



COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY - SERVICE DELIVERY

Applicable to: All employees and families

Effective date: 14 June 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure VIVA Therapeutic Services (VIVA) provides a fair, effective, and transparent response to service delivery related complaints. This policy sets out the procedures for receiving, reviewing, recording, and responding to complaints about our service from external sources.

Guiding Principles

VIVA is committed to adhering to high standards of practice. Our company's core values include teamwork, integrity, quality, dignity, diversity, and joy. Specific to integrity, we value feedback from our service users and continuously strive to improve our services. Our complaint resolution policy is guided by the following principles:

Accessible	VIVA's complaint resolution policy is publicly available on our website, and service users are informed of their right to complain about our organization. Complaints are accepted in a variety of ways (i.e., website, phone, mail, and email).
Fair	All complaints will be handled in a manner that is impartial and fair. Our formal complaint process provides the opportunity for service users to submit relevant information and have an opportunity to be heard before the summary of findings and decision from the complaint is finalized. Our process also provides opportunity for appeal.
Person-Focused	We recognize that service users have different needs, and each person has their own unique history that they bring to the interaction with our organization. We commit to listen to our service users' concerns, treat them with dignity and respect, and maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process.
Responsive	We will acknowledge receipt of formal complaints within two (2) business days and will seek to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity. Complaints that cannot be resolved at first contact, or those that raise more serious concerns about our organization, will be forwarded for further review and investigation; we aim to provide a report outlining a summary of findings and decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of a formal complaint. VIVA is committed to these time frames and will inform our service users of the progress of their complaint and reasons for any delay in the complaint resolution process. VIVA will not respond to anonymous or third-party complaints.



The scope of this policy is to address complaints with VIVA's service delivery with informal strategies and formal procedure. It does not cover complaints related to autism support in schools, autism support provided by Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs), or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).

Complaints must be received within 6-months after the incident occurred that gave rise to the concerns.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint – a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of our programs, services, or people. It can include concerns about our employee's conduct, quality of service, delay in providing a response, or the reasonableness of a decision made, or action taken by a member of our employee. It can also include the response provided by a VIVA employee to a complaint or concern raised about our organization.

A complaint is different than a *conflict* or *challenging* or *emotional situation*. This policy deals with specific complaints about something that has happened or continues to happen and is believed to be unsatisfactory.

Levels of complaints are defined as:

Informal complaints – these are issues that can be resolved at point-of-service. These complaints tend to be regarding interpersonal issues, collaborative issues, concerns with schedules or specific services. There is no formal format or procedure to handle the complaint. These issues are usually resolved by simple solutions or conversations.

Formal complaints – these are issues that require or are requested to be escalated to senior leadership or a third party for investigation. There is a formal service delivery complaint procedure that outlines the steps required, timing and escalating authority, and is documented in writing.



STEPS TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT

1. File a complaint by emailing: info@vivanb.ca or mailing/telephoning the Regional Director at one of our service locations (<https://www.vivanb.ca/regional-offices/>)
2. Include the following information:
 - a. name and contact information of the complainant
 - b. name and position of any employee/s who are involved in the complaint
 - c. the nature of your concern – what happened, when, where, and with what you are dissatisfied
 - d. any related documentation, including notes
 - e. the desired outcome
3. Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will occur within two (2) working days by email, letter, or phone call. This acknowledgement will include information about the employee who has primary responsibility for investigating the complaint, as well as information about the complaint resolution process, including applicable timeframes.
4. The complaint will be reviewed and, if appropriate, investigated by the Regional Director.
5. A report outlining a summary of the findings and decision will be sent (email or mail) to the complainant within ten (10) business days of receipt of the complaint.
6. When a formal complaint is not investigated the complainant will be notified by email or letter within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint, with reasons provided for the decision to dismiss the complaint. Reasons may include: the issue is not within the jurisdiction for review by VIVA; the concerns raised have previously been investigated and no new complaints have been reported; the issues raised by the complainant are currently under investigation; the remedy sought by the complainant is not achievable.
7. The complainant can appeal the decision by contacting the COO (or designate) and requesting the complaint be escalated to the CEO for final review and decision.
8. Following escalation, final decision will be provided in writing to the complainant and the Regional Director within five (5) business days.
9. The complainant can appeal the final decision by contacting the Department of Education and Early Childhood development at autism.autisme@gnb.ca

VIVA may investigate complaints that have been received within 6-months following an incident that gave rise to the concerns.