



April 16, 2020

Via email

Dear Legal Advocate,

RE: Ombudsperson Services During the Pandemic

I am writing to make you aware that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, our services continue to be available to all British Columbians. We are particularly aware that for those who are marginalized or vulnerable, accessing provincial or local government services can be challenging in normal circumstances, let alone in these extraordinary times. If you have clients who you believe have been treated unfairly, whether in relation to changes in public services during the pandemic or other, more regular, concerns relating to service by public sector organizations, we continue to be here to listen, resolve individual issues and investigate where appropriate.

Our jurisdiction covers over 1,000 public sector bodies including provincial government ministries, local governments, BC Housing, Community Living BC, hospitals and health authorities, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, BC Hydro and more. You can check whether a public body is within our jurisdiction at <https://bcombudsperson.ca/complaints/can-we-investigate-your-complaint/>. Complaints about these public bodies can relate to virtually any aspect of administration including disagreements about eligibility for services and supports, lengthy delays, or potential errors in how regulations or policies are applied.

Our services are independent from government, impartial, confidential and free. While in-person walk-in services are suspended at our office, our phone lines continue to be open, or people can also reach us online (<https://bcombudsperson.ca/contact/>), by fax or by mail.

The purpose of advising you of the above is so that you and your clients, where appropriate, consider our office during the pandemic. If you would like hard copies of our informational brochures/posters, we would be happy to send them to you. They are also available on our website at <https://bcombudsperson.ca/brochures-posters/>.

If you have specific questions about our services at this time, please connect with Communications Lead, Sara Darling at sdarling@bcombudsperson.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Jay Chalke
Ombudsperson
Province of British Columbia