

## **4.2(g) Prince Edward County & Lennox and Addington Social Services (Ontario Works)**

Who we are

Prince Edward County Social Services (Ontario Works) is funded by the Ministry of Community & Social Services (MCSS). Ontario Works helps people in financial need become employed and achieve self-reliance through mutual responsibilities of the participant and the delivery agent.

Our Role in Domestic Violence

- Victims of domestic violence who contact the local Ontario Works office directly will be served immediately by local office staff in order to ensure that immediate safety and other needs are satisfied without delay.
- Applicants will be asked if they are applying for assistance because they are leaving an abusive situation. When it is identified, the applicant will be asked the following:
  - Are you safe now?
  - Do you need the police?
  - Is it safe for you to talk now?
  - Does the abuser reside in the home?
  - Are there any weapons in the home?
  - What number can I call you back at should we get disconnected?
- A temporary waiver of support for three months shall be granted to those applicants/participants who have left the home because of violent situations

Prince Edward Domestic Violence Protocol

- Victims who contact the Intake Centre will be referred to Alternatives for Women or Three Oaks Women's Shelter. A case worker can call in a crisis counsellor to transport the women/children to shelter if the client chooses.
- In the absence of any previous contact, it is recommended that Ontario Works staff advise the victim to contact Alternatives for Women to complete a safety plan.
- All applicants who are victims of domestic violence will be given ample time to provide verifying documentation to support their case and approval for benefits will not be delayed due to the absence of any document.
- Victims will never be required to return to a dangerous or abusive environment in order to obtain any documentation.

## Accountability

The County of Prince Edward has an Internal Review Process. If an individual is not satisfied with a decision regarding eligibility for regular or mandatory benefits or levels of entitlement for these benefits, the decision may be appealed by writing to the OW Caseworker and requesting a review. A third party will then review the decision and provide notice to the outcome to all parties. If this review process does not resolve the issue, a final outcome can be determined by referring the matter to the Social Benefits Tribunal.

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