



## **Policy and Procedure for Compliments and Complaints from Service Users and Stakeholders**

SGPC aims to provide its service users with a fair and high-quality service, within its stated aims and priorities and welcomes feedback from service users, other individuals and organisations we work with, on all aspects of our services. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work to ensure we are running the company in the right direction to meet the needs of our community.

### **The objectives of this Policy are to:**

- provide a formal means for feedback, both compliments and complaints, and how to manage this;
- ensure that anyone who wishes to complain knows how to do so;
- ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and quickly;
- ensure that complaints are monitored and contribute to changes to improve our services.

### **This policy covers complaints about:**

- the standard of service you should expect from us;
- the behaviour of our staff and volunteers in delivering that service;
- any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged on SGPC business.

### **We will ensure that we:**

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible.
- Ensure that wherever possible, and except for reasons of legality or confidentiality, the management of complaints is open and transparent.
- Record, process, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the GDPR 2018.
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated timeframe as detailed in our policy.
- Ensure that any staff and volunteers named in a complaint are made fully aware of the support mechanisms available to them.
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal.
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented as a result of the complaint, where appropriate.
- Report, on a quarterly basis, the number of compliments and complaints received; the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken at board meetings.
- To feedback to our team the compliments received as compliments should be recognised and celebrated.

This Policy and Procedure does not replace any legal rights an individual or organisation may wish to explore.



### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not to our organisation.

An individual may make a complaint if they feel we have:

- Failed to provide a service or an acceptable standard of service.
- Delayed in providing a service.
- Made a mistake in the way we have provided a service.
- Failed to act in a proper way.
- Provided an unfair service.

This policy and procedure relate only to complaints received about SGPC and its services. Individuals who make complaints about other organisations that we may work with will be notified in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with and will be provided with contact details, where possible.

### **Legal issues**

There may be occasions when we are required by law to refer a complaint to law enforcement or statutory agencies, or we are informed about a complaint by a law enforcement agency, solicitors or bodies with statutory powers of investigation. At all times legal, statutory or professional investigations will take primacy over the Complaints Policy and Procedure and we will not undertake any actions that may compromise any external investigations. In such cases:

- The Complaints Policy and Procedure will be initiated and the Board of Directors may take such action to protect clients, users, or this organisation through suspension of a member or other volunteer until such a time as any legal procedures or investigations are completed to the satisfaction of the external agencies concerned. If the complaint involves a paid member of staff then the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure will be used.
- Once immediate actions have been taken the Complaints Policy will become suspended until such a time as any legal procedures or investigations are completed to the satisfaction of the external agencies concerned.
- We will keep full and accurate records of its actions in respect of such a complaint.

In situations where a complaint may have financial or legal consequences for this organisation, we will seek further guidance from our insurers/legal advisors which may require us to cease direct contact with the complainant. It may then be necessary, in the best interests of the complainant where possible to refer them to a third party to ensure that their service needs are met.



## **Data Protection**

To process a complaint SGPC will hold personal data about a complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give when investigating the complaint. We will hold this data securely and only use it to help to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those needing to consider the complaint and will not be revealed by SGPC to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in all circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties. For legal matters we may seek advice from Advising Communities and their legal team.

We will normally destroy compliments and complaints files in a secure manner six years after the compliment has been made or the complaint closed. These will be stored in the company's secure file on P Cloud.

## **Monitoring**

Complaints are an important tool, which alongside other user feedback and evaluations will allow SGPC to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them. To ensure that we learn from complaints the following information will be collected:

- Name and address of complainant.
- Date complaint received.
- Name of person dealing with the complaint.
- Date of response to the complaint.
- Nature of the complaint.
- Action(s) taken or recommendations made in response to the complaint (where appropriate).
- Lessons learned.
- Complaints information will be considered on a regular basis and reported quarterly to the Board of Directors. Wherever possible the information will be used to improve and develop services.

If SGPC receives a complaint about another member of the organisation the formal complaints procedure will be used and we will also carry out any actions in accordance with our constitution.

## **SGPC Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

### **Compliments**

Any verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the member of staff receiving the compliment and be passed to the appropriate manager for recording on the Compliments Register. Any member of staff identified as being the subject or contributing to any matter giving rise to the compliment will be notified. Feedback on compliments will be shared with our team at appropriate timings and at Directors Meetings. We value all positive feedback we receive as a company and feel it's important that these key messages are heard. Forms can be found in our Policies and Guidance folder on P Cloud. Completed forms will be stored on our secure file on P Cloud.



## **Constructive Feedback**

Being a small growing company, we welcome any feedback and constructive feedback is something we value as it helps us revisit areas of the services that perhaps are not working at its best.

We recognise the need to accept constructive feedback as a way of assessing our day to day running of SGPC. Many members may not want to actually complain but would value a way to offer that feedback.

