



Survivors'
Network

Survivors' Network Complaints Policy

Key Contact: CEO

Date Agreed: March 2021

Review Date: March 2024

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Our commitment

Survivors' Network is committed to delivering efficient and high-quality services. We aim to be open, to answer for our actions and to respond to enquiries in an effective and professional manner. 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). Survivors' Network strives to be a learning organisation, where we invite all feedback from service users and stakeholders. It is essential that staff (sessional and contracted), volunteers and trustees are able to identify, receive and direct any concerns about the services we provide.

Helping us to put things right

Survivors' Network is always keen to hear views of the people we are in contact with about our performance: things that we are doing well and areas for improvement. 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 time frames for our complaints. If for any reason we will not be able to meet this time frame we will contact you to agree a new time frame.

What is a complaint?

Survivors' Network regards a complaint as:

“Any written or spoken expression of dissatisfaction about Survivors' Network and its services, where the client is wanting us to investigate”

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 or our website

Once a complaint has been received, we will:

- treat the complaint seriously, however it is made
- investigate all complaints regardless of when the incident happened, although we may be restricted in any investigation of an event/incident that happened over one year ago.
- do our best to deal with it professionally and within the agreed time frames
- apologise when we have got things wrong
- explain our position or any action we take
- 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
- consider (with your input) how to avoid the same / similar issue arising, if applicable
- resolve the complaint to our mutual satisfaction

Complaints Procedure

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 scheduled time frames, for example due to staff absence, office closures or if the issues are particularly complex or require us to speak to a number of other individuals. However, we will always ensure that we inform you of any delay and agree a new timetable with you.

The investigation will include some or all of the following:

- phone call/meeting with you to ensure we have all relevant information
- clarification of your desired outcome
- review of any relevant paperwork/case notes/policies
- interview with staff/volunteers
- record of all actions taken
- a written outcome, detailing any action/learning

Stage One – Informal Complaint

We will always try to resolve any concern or complaint informally in the first instance. It is always best practice for the complainant and the member of staff or volunteer to attempt to resolve the issue directly. If this is not appropriate or not possible, the complaint should progress to stage two.

Stage Two – Formal Complaint

If it is not appropriate or possible for the complaint to be resolved informally, it will then be passed to the relevant service coordinator. They will then investigate the complaint and respond to you in writing according to the stated timeframes. If the complaint concerns more than one service or relates directly to the actions of a coordinator, it will be investigated by the Head of Operations.

Stage Three – Escalated Complaint

If you are unhappy with the outcome or investigation of your complaint, you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to the CEO.

She will respond to your complaint according to our timeframes and will review the documentation collected during the initial investigation, in addition to any additional evidence. You can contact the CEO, Jay Breslaw on jay@survivorsnetwork.org.uk

Stage Four – Board Review

If there is still a concern regarding the outcome or investigation of your complaint, you can ask the Board of Trustees to review. The Board will assess 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. You can contact the Chair of Trustees on trustees@survivorsnetwