

Charity Number: 1156427

Somerford ARC Community Centre

# Complaints Policy & Procedure

Created: April 2022



## **General statement**

Somerford ARC Community Centre dedicated to providing high-quality services to all individuals who engage with our organisation. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when our services do not fully meet expectations.

We regard complaints as a constructive opportunity to listen, learn, and improve the way we operate. All complaints will be handled seriously, and addressed with dignity and fairness, in accordance with our commitment to transparency. Accountability and continuous improvement.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy outlines how complaints are managed at Somerford ARC Community Centre and ensures they are handled in a consistent, fair, and timely manner.
- 1.2. The policy is publicly available to ensure that all service users understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.
- 1.3. Complaints help us maintain and improve the quality of our services. All feedback, positive or negative, is valued as part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.
- 1.4. This procedure forms part of our broader governance framework and reflects our organisational values of openness, respect, responsiveness, and accountability.

### **2. What is a Complaint?**

- 2.1. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction relating to:
  - The quality or standard of services provided.
  - The conduct or behaviour of Trustees, employees, volunteers, pr representatives
  - Any aspect of the organisations operation or activities of the organisation.
- 2.2. Complaints may be submitted by any individual or organisation who interacts with the centre, including service users, partners, funders, contractors, and members of the public.

### **3. How to Make a Complaint**

- 3.1. We encourage informal resolution wherever appropriate. If you feel comfortable doing so, please raise your concern directly a member of the office team. Many issues can be resolved promptly at this stage.
- 3.2. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be submitted through the following channels:
  - Email: [info@somerfordarc.com](mailto:info@somerfordarc.com)
  - Post: Somerford ARC Community Centre, 20 Southe Road, Christchurch, BH23 3EH
  - Complaints form (Appendix 1): Available from the office or on our website.

Please mark any written correspondence as private and confidential.

- 3.3. To help us process your complaint effectively, please include:

- Your name and contact details
- A clear description of your concern
- Relevant dates, individuals involved, or supporting documents (if applicable)

#### **4. How We Handle Complaints**

##### 4.1. All complaints will be managed through the following four steps:

###### Step 1: Acknowledgement

- We will acknowledge your complaint within 10 working days of receipt.
- You will be informed of who is handling your complaint and next steps in the process.

###### Step 2: Investigation

- The Office Manager or an appropriate delegated will investigate the matter.
- If the complaint concerns a specific individual, they will be informed and given the opportunity to respond.
- Complaints will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection laws.

###### Step 3: Response

- A full written response will be provided within 28 days of receipt.
- If additional time is required due to the complexity of the matter, you will be informed and updated on progress.

###### Step 4: Outcome

###### Our written response will include:

- A summary of the investigation.
- Findings and conclusions.
- Any action taken to resolve the issue or to prevent recurrence.

#### **5. If You Are Not Satisfied**

- 5.1. If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive, you may request a formal review of the complaint by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 5.2. Upon receiving your request:
  - You will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days.
  - The Chair (or delegated Trustee) will conduct a further review of the matter.
  - A final decision will be issued in writing within 28 days.
- 5.3. This decision will be considered final unless the Board of Trustees determines that external guidance or mediation is necessary.

## **6. Escalating the Complaint to an External Body**

- 6.1. if you remain dissatisfied following the completion of our internal process, or the issue involves serious concerns such as, misconduct, fraud, or data misuse, you may escalate the complaint to a relevant external authority.

### **Fundraising Complaints**

*Concerns about donation requests or fundraising conduct*

[www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

### **Charity Governance or Serious Misconduct**

*Concerns such as mismanagement, fraud, or illegal activity*

[www.gov.uk/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/charity-commission)

### **Data Protection Concerns**

*Issues relating to personal information or privacy*

[www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **7. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- 7.1. All complaints are managed in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Somerford ARC Community Centre Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

- 7.2. Personal data will only be disclosed where necessary for the investigation and resolving the complaint, and only with those directly involved in the process.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1. All complaints will be recorded and reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees to:

- Identify recurring issues or trends.
- Monitor the effectiveness of complaint resolutions.
- Improve service quality and organisational practices.

## **9. Equality and Accessibility**

- 9.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to ensuring that everyone has equal access to our complaints process, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

- 9.2. We will make reasonable adjustments to support individuals who may face barriers in accessing or understanding this policy, including but not limited to:

- Providing the policy or complaints form in alternative formats (e.g., large print, easy read)
- Offering support to complete the complaints process, where needed
- Ensuring communication methods are accessible for people with disabilities or language needs.

- 9.3. If you require any adjustments or assistance in submitting or discussing a complaint, please contact us, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs

Associated Policies
Data Protection Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Created by	
Print Name	Lauren Biggs
Role	Office Manager
Date	16-04-2022

Review History	Reviewed by	Validated by
25-04-2022	Lauren Biggs	unvalidated
02-10-2023	Lauren Biggs	unvalidated
20-05-2025	Lauren Biggs	

Next review date	20-05-2027
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## APPENDIX 1

# Complaints Form

Date	
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## Complainant information

Full Name	
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Address	
Postcode	
Mobile number	
Landline	
Email	

## Complaint Details

Date of incident	
Time of incident	

*Please describe the details of your complaint below. (include what happened, where it occurred, who was involved, and any other relevant information. Please be as factual and specific as possible):*

A decorative header for a document. It features a series of horizontal black lines of varying lengths across the top. Below these lines is a large, abstract shape composed of three overlapping curved bands in light green, light red, and light blue. To the left of this shape, the word 'SONG' is written vertically in a light blue, sans-serif font.

*\*use a separate sheet if more space is needed. Please sign and date any additional pages.*

## Declaration of Complaint

I confirm that the information provided in this complaint is accurate and to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

**Data protection:** the information you provide in this form will only be used for the purpose of handling your complaint. We will not share your details with any third party without your permission, unless required by law. All data related to your complaint will be retained for no longer than two years following resolution or termination of your relationship with the organisation.

## Office use only

Complaint received by	
Role	

## Complaint acknowledged by management

Time	
Date	

## Complaint Submitted to Trustees

Time	
Date	

## Complaint Acknowledged by the Trustees

Time	
Date	

## Investigation

## Was an investigation necessary?

Yes

1

No

1

Actions taken: (please include key steps taken, who was involved in the investigation, and any outcomes or recommendations).

*\*please use a separate sheet of paper where necessary. Ensure all additional pages are signed and dated.*

Outcome communicated to the complainant

Outcome communicated to the complainant	
Time	
Date	

Investigation resolved	
Signed	
Date	

