

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Settlement Agreement

About Settlement Agreements

Many human rights complaints are settled (closed through an agreement between the parties). When cases settle, there is no decision on whether discrimination happened because only a Board of Inquiry (i.e., public hearing) can do that. Cases settle for many reasons (speed, control over the process, confidentiality, etc.), and each agreement is unique. Settlements do not create “precedent”, meaning they do not influence future Board of Inquiry decisions.

This is an example of a matter that was settled by the parties. The agreement is confidential and therefore any identifying information has been removed or altered.

Area: Access to Services or Facilities

Characteristic: Sexual Orientation, Sex (gender)

Allegation: The Complainant alleged that she went to a service provider to get career counseling. She paid for this service. When she met with the counselor assigned to the matter, he asked her questions about her intimate relationships. She told him that she is in a same-sex relationship. He became very interested in this fact, and asked many inappropriate questions about what the women do in the bedroom. He offered his own observations about what he thought they did do, and what he thought they should do. He offered to participate. She left the service provider. Very late that evening, the counselor called her at home claiming that he had not finished all the relevant documents for her counseling service, and advised that he wanted to come directly to her house to see her and her partner. She declined, and the next day contacted the Nova Scotia Human Right Commission. With the support of the Commission, the parties reached an agreement to resolve the concerns. This agreement includes the following terms:

Individual Terms

- Letter of apology
- Financial compensation for emotional harm
- Service fee refund

Public Interest Terms

- Human rights education