

# COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Effective: April 2009  
Reviewed: July 2010  
Revised:

## AUTHORITY

Ombudsman, Fiona Crean

## INTRODUCTION

We aim to be accessible, responsive and accountable to the residents of Toronto. Sometimes in this kind of work we receive complaints or compliments about our service, what went well or poorly and generally what people think about the Ombudsman. We acknowledge it takes time and sometimes courage to provide feedback and it is for those reasons that we publicly state our commitment and genuine desire to hear from you when you have a compliment, a concern or a complaint about us.

We will try to get things right the first time by always keeping public interest uppermost. Sometimes we may not fulfil peoples' expectations or we may not have done the best we could. And that's where handling your feedback constructively comes in.

## POLICY STATEMENT

All complaints regarding the work and staff of the office of the Ombudsman will be addressed.

A complaint about our Office includes:

- an allegation of misconduct by a staff member
- an allegation about how we handled a matter

Some examples of complaints might include: rudeness, delay, inaccurate information, bias, conflict of interest.

A complaint about our Office does not include:

- a disagreement about our evaluation of the facts or evidence
- a request for a review of a decision by the Ombudsman
- our internal complaints system

### Stage 1: Frontline complaint

If you have a complaint about the staff member with whom you are dealing, try to raise it with them first. Staff are expected and trained to receive constructive criticism. Sometimes talking about it will resolve the issue immediately.

## Stage 2: Internal review

If you are dissatisfied with Step 1 or for some reason you feel you cannot talk to that person, contact the Director, Investigations & Conflict Resolution.

If your complaint is about the Director and the issue is sufficiently serious that you feel unable to address the matter with him, you may contact the Ombudsman.

If a complaint is very serious, such as wrongdoing or serious misconduct, we expect you to put it in writing with full details to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman is a place of last resort. As such you cannot complain about the merits of decisions she makes unless they are sufficiently flawed in law in which case you may consider options under Stage 3.

## Stage 3: External options

You may consider legal avenues such as the courts or a complaint under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

We will respond at any stage of your complaint by:

- acknowledging your complaint promptly
- being courteous and listening carefully to what you say
- seeking clarification and asking questions in a non-judgmental way
- providing you with relevant information
- summarizing your complaint back to you to make sure we have understood
- asking you what you expect to fix your dissatisfaction
- trying to meet reasonable requests
- taking action and informing you

## Timeframes:

We will address oral complaints in two days unless there are extenuating circumstances. We will address written complaints in two weeks unless there are extenuating circumstances.

## No reprisal:

You are welcome to complain about our services. Complaints will be handled confidentially and no reprisal action will be taken for complaining. The Ombudsman will deal directly with any complaint from a member of the public who alleges they have been punished as a result of complaining about this Office.

## Compliments and suggestions

We want to use your feedback in constructive ways to improve our services, act on suggestions where we can, be accountable and transparent in how we do things. Your complaints, suggestions and compliments help us plan, allocate resources and evaluate our effectiveness. We welcome hearing from you and suggest you call us at 416-392-7062 (TTY 416-392-7100) or write to [ombuds@toronto.ca](mailto:ombuds@toronto.ca)