



BCCSW - How to File a Complaint 2022 Phronesis Counselling & Social Services

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This information has been directly taken from the British Columbia College of Social Workers website that you can find here: <https://bccsw.ca/public/complaint-information/>

The British Columbia College of Social Workers is a regulatory body established by the British Columbia government to protect the public. Registered Social Workers are accountable to the College for their professional conduct. The College receives complaints and conducts investigations into the conduct of Registered Social Workers that are registered in British Columbia. The College can also investigate persons for the unlawful use of the title 'Registered Social Worker'. Any member of the public has the right to make a complaint about a Registered Social Worker's conduct or practice. There is no timeframe in which to submit a complaint, however submitting a complaint after a recent event often assists in the investigation process.

The College cannot require a Registered Social Worker to provide a reimbursement for services or compel a Registered Social Worker to provide a specific treatment plan. The College does not have authority over the actions of other professionals. Prior to submitting a formal complaint, you may wish to speak with the Registered Social Worker or their employer about your concerns.

HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

The first step in making a complaint is to verify that the person you are making a complaint about is a Registered Social Worker in British Columbia. You can verify this by searching their name on the BCCSW [online public registry](#). Complaints must be made in writing. Please find the complaints form [HERE](#). We strongly discourage the use of email for the submission of a complaint and throughout the investigatory process. Please submit your letter of complaint that includes the following:

The first and last name of Registered Social Worker you are making the complaint against
A description of the matters, incident or conduct that has caused you concern
Any documents, images, emails or records that you feel are relevant to your complaint



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Your name, mailing address and phone number

Your signature

The RSW has a right to know the allegations made against them, a right to respond and a right to know who submitted the complaint. Complaints cannot be made anonymously. If you have questions about submitting a complaint or the complaint process, please call the College at 604 737 4916 or email info@bccsw.ca

WHAT HAPPENS WITH A SUBMITTED COMPLAINT?

View the Complaint Investigation Process Flowchart [HERE](#). | View the Discipline Process Flowchart [HERE](#).

Every complaint is reviewed by the Registrar of the College. The College utilizes the Social Workers Act, College Bylaws and the Standards of Practice to assess the registrant's conduct.

The Registrar is authorized under the Social Workers Act to consider and act on certain types of complaints, including dismissing complaints for specific reasons, after a preliminary investigation. If the registrar dismisses the complaint, the inquiry committee, registrant and complainant are all notified. The Inquiry Committee can also decide to investigate further.

If the complaint is not dismissed, further investigation is conducted. The investigation involves submissions from both the complainant and the Registered Social Worker. The investigator may get in touch with other relevant third parties and collect relevant material in relation to the complaint. The College may request client records from the Registered Social Worker or employing agency.

There are a range of options available to the College in resolving complaints, including:

Take no further action on the complaint

Resolve the matter through a remedial agreement with the Registered Social Worker, where the Registered Social Worker must undergo training, supervision or other undertakings in order to improve practice

Caution or reprimand the Registered Social Worker

Implement limits or conditions

Suspend or cancel registration

Require the Registered Social Worker to pay a fine

Publish the details of the Registered Social Worker's conduct

The complainant and the Registered Social Worker are both notified of the outcome and the reasons for the decision.

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WHAT INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLIC?

Information gathered during an investigation is kept confidential unless disclosure is required to comply with legislation.

A citation for a Discipline Committee hearing may be made public and is posted on the College's website. Discipline Committee similar to a court process and may be open to the public, with certain discretionary restrictions. The outcomes of the hearings are made public on the College's website. If a decision of a discipline committee is to suspend or revoke registration, this information is published on the online social work registry, under the name of the Registered Social Worker.

DO I HAVE A DUTY TO REPORT?

Employers and Registered Social Worker colleagues must report to the College under [section 39 and 40 of the Social Workers Act](#), respectively where they have reason to believe that a client has been sexually abused, physically abused or emotionally abused by a Registered Social Worker while engaged in the practice of social work. For more information on this, please contact the College.

HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

The process of investigating and reviewing a complaint and coming to a resolution may be lengthy. The investigation may be delayed if other bodies are investigating the same or other issues. The length of time can depend upon the complexity of the complaint and investigation, and a number of other factors. It may take up to 18 months, or longer particularly if it is determined that a citation is to be issued for a discipline hearing. This timeline may be shortened to approximately 6-8 months if the Registrar disposes of the complaint under section 26(2) of the Social Workers Act.

If the complaint is dismissed by the Registrar, the complainant is notified and given 30 days to make further submissions related to the complaint. The Inquiry Committee is also notified of the dismissed complaint and they have the ability to investigate further. If no additional information is received from the complainant and the Inquiry Committee does not investigate further, the decision to dismiss takes effect 60 days after the Inquiry Committee is notified.

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Date created July 1 st 2022	Annual review date July 20 th 2023
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