



## 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 person, family member or friend, 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 to and recording all responses to the views of all those we come into contact with, and in particular by responding positively to complaints.

### 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 complaints promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- We respond to complaints 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 ongoing relationship with anyone who complains is not adversely affected by the fact of their having complained.

### Informal Complaints

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 10 working days, where possible.
- Keep matters low-key.
- Record the outcome of informal complaints on the service user's Charity Log record. If the person making an informal complaint is not a service user, details will be recorded in the relevant folder of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) site and stored for 2 years.

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

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'. By written expression it is meant by letter or email

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.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Act where appropriate, including investigation meetings if required.
- Respond within a stated period of time including outcomes of any investigations.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, (letter or email) to Swindon Carers Centre's attention as soon as practically possible after the incident.
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

- Clearly explain the impact the issue has had on you and what outcome you are seeking.
- Allow Swindon Carers Centre a reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Swindon Carers Centre's control.

#### **Procedure for Making a Formal Complaint**

- If you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to a member of the management team or Senior Leadership Team by means of letter to Swindon Carers Centre, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HE or send an email to [complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk).
- In your letter or email you should clearly set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.
- The manager receiving the complaint will log the complaint and pass on to the relevant manager to progress. If the complaint refers to the Chief Executive, the complaint will be passed to a member of the Board of Trustees.
- If you email or write to another member of staff, they will always escalate this to one of the management or Senior Leadership Team at the earliest opportunity.
- You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and a response within 10 working days where possible.
- As the complaint is reviewed, you may be invited to attend a meeting to go through the details of the complaint. We welcome an advocate of your choice to assist you at any such meetings. Meetings may also be held with any relevant members of staff or volunteers, and potentially external bodies, if appropriate.
- A written record of the complaint resolution will be made available to you as soon as possible, following the complaint investigation, and may include interview notes/minutes taken as part of this process, as appropriate.

#### **Procedure If You Are Unhappy with the Complaint Resolution**

##### **Escalation Step 1:**

- If you are not satisfied with the initial response given to the complaint, you can write to the Chief Executive (or member of the Board of Trustees if the complaint concerns the Chief Executive) by means of letter to Swindon Carers Centre, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HE or send an email to [complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk).  
This must be done within 10 working days of the complaint resolution being made available to you and you must outline why you are dissatisfied and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed.
- You can expect an acknowledgement of your request within 5 working days of receipt and a response within 10 working days where possible.

##### **Final Escalation Step**

- If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from our Chief Executive, you have the option of writing to the Chair of Trustees by means of letter to Swindon Carers Centre, Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HE or send an email to [complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk](mailto:complaints@swindoncarers.org.uk).
- You must state the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome and must do this within 10 working 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.
- 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.

#### **Response Timescales**

- Our 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 a 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.

### **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, such as a safeguarding concern. 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.
- Swindon Carers Centre report quarterly to Swindon Borough Council an anonymised report of the number of complaints received.

### **Handling Complaints Records**

- Informal and formal complaint details of registered carers will be stored on their record for the time they are registered with Swindon Carers Centre.
- Carers full records including complaint information will be anonymised 6 years from the time the carer no longer wishes to be registered.
- Informal and formal complaint information from a person not registered with Swindon Carers Centre will be stored on the Senior Leadership Team's site for 2 years from the date the complaint was received. Following this, the records will be deleted.

### **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. Swindon Carers Centre will continue to review and amend all/part of this policy on a regular basis.

### **Related Policies**

- Easy Read Complaints Policy [CB9]
- Complaints Procedure [CB8-P1]
- Privacy Notice - Carers