicate on the complaint form and forward the completed form to the DPSQ for review and filing.

If the complaint/grievance remains unresolved at the coordinator level further investigation and resolution is to be conducted by the CRO. Internal investigations will consist of obtaining information relating to the complaint and of finding an acceptable resolution. Where the CRO finds that BSS conducted itself inappropriately, they will issue an apology on behalf of the Agency and will outline the steps and changes that will be made to prevent incidents.

The CRO will document the resolution and communicate it to the complainant and any other related parties within ten (10) working days of the original complaint being brought forward

If the complaint/grievance cannot be resolved within the organization, the complainant will be referred to an external agency or advocate.

**Appeals:**

1. Complainants have thirty (30) days to appeal to the CRO
2. The CRO must respond in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving the appeal
3. The CRO’s decision is final and will be documented. The decision will be communicated to all related stakeholders.
4. BSS will advise the complainant of their options in pursuing the complaint with external agencies or offices.

**Records:**

The DPSQ will maintain a record of all concerns and complaints in a confidential complaints file including: dated records of all discussions and interviews conducted in the investigation of a complaint; and a complete set of relevant documents, records and reports relating to a complaint.

The DPSQ will issue an annual report that summarizes and analyzes all complaints registered against BSS within the previous year.

<i>Reference:</i>	Residential Care Regulations, Article 48.1(b)-48.1(c) , Article 60, Article 85.2(d), Article 89.1 CARF Standard 1.K.3.a BSS Resident and Family Handbook
<i>Cross Reference:</i>	BSS Policy #4021, Conflict Resolution
<i>Forms:</i>	P017, R028, R063