



## **SERVICE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

### **OPTIMISM PLACE WOMEN'S SHELTER AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

270 Freeland Drive, Stratford ON N4Z 1GB  
519-271-5550  
519-271-5310  
1-800-265-8898

### **NORTH PERTH OUTREACH SERVICES - VAW RESOURCE CENTRE**

145 Argyle St., Listowel, ON  
519- 301-5310  
1-800-265-8898

[www.optimismplace.com](http://www.optimismplace.com)

#### **Our Mission**

Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services supports women alone or with children to live free of abuse by providing shelter and confidential, non-judgmental service. We are committed to ending the cycle of abuse and violence by raising awareness through prevention, intervention, and education.

#### **Our Vision**

Ending woman abuse and its impact of all women, families, and communities.

#### **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT:**

If you feel that you have a problem with the service you have been receiving, or have not received, we need to know! Our shelter and its programs work hard to offer the best service possible to the women and children who seek help from us. We want to do our best to solve any problem or difference of opinion. We also want to know how we can improve our services.

The following procedure is designed to offer a method to resolve any problem related to delivery of service.

Please bring all complaints to our attention within 3 months of your discharge from residency or an Optimism Place Program.

(All women discharging from shelter have the option to forward comments about their stay using the Discharge Evaluation. All women discharging from shelter services or programs of any kind may also forward their comments to the Ministry of Community and Social Services electronically. To find out more, call the Residential Manager at 519-271-5310 x13. An agency computer is made available for this purpose.)

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### **STEP 1: TALK TO YOUR WORKER**

As a client of the agency, when you have a problem or difference of opinion, talk to the Worker involved as a first step.

If you are in residence, this is usually a Front-line Crisis Counsellor.

If you are not in residence, and are receiving help from a Program Worker, that is the person you should speak to first.

In most instances, meeting with your Worker for an open discussion will resolve the matter.

However, there may be times when you will want your concerns addressed by others in the agency.

### **STEP 2: THE SUPERVISOR**

If you have discussed your complaint with the worker involved, and still remain unsatisfied, you should approach the worker's Supervisor.

The Supervisor for Front-line staff is the Residential Co-ordinator ([residential@optimismplace.com](mailto:residential@optimismplace.com) or 519-271-5310 x13).

The Supervisor for the Transition Program staff can be reached at [transition@optimismplace.com](mailto:transition@optimismplace.com) or 519-271-5310 x18

The Supervisor for all Program Staff is the Executive Director, Anne McDonnell ([amcdonnell@optimismplace.com](mailto:amcdonnell@optimismplace.com) or 519-271-5310 x12).

You may contact the Supervisor in writing, by email, or by leaving a voice mail message. State the nature of the problem and why you feel it remains unresolved. (You may see the Supervisor in the building. However she may be too busy to talk or there may not be adequate privacy to do so.)

Having received your message, the Supervisor will make every effort to deal with your concerns promptly. She will either schedule a time to meet with you and the worker involved, or she will address your concerns in writing. This should happen within 3 working days of her receiving your complaint.

If a satisfactory resolution does not result, we encourage you to move to the next step.

### **STEP 3: THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

If you believe that the Supervisor has not resolved your problem, you should then contact the Executive Director, as above, outlining your complaint and the resolution you are seeking.

The Executive Director will meet with you within five working days to carefully review your concerns. The Supervisor and the Worker will also be present. You will be advised in writing within two weeks of the meeting of any agreement reached.

In the absence of a resolution, you may go to the next step, Step Four, the Board of Directors.

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### **STEP 4: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

In the event that the Executive Director's decision is not acceptable to you, you may appeal within 30 days to the Board of Directors in writing. Address your letter to the Board Chair in care of Optimism Place. The Board Chair will convene the Committee of the Board which is authorized to review the matter on behalf of the full Board of Directors.

The Committee will review all documents on the matter to ensure proper procedure has been followed. If necessary, they may meet with you.

The Committee will make a recommendation to the next Board meeting and you will receive a written reply to your complaint from the Chair within 30 days of that Board meeting.

### **STEP 5: THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

If you are not satisfied with the Chair's response, you should contact:

The Area Manager,  
Ministry of Community and Social Services, Suite 203,  
217 York St.,  
London, ON  
N6A 5R1  
519-438-5111 or 1-800-265-4197