

Complaint Process Summary Report for the 69th L.J. Compliance Report

During the reporting period of July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, the Child Welfare Team received a total of thirty-five L.J. class member complaints. Currently, all complaints, including those arising in situations involving a LJ Class member or non- class member, are being tracked by the Executive Assistant to one of the Assistant Deputy Directors of Child Welfare.

No current changes have occurred to the complaint process. It is anticipated that there will be notable changes coming in the 71th reporting period resulting from feedback provided by the Independent Verification Agent. All inquiries have been acknowledged by a member of the involved Agency case management team within one business day of receipt.

The most common type of complaint during the reporting period continues to involve payment issues. Out of thirty-five inquiries received, twelve were focused on overdue daycare payments. The majority of these complaints concerned the length of time it was taking to receive the payment or reimbursement. Most were easily resolved by explaining the timeline of the State's process for payment reimbursement. A few providers who were the complainants, believed that they should receive an up front payment but once the process was explained to them it was resolved. The other group of reimbursement complaints were around daycare payment delays due to incomplete paperwork or paperwork submitted incorrectly so that it delayed the payment process. There were a few instances involving caregiver concern that they would lose the child care placement due to delay in payment. In those instances the Agency worked directly with the providers to prevent any interruption in services from occurring. In situations where the delay was caused by internal error, the permanency teams have created reminder tools to help remedy the situation so that it does not reoccur moving forward. In addition to daycare reimbursement, the other notable category of payment complaints centered around caregivers not receiving various payments due to a change in address causing the non-payment by the Central office in Annapolis. This accounted for six of the inquiries received during this reporting period. When this occurred the Agency staff walked through the change of address process with the caregiver. In two of the incidents, case workers met directly with the caregivers to assist with filling out the proper paperwork and submitting it appropriately.

During this reporting period, as with previous ones, the remainder of the inquiries fell under the umbrella of a communication problem. Notably, this problem arose mainly in trying to locate the appropriate case worker or supervisor for the subject child or youth in care. Out of the remaining seventeen inquiries, eight were from family members trying to determine who the case worker was for a specific child or youth in order to offer availability as a resource or a family connection. These family members had difficulty determining how to reach out to the appropriate agency staff and often were provided contact information for CPS workers who were no longer involved with the case or even working at the agency. These relatives could not figure out next steps and ultimately used the Complaint Process to try to resolve the issue. Finally, some of these complaints involved inquiries where workers didn't return their calls or had left the agency and finding the appropriate person to speak with was difficult to ascertain.

BCDSS will continue to track complaints in order to improve all aspects of the services we provide to our children, youth and families.

