



Complaints Procedure

Our commitment

Survivors' Network is committed to delivering efficient and high-quality services. We aim to be open, to answer for our actions, to provide information quickly and politely, and to help anyone who is in contact with us. This complaints procedure builds upon our commitment to equal opportunities and data protection. We are members of the Fundraising Standards Board and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Should you feel that their framework or codes have been broken in any way then please contact Survivors' Network to enable us to investigate the matter.

Helping us to put things right

Survivors' Network is always keen to hear the views of the people we are in contact with us about our performance – what we do right, and what we do wrong. We recognise that things may go wrong and, as a result, we may not provide the standards of service that we have set ourselves. We are especially keen to know when this happens as it gives us an opportunity to put things right and to learn from our mistakes. That way, we can get it right next time. Below we provide timetables for our complaints procedure. We understand that sometimes we will not be able to meet this and where this is the case we will contact you to agree a new timetable.

What is a complaint?

Survivors' Network regards a complaint as:

“any written or spoken expression of dissatisfaction about Survivors' Network and its services, whether made formally or informally, after a clear explanation of the point at issue has been given.”

How do you go about complaining about us?

You can make a complaint to any member of our staff or volunteers. You can make a complaint:

- in person;
- by phone;
- in writing by post or e-mail
- by contacting us directly through social media

This will then be passed to our Complaints Coordinator. The Complaints Coordinator is the Director who can be contacted via the office or at director@survivorsnetwork.org.uk

Once a complaint has been received, we will endeavour to:

- treat the complaint seriously, however it is made
- investigate all complaints regardless of when the incident happened
- respond to your complaint and provide you with a copy of our relevant procedures within 14 working days of the complaint being made

- do our best to deal with it quickly, politely and, where appropriate, informally (for example by phone)
- aim to let you know the outcome of your investigation within 30 working days of the beginning of our investigation
- apologise when we have got things wrong
- explain our position or any action we take
- avoid jargon and get our facts right
- give explanations which are clear and easy to understand
- give you a contact phone number for enquiries
- tell you how to take your complaint further if you wish to do so

After the matter has been settled we may ask you how we can avoid similar problems in the future.

When you can expect a response

We will aim to sort out your complaint to our mutual satisfaction as soon as possible. We will try to respond to your complaint within fourteen working days, acknowledging your complaint and our understanding of the issues and providing our complaint and any other relevant procedures.

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We will take your complaint seriously and endeavour to meet all timetables that are set out here. Sometimes however it is not always possible to meet the fourteen working days timetable for an initial responses, for example due to staff absence or office closures. However we will always ensure that we inform you of any delay and agree a new timetable with you.

Stage One – Acknowledgement

Timetables will be set and, if we have an address for you, a letter will be sent to you informing you of our time commitment and provide you with the relevant paper work. We will aim for this to happen within fourteen working days of the office being informed of a complaint.

The complaint will be passed to the Survivors' Network Complaints Coordinator who will then investigate the matter. If the complaint is regarding the Complaints Coordinator, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees to carry out the investigation.

Stage Two – Investigation

We will aim to complete all investigations within 30 working days. However, it may not be possible to meet this 30 working days timetable, for example due to staff absence or office closures. If there are any delays in the investigation, or if the investigation is a prolonged one, we will inform you of any delay and keep you informed as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded. In the case of a prolonged investigation, where possible we will agree a new timetable with you. During the investigation we would ask that you do not discuss your complaint with the service concerned, including volunteers, members of staff or management.

The investigation may consist of any of the following:

Interviews (either in person or via the telephone) with relevant staff and personnel

A review of materials and policies

Any necessary consultation with external experts

We may ask you for any details which we feel are necessary to investigate the complaint properly to ensure your satisfaction and to ensure that systems are put in place for the protection of all service users, staff and volunteers.

The investigation and its results will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Stage three – Resolution

The Complaints Coordinator will contact you with details of the investigation and any outcomes reached. She will try to ensure that you are happy with our investigation and any arising decisions.

We will ensure that following an investigation:

- Where possible, we improve training, systems and procedures so that the problem doesn't happen again
- If appropriate, take disciplinary action against our staff or volunteers

Survivors' Network aims to act in a reasonable and fair way. We ask that you do not take legal action or involve the media without first allowing us to implement our complaints procedure. If you are still unhappy at the end of our complaints investigation then please write and tell us. The Board will review this and any reasons you give for being unhappy along with any supplementary evidence. They will inform you in writing if they feel that your letter warrants an additional investigation. If you are still not happy with the way that Survivors' Network has treated you then we will support you to take your complaint to the Fundraising Standards Board or the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The complainant can choose to deal with the matter by correspondence or at meetings. A friend or advisor can accompany the complainant.

Records

All complaints made to staff or volunteers will be passed to the Complaints Coordinator. All records will be confidential to the organisation but the Complaints Coordinator and the Board of Trustees will have access to them. We will keep written records of the complaint, the investigation and the outcome. We shall also record if there was any further information/action required.

For more information on how we store information and our commitment to confidentiality and keeping you safe please see our Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.