

Dear Jen and Members of the Board of Directors,

I am writing because I believe the current situation has gone on far too long, and I strongly urge Community Living Renfrew's leadership to seriously consider proceeding to arbitration.

I want to make it clear that my concerns about Community Living Renfrew and its management did not begin with this strike. I had concerns about the organization and the way certain matters were being handled well before the strike began. The events of the past several months have only reinforced many of those concerns.

I also want to be clear that this is not an expression of support for the way management has handled this situation. I have significant concerns about the way the organization has handled the strike and the impact that the ongoing dispute has had on clients and their families.

However, regardless of my concerns about how the organization has handled the situation, the reality is that this strike has now continued for an unacceptable length of time, and the people who are ultimately paying the price are the clients.

These are vulnerable individuals who did not choose this labour dispute and, in many cases, do not understand why their lives and routines have been disrupted for so long. Their families are also carrying the burden of this ongoing uncertainty.

At some point, continuing to remain at an impasse stops being a solution.

If management and the union have been unable to reach an agreement after this length of time, I believe it is time to bring in a neutral third party. Arbitration would provide an opportunity for both sides to present their positions and for an impartial process to help bring this dispute to a conclusion.

I understand that arbitration has implications and that there may be legal or collective-bargaining considerations involved. However, I believe those considerations need to be weighed against the continued impact of this strike on the clients and their families.

I also believe that leadership sometimes means recognizing when the current approach is no longer working and being willing to take a different path.

I have supported the workers throughout this strike because I believe their concerns deserve to be heard. I have also actively participated in putting pressure on management because I want to see this situation resolved.

I am now asking the organization's leadership to take meaningful steps toward finding a way out of this impasse.

This is no longer simply about management and the union. There are vulnerable clients caught in the middle of a dispute they did not create and cannot resolve themselves.

I strongly urge you to consider whether continuing down the current path is truly in the best interests of those clients, and whether bringing the matter before an impartial third party is now the most responsible course of action.

The clients and their families have been living with this situation for far too long. They deserve more than an ongoing stalemate.

I respectfully ask that you seriously consider arbitration and pursue every reasonable avenue available to bring this strike to an end.

Sincerely,
Krystle Bennett