

Complaints Procedure 2024

Policy Statement

Please note: Suffolk Rape Crisis are currently in the process of recruiting for the CEO, and as such any complaints should be set out in writing and addressed to the Chair of Trustees (fran@srchelp.org.uk). The Chair of Trustees will then act upon the complaint as described in this policy. If the complaint is about the Chair of trustees, then the complainant may directly contact the Secretary trustee. This policy will be reviewed upon the appointment of a new CEO.

Suffolk Rape Crisis (SRC) provides confidential support for adult women and girls aged 14+ who have been raped, sexually abused or assaulted. Any complaint about any aspect of the organisation will be taken seriously and processed according to agreed procedures. Users of Suffolk Rape Crisis services will be provided with information about how to make a complaint.

SRC also wishes to encourage general suggestions as to how its services could be improved and welcomes feedback from users.

Definition

SRC defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with SRC, with a member of staff or volunteer, or with a SRC Trustee) that relates to SRC and that requires a formal response'.

SRC's responsibility will be to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- Respond within 7 working days;
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, to SRC's attention normally within 4 months of the issue arising (any complaints beyond 4 months will be considered on a case by case basis);
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with the CEO who will be responsible for any further action;
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- Allow SRC to deal with the matter within the time frames specified in this policy;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond SRC's control.

Monitoring and Reporting

Trustees of SRC will receive annually an anonymous report of complaints made and their resolution.

Procedure

Stage 1

If possible, the complaint should be resolved informally in the first instance, by a discussion between the complainant and the member of the organisation in person. If this is not appropriate, or you feel unable to discuss your complaint with the staff member, you should proceed to Stage 2 and bring the matter to the attention of the relevant manager of the service.

SRC's Response: An appropriate staff member will offer to have a meeting with you usually within seven working days to discuss the complaint. The outcome of this meeting will be sent to you in writing within ten working days. You will be notified of any exceptions to these time scales in writing.

At this stage you can decide whether you are satisfied with the result of the discussion and the action to be taken. If you are not satisfied, you should proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2

You should contact the manager of the service with a letter or email outlining your complaint. The complaint should include the name and contact details of the complainant, whom and/or what the complaint is about as well as all relevant dates. If this is not appropriate, or you feel unable to discuss your complaint with the manager of the service, proceed to Stage 3.

SRC's Response: The manager of the service will offer to have a meeting with you within ten working days to discuss the complaint. The outcome of the meeting will be sent to you in writing within a further ten working days. You will be notified of any exceptions to this in writing. At this stage you can decide whether you are satisfied with the result of the discussion and the action to be taken. If you are not satisfied, you should proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3

You can contact the Chief Executive Officer- CEO of Suffolk Rape Crisis via letter or email highlighting the details of your complaint. The complaint should include the name and contact details of the complainant, whom and/or what the complaint is about as well as all relevant dates.

If this is not appropriate or you feel unable to discuss your complaint with the CEO you can make your complaint in writing to the Chair of the Suffolk Rape Crisis Trustee Board via email (fran@srchelp.org.uk). If the complaint relates to the Chair of the Trustee Board, the complainant may directly contact the secretary trustee (claire@srchelp.org.uk). A postal address can be provided upon request.

If the complainant is unable to put his/her complaint in writing they should leave a message on the Suffolk Rape Crisis answer phone, 01473 231200. Please request a call from the CEO, leave your contact details and do not leave details of the complaint on voicemail. The CEO will return the call as soon as possible. Any complaint will be acknowledged by the CEO, normally within seven working days of receiving it.

SRC's Response: The CEO will investigate the circumstances outlined in the complaint and follow one of the following procedures:

- A. If the complaint is about a specific member of staff or volunteer, the CEO will approach that person to address the problem on a one-to-one basis
- B. If the complaint is not about a member of staff or volunteer, but relates to another issue, the CEO will take any necessary action.

The CEO will then inform the complainant in writing of what has been done to address their complaint within 28 days. She will also inform the Chair that a complaint was received, its nature, and what action was taken.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the CEO's action on the complaint, the CEO will refer the matter to the Chair. The decision on what action to take is at the Chair's discretion. The Chair will inform the Trustee Board that a complaint has been made, its nature, and what action was taken. The Chair will inform the complainant in writing of her decision, no later than 42 working days after first receiving the letter of complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, they may write a letter of appeal to the Chair who will then need to bring the case before the Trustee Board.

The Trustee Board will aim to come to a decision and to notify the complainant of its conclusions within 28 working days of receiving the letter of appeal, together with a clear explanation of the reasons for reaching them. The decision of the Trustee Board is final. SRC'S aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated.

Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim

response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

All complaints received, together with a copy of the response to the complainant, will be kept on file. Complaints will be monitored, and information from this will be fed into the future planning process as appropriate.