



Everyone needs a home

HFS Shelters' Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Homes First will respond professionally and appropriately to all complaints from all individuals.
- Shelter residents have a right to make a complaint and not fear consequences.
- Staff are to provide the HFS Complaint and Appeals Form, as well as a copy of this document upon request; when a resident is being service-restricted, staff are to advise them of their right to appeal and provide them with a copy of the Complaint and Appeals Form upon request.
- All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible.
- Should a resident feel that they are being unfairly targeted, please address this matter with management immediately.
- HFS will provide the contact information for SSHA to any client who has exhausted the shelter's complaints and appeals process, remains dissatisfied with the resolution, and who wishes to escalate their complaint or appeal further.
- Homes First will provide the contact information for SSHA and the Office of the Ombudsman to any individual who wishes to make a complaint about a City of Toronto or SSHA program, service, or responsibility.

STEP 1: Formal complaint is verbally conveyed to Community Shelter Worker (CSW):

- CSW and resident jointly attempt an amicable solution.
- If an amicable solution is not possible, the complaint form is provided and filled out with assistance from the CSW, if necessary.
- If necessary, CSW will offer to transcribe the resident's complaint.
- Resident to sign that they have read and/or agree with written complaint.
- If resident's complaint is against a specific CSW, the complaint should be taken directly to the Shelter Supervisor.

STEP 2: Resident files the written formal complaint to the Shelter Supervisor or designate:

- The Shelter Supervisor or designate instigates documented investigation.
- Initial written response to resident within five working days, or interim or final decision if possible.
- Shelter Supervisor or designate issues final report in as speedy a manner as possible.
- If resident is still not satisfied with response, they may forward the written complaint form, along with a letter to the Shelters and Housing Manager.

STEP 3: Shelters and Housing Manager may respond in writing or arrange to meet with resident within seven working days.

- If resident is still not satisfied with this response then they may forward the Written Complaint Form, along with a letter, to the Chief Executive Officer.

STEP 4: Chief Executive Officer may respond in writing or arrange to meet with resident within seven working days.

- The Chief Executive Officer's or designate's response is considered final.

Other Avenues for Complaints and Appeals:

- Staff will encourage and support clients in following the HFS internal complaints and appeals process before contacting Hostel Services. However, clients have the right to contact Hostel Services at any time.
- All complainants have the right to make a complaint about a Homes First shelter to Hostel Services. If the client is not satisfied with a decision made, they may escalate their complaint or appeal to SSHA Customer Service (416-392-8741 or ssha@toronto.ca).
- Shelter sites will cooperate with Hostel Services when it reviews complaints.
- If the resident's complaint is about the supervisor or manager, they do not need to submit an internal complaint form. In this case, staff are to immediately provide the client with the contact information for SSHA Customer Service.
- If the resident has contacted SSHA and is still not satisfied, they may lodge a complaint with the City's Office of the Ombudsman (375 University Ave, Suite 203, Toronto, ON M5G 2J5; 416-392-7062; ombudsman@toronto.ca)

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- As per Toronto Shelter Standards, 2016: Section 7(a)(i).
 - Created on February 16, 2017.
 - Approved by HFS Governance and Nominating Committee on February 25, 2017; to be reviewed in 2022.
 - Approved by HFS Board of Directors on March 28, 2017.
 - This Policy applies to all Homes First Shelters.