

External Feedback/Complaints Policy

Effective Date: January 2017

Last Editorial Change: January 2017

Policy Purpose

The YMCA of Lethbridge prides itself on maintaining the highest level of transparency while modeling core values of honesty, respect, responsibility and caring. We strive to ensure all persons who access the YMCA of Lethbridge programs and services, and all employees and volunteers who provide such programs and services, have written guidelines that outline the process to provide feedback.

Person(s) served by this policy and procedure include members, service users, participants, families, individuals, volunteers, staff and community members and/or groups.

Policy Statement

The YMCA values and encourages parties to engage directly with the YMCA of Lethbridge in order to bring forth affirmations and suggestions while addressing issues of concern.

- We believe that complaints are to be dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- We believe that the review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants always have the option to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome or uncomfortable dealing with someone.
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints and are updated with relevant information throughout the process.
- We believe that complaints help us in improving services, policies and procedures.
- Where appropriate, or upon request of the complainant, the matter of the complaint will be held in strictest confidence.

The YMCA recognizes that from time to time, parties may be unable to resolve satisfactorily a suggestion, concern or complaint through direct engagement and that in such circumstances, an appeal process may be required to conclude a situation.

To promote accessibility of our complaints process, the External Feedback / Complaints Policy can be accessed at the following web address: www.lethbridgeymca.ca

Definitions

Compliment: a comment that commends YMCA Lethbridge or an individual associated with YMCA of Lethbridge.

Comment: the expression of a personal opinion or belief regarding YMCA of Lethbridge activities.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by the YMCA of Lethbridge as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on its behalf. Anyone personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- Failure to observe policy or law;
- Breaches or departure from our ethical standards;
- Error made by a staff member/volunteer; or
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff member/volunteer;

Person: Individual who directly receives or takes part in programs or services at the YMCA. A parent or guardian of a dependent child or adult who is taking part in programs or services at the YMCA.

Program Employee or Volunteer: An employee or volunteer of the YMCA who has responsibility for program and service delivery.

Supervisor: A YMCA employee with direct report employees and volunteers who oversees specific programs and services.

Manager or Director: A YMCA employee responsible for controlling/administering program and service clusters.

Timely: The first opportunity for a complaint to be resolved once all information pertaining to the complaint has been analyzed.

Guidelines: All processes for sharing feedback will be guided by the values of the YMCA: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The information contained within the policy will be communicated to staff and volunteers.

Direct Feedback Process for Compliments or Comments

If an individual or group wishes to provide direct feedback to an employee or volunteer, they should contact the relevant employee or volunteer in the program or service area. For example, to recognize the efforts of a staff person, please provide this feedback directly to the employee or their supervisor, verbally or in writing.

Complaint Receipt and Handling

A member, staff, volunteer, participant or group complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or any complainant may communicate in writing (by mail, email, written comment at the program site or via the Openline member feedback portal).

An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint should first determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it. If the

complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the transferor that he/she has received it and will act on it.

The person who initially receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or another employee. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.

Appeal Process

In the event that the person does not feel their feedback was sufficiently heard, or that their concern or complaint has not been resolved through direct discussion, then the following procedure will be followed:

- Contact the Director for the service area. During this step of the process, the person may be asked to put the particulars of their complaint in writing. The Director will resolve the matter directly, or may choose to investigate the matter before acting. Any actions that do not involve investigation will be resolved within three working days.
- If the matter goes to investigation, the Director will provide his or her response within seven (7) working days, but if consultation with other parties is necessary, the YMCA reserves the right to respond within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the complaint.

If the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, and or if the Director is a direct party to the complaint, it will be referred directly to the CEO of the Association for his or her response, which will be rendered within twenty (20) working days of receiving the complaint. The CEO's decision on the appropriate response will be final.

Documenting the Complaint

It is necessary to keep a written record of any complaint immediately (on the same day it is received).

Information about the complaint must include:

- including a description of the complaint or incident
- who was first notified, and how (verbally or in writing)
- who handled it,
- what was done to resolve the complaint,
- timeframe, and
- description of the resolution

These written documents must be submitted to the department director.

On a quarterly basis, department directors will submit to the CEO a summary of all complaints received (including type) during that quarter. Annually, the CEO shall report to the Board a summary of the number and types of complaints received. All website or survey complaints will be recorded as well.

Complaints will be broken down by Complaint category:

- staff/ volunteer,
- programs or services or
- external

HR complaints are excluded from the scope of this policy as they fall within the purview of HR matters and under relevant HR policies and procedures.

Accountability

All written feedback received by the senior leadership (Directors and CEO) will be provided to the Board of Directors quarterly. During a regular meeting of the board, the Board will receive a report will include the number, type and disposition of feedback received. This information will be reviewed in order to ensure Association accountability, as well as, to identify if any systematic change is required.