

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

GUIDE TO COMPLAINTS

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO) operates within a set of core values including Care, Accountability, Respect and Excellence. ASO is committed to providing services to stakeholders in a way that demonstrates value and responsiveness to identified needs. ASO believes that quality improvement is at the essence of our values and understands that dealing with complaints presents an opportunity to integrate learnings into continuous improvement initiatives.

A process has been established to approach complaints/concerns/issues in a systematic and responsive way which seeks to ensure effective resolution of a complaint/concern/issue in a timely and satisfactory manner. The process will seek to include all relevant members of the team, including staff and volunteers, where appropriate, within the established steps to resolve the identified issue.

ASO considers primary stakeholders to include staff, volunteers, board, donors, members of the Alzheimer Society Federation and the general public.

1. Anyone has a right to express concern about the activities of ASO. A complaint may be made in person, by phone, or in writing.
2. The Complaints policy is made available on the ASO website.
3. The responsibility for handling complaints shall rest with the department Manager about which the complaint was made.
4. Informal resolution of issues should be sought between the staff member and the complainant wherever possible before formal complaint procedures are engaged.
5. The resolution of the complaint should be timely, as per the complaint procedure, so as not to delay appropriate action for the complaint or cause undue stress for the complainant.
6. Uncorroborated complaints from a third party will be discouraged. Anonymous complaints will be accepted when submitted directly from the complainant.
7. Complaint and resolution outcomes are to be reviewed quarterly for the purpose of ongoing quality improvements.

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STEPS

To address concerns and complaints the following steps will be taken:

1. RECEIVE AND CLASSIFY

PRIORITY LEVEL	DEFINITION	ACTION REQUIRED
ALL COMPLAINTS	Expression of a negative experience with ASO.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member who receives the complaint will immediately <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge receipt of complaint to complainant Notify department manager Manager will inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the complaint and keep them apprised of resolution activities. If complaint involves the member of the SLT, the Manager will escalate the complaint to the CEO. SLT member will inform the CEO of the complaint received and keep the CEO apprised of resolution steps/actions taken. Manager and SLT member will determine priority level of the complaint and next steps. Staff member responsible for dealing with the complaint will complete the ASO Complaint Form.
LEVEL 1	<p>Major issues that are a risk to safety, wellbeing, privacy or reputation.</p> <p>(e.g. allegations of abuse by staff, notice of legal action, threat to public reputation, media involvement)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1 complaints remain with the SLT member. SLT member will create an action plan and further investigate the complaint. SLT member will report investigation findings and resolution plan to the CEO within 2 business days. SLT member will respond to complainant with investigation outcome and proposed resolution within 3 business days. All Level 1 complaints are reported to the CEO and Board of Directors.
LEVEL 2	<p>Risks that interfere with the activities of ASO to interact with and support stakeholders.</p> <p>(Lower organizational risk, highlights potential</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If complaint is determined to be Level 2 by department manager and SLT member, the complaint will be assigned to responsible department manager to address. Department manager will create an action plan and further investigate the complaint. Department manager will report investigation findings and resolution plan to the SLT member within 5 business days.

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	area for process or service improvement, likely applicable for most complaints)	4. Department manager will respond to complainant with investigation outcome and proposed resolution within 6 business days.
LEVEL 3	Complaints of any level that involve the Chief Executive Officer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All complaints that involved the CEO are considered Level 1 complaints. 2. Complaints about the CEO will be given to the Chief People Officer to investigate. 3. Complaint is to be acknowledged within 3 business days to complainant with findings of investigation and proposed resolution. 4. The Board of Directors shall be notified of any complaints regarding the CEO.
EXCEPTIONS: WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE	Exception for complaint handling when complaint made through the Whistleblower Hotline.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Whistleblower hotline is available to any staff member who does not feel comfortable making a complaint directly to their manager, SLT member or CEO. 2. Whistleblower hotline complaints will follow the Whistleblower policy. 3. The Whistleblower hotline should be used for extreme scenarios and major complaints.

2. ACKNOWLEDGE

- All complainants, regardless of priority level, will receive an acknowledgement on the day of receipt by the person directly receiving the complaint how the complaint was received (phone, email, in writing). Beyond the initial acknowledgement by the staff who received the complaint, the complaint will be reported to the department manager and further investigated

3. INVESTIGATE

- The person receiving the complaint will fill out the *Complaint Details* on ASO Complaint Form.
- All areas of interaction and communication should be established (who, what, when, where and why) and documented.
- Received complaints along with the *Complaint Details* form will be escalated to the department manager
- Manager will work with SLT member to determine the priority level of the complaint and next steps
- The priority of the complaint will drive the timeframe for completion as well as who is responsible for acknowledging the complaint. *See Section 1. Receive and Classify*

4. RESOLVE AND CONFIRM

- The Department manager or SLT member will create an action plan on the *ASO Complaint Details* Form.

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- They will ensure that the proposed resolution does not prejudice ASO in any legal or financial manner.
- They will reflect on the proposed resolution from both an ASO and complainant's viewpoint to ensure fairness and clarity.
- The department manager or SLT member will document the proposed action, review and seek approval from their supervisor.
- The review is to include recognition and documentation of any underlying issues that have contributed to the complaint and include recommendations for future quality improvement considerations.

5. RESPOND TO COMPLAINANT

- A detailed account of findings and proposed resolution should be clearly explained (written or verbal) to the complainant – within the recommended timeframe.
- If this cannot be completed within the established timeframe, the complainant is to be informed of current standings and advised that further time will be required.
- While responding to the complainant, the complainant should have the opportunity to respond:
 - Is the complainant satisfied with the response?
 - Did they feel their complaint was properly and fairly handled?
- Negative responses to these questions should be referred to the SLT member for action and direct follow-up with complainants. If complainant continues to appeal the resolution, the CEO will step in to further try and resolve the problem.

6. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND CONCLUSION

- Key points about complaints will be reported to the Board of Directors by the CEO as deemed appropriate.
- Any complaints where action can be taken to avoid reoccurrences must be acted upon and raised with the appropriate ASO management personnel.
- All documented complaints will be held confidentially by the CEO.
- Complaint reports will be reviewed quarterly by CEO.
- Complaint reports will also be reviewed quarterly by ASO Quality Improvement (QI) personnel for ongoing quality improvement plans.