



SWINDON CARERS CENTRE Complaints Policy [CB8]

Policy Statement

Swindon Carers Centre is committed to providing a quality service for all carers and their cared-for, and to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and recording our responses to the views of all those we come into contact with, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Our aim:

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken;
- We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures;
- Our on-going relationship with anyone who complains is not adversely affected by the fact of their having complained.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- Resolve informal complaints brought to our attention verbally by telephone or by meeting with the complainant within seven days;
- Keep matters low-key;
- Record the outcome of informal complaints on the service user's Charitylog record. If the person making an informal complaint is not a service user details will be recorded in the relevant folder of the Communications site.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Formal Complaints Policy

Definition: Swindon Carers Centre defines a formal complaint as 'a written expression of dissatisfaction that relates to Swindon Carers Centre and that requires a formal response'.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Swindon Carers Centre's responsibility will be to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- Respond within a stated period of time;

- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, to Swindon Carers Centre's attention as soon as practically possible after the incident;
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of the Senior Leadership Team at Swindon Carers Centre;
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- Allow Swindon Carers Centre a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Swindon Carers Centre's control.

Responsibility for Action: All Staff, and Trustees of Swindon Carers Centre.

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Swindon Carers Centre maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting: Trustees of Swindon Carers Centre will receive quarterly an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Chief Executive, who will log the complaint and pass it on to the relevant manager to progress. If the complaint refers to the Chief Executive, you should write to the Chair of Trustees. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. As the complaint is reviewed, you may be invited to attend an interview to go through the details of the complaint. We welcome an advocate of your choice to assist you at any such meetings. Interviews may also be held with any relevant members of staff or volunteers, and potentially external bodies, if appropriate. A written record will be kept of all interviews made as part of this process, and such records will be made available to you.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response given to the complaint then you can write to the Chief Executive (or Chair of Trustees, if the complaint concerns the Chief Executive) outlining why you are dissatisfied and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chief Executive to acknowledge your request within 5 working days of receipt and a response within 10 working days.

Swindon Carers Centre'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.

Final Stage

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from Swindon Carers Centre's Chief Executive, then you have the option of writing to the Chair of Trustees, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response from Swindon Carers Centre's Chief Executive.

The Chair of Trustees will normally respond within 10 working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

Note. If your original complaint was against the Chair of Trustees, then the final stage will be handled by the Vice Chair, or other member of the Trustee Board.

Review Statement

This policy has been prepared considering prevailing legislation and recognised good practice. New legislation requirements or changes in current legislation may necessitate the review of this policy document. The company will continue to review and amend all/part of this policy on a regular basis. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the copy of the policy being referred to is the most up-to-date version.

Further Information

If you would like further information on any aspect of this, or any other HR policy, please contact your line manager.