We will record our Constructive feedback in the same format as our compliments Register. Feedback will be shared with our team at appropriate timings and at Directors Meetings and actions noted.

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage One: The Complaint**

#### **What you need to do**

Write to SGPC explaining your complaint as fully as possible. Your letter should be addressed to

The CEO, South Glos Parents and Carers  
Randolph Room  
Poole Court  
Poole Court Drive

Yate South Gloucestershire BS37 5PT  
and marked "Private and Confidential".

Please include your name, a contact address and telephone number and the name of the organisation you represent, if appropriate. We cannot respond to anonymous complaints. The organisation can help you to put your complaint in writing, or signpost you to someone who can support you to do this.

If your complaint directly concerns the CEO you can address your complaint to the Chair of Directors, South Glos Parents and Carers, Randolph Room, Poole Court, Poole Court Drive, Yate BS37 5PT. Marked "Private and Confidential".

If you request details on how to complain we will send out our Complaints Policy and a Complaints Form where possible within 5 working days of your request (subject to holiday season as we may be closed during school holidays).

On receiving your written complaint and/or our complaint form we will ensure that it is logged onto the complaints register and stored on our secure folder.

The CEO/Chair will contact you within 10 working days (may be longer during the holiday season if we are closed during school holidays) with written confirmation that your complaint form/letter has been received and that an investigation has begun. If the CEO is not available either the Acting Manger or Chair will deal with the matter. If both are unavailable another Committee/Board member will deputise.



The CEO/Chair (or deputy) may be able to resolve the complaint quickly by way of an apology, by providing the service required or by providing an acceptable explanation. The CEO/Chair will complete a 'Complaints Investigation Report' (see appendices) and send a copy of this to you.

If it is not possible to resolve the complaint quickly then the CEO/Chair (or deputy) will fully investigate the complaint - this could be by interviewing any relevant staff. The CEO/Chair may seek advice from our insurers and/or from external advisers. If the investigation is likely to be time-consuming or complex, the CEO/Chair may involve up to two other Leadership or Board members. Notes will be taken of any interviews, if required, and the interviewees will receive a copy. The CEO/Chair will list any evidence seen (e.g. files, emails etc.).

All parties involved in the investigation will be required to keep the matter private and confidential, except that staff may seek the advice of Trade Unions or other advisers if they consider that the SGPC Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure will need to be invoked due to the complaint.

You will receive a copy of our "Complaint Investigation Report" within 21 working days of our written confirmation of your complaint. This will be in writing. It will include a summary of what has been done to investigate the complaint and any proposed action. Having received the report, you then need to complete the return slip indicating if you are satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or not.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome the return slip provides the organisation with details of your intention to move to Stage 2.

## **Stage 2: Appeal against the CEO or Chair's decision**

### **What we will do**

You will be invited to make your appeal in person to an 'Appeals Panel' consisting of 3 people, including 2 members of SGPC Governing Board not previously involved in the investigation and another member of SGPC. They will have been given a copy of the Complaints Investigation Report, but will not have discussed the matter with the investigator or the staff involved.

The role of the Appeals Panel is to see if your complaint has been dealt with properly and fairly and whether an appropriate decision has been reached, not to re-investigate the complaint.

Where the complaint is against a member of staff or volunteer, that person will be given the opportunity to submit a written statement to the Appeals Panel. This will be considered alongside the original complaint, the investigation report and any action suggested to remedy the situation.

You will be given at least 7 working days' notice of the date, time and venue of the Appeals Panel meeting and all reasonable efforts will be made to hold the meeting at a time convenient to you. You may bring someone to assist you, or to witness the procedure.

Registered Office Poole Court, Poole Court Drive, Yate BS37 5PT  
South Glos Parents and Carers is a Community Interest Company CIC 8364673 (not for profit)



The Appeals Panel will write to you within 7 working days to notify you of its decision and any actions to be taken to address the complaint. The Appeals Panel's decision will be final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

How we will behave towards a person against whom a complaint has been made

### **Complaint about a member of SGPC**

Sometimes the organisation will receive a complaint about a person who is believed to have done something wrong. In these instances, a written complaint will be needed. If the complaint is made against:

- a member of staff or volunteer, it should be addressed to the CEO;
- a member of the organisation, it should be addressed to the CEO;
- a service user/client, it should be addressed to the CEO;
- the CEO, it should be addressed to the Board of Directors;
- a Board Member, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors;
- the Chair of board, it should be addressed to the Board via the CEO;

The organisation will treat the person against whom a complaint has been made as fairly as the complainant. They will be given a copy of the complaint made, which may be anonymised in order to protect the confidentiality of the complainant, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint (subject to School holidays).

If it is a person within the company being complained about, they will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms and assistance and support will also be available for them if required. They will be asked to provide a written statement responding to the complaint, including identifying any witnesses to the event.

In recognition of the stressful situation the person being complained about will be offered support from the organisation in accordance with the resources available. This may be an individual who is identified to provide a listening ear and practical support in terms of helping them to complete a written response and explaining the process.

The person being complained about will be kept informed of progress throughout the process and along with the complainant will receive a copy of the Complaint Investigation Report within 21 working days of our written confirmation of your complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with the decision that has been made you can appeal. This must be done within 7 working days of having received the Complaints Investigation Report. You make your appeal in writing to the Chair of Directors. You will then be required to follow the process outlined in Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

The organisation has different policies and procedures in place in order to ensure good, effective management of the organisation and delivery of services.

Depending on the nature of the complaint these policies and procedures may be used either alongside or instead of the complaints procedure.

Whilst it is not uncommon for people to look for someone to blame when things go wrong, the person being complained about will be assured that this is not the aim of investigating



a complaint. It will be made clear that the investigation of a complaint is to establish facts to try and find out what, if anything has gone wrong and identify any learning from the situation.

In the case of staff, they will be reassured that the investigation does not form part of a disciplinary procedure, but that a separate disciplinary process could take place if this was found to be appropriate. In the case of volunteers, including trustees this would be via the volunteer and equal opportunities policy and procedures/trustee code of conduct.

If the complaint is about another member then the organisation must use the rules set out in their governing document for dealing with members and also implement its code of conduct. This will also apply if the person being complained about is a service user/client who is also a member.

Where the complaint is about a service user/client who is not a member of the organisation then its client code of conduct and equal opportunities policy and procedure will be used.

### **Interviews**

When the investigation requires a person being complained about to attend for interview, they will be told the purpose of the interview, what to expect and what preparation they need to do. They will be advised that they can bring someone (such as a friend, colleague) for support – although the position of confidentiality and their role should be made clear. They will also be told about the procedure after the interview.

### **Anonymous Compliments and Complaints**

Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

### **Persistent and vexatious complaints/complainants**

#### **Unacceptable behaviour:**

SGPC recognises that from time to time there will be people who repeatedly file persistent, trivial or vexatious complaints. Should this arise the complaint/complainant may be dealt with by the leadership team if appropriate, rather than that determined in the procedure in order to minimise the resources required to investigate the complaint.

Deviation from the procedure will only be acceptable if a complaint or the behaviour of the complainant is clearly unacceptable or trivial.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- aggressive or abusive behaviour;
- persistent complaints about the same issue when that issue has previously been investigated and closed in accordance with this policy;
- trivial or frivolous complaints that do not warrant action;
- malicious or vexatious complaints that seek to discredit the organisation, Directors, employees or partner organisations and community members.
- Constant threats and demands.



## **Managing unacceptable behaviour**

SGPC will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour towards their employees, other service users/clients, members or employees of partner organisations.

In the event a member of staff feels they are being treated aggressively or abusively they should advise the complainant their behaviour is unacceptable and terminate any conversation or meeting and inform the CEO. The CEO/Chair will determine what further action is appropriate.

## **Resolution**

SGPC will take all reasonable steps to investigate and resolve complaints in accordance with this complaints procedure. However, the association reserves the right to decline investigation of complaints that are deemed unreasonable or trivial.

The decision to decline investigation into a complaint can only be taken by the CEO after careful consideration of the circumstances.

Complainants will be notified in writing of any decision not to investigate a complaint that is considered to be unreasonable or trivial and the reasons for this decision.

The Board will be notified of all decisions not to proceed with an investigation into a complaint and the circumstances.

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Discussed by Board and updates agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020





## SGPC Complaints Form

Name of Complainant:	
Name of your organisation (if relevant):	
Address:	
Tel Number:	
E-Mail:	
Describe your complaint:	
Date complaint made:	
Signature of complainant:	
<b>For Office Use:</b>	
Date Complaint received:	
Name and signature of person receiving the complaint:	
Date complainant notified of its receipt:	
Name of person dealing with the complaint:	



## SGPC Complaints Investigation Report

Name of person(s) investigating the complaint:	
Position in the organisation:	
Date complainant notified of its receipt:	
Name of person dealing with the complaint:	
Outline of complaint:	



Details of investigation: (Paper work looked at, emails, interviews held etc.):	
Complaint Upheld?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons for decision:	



Actions to be taken:	
Date result with report sent to complainant:	
Signature of investigator:	

## REPLY SLIP

Please complete, detach and return to SGPC.

Complainant Name:
<p><b><i>Please delete as appropriate:</i></b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am satisfied with the results of this investigation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am not satisfied with the results of this investigation and wish to move on to Stage 2</p>
Signature of complainant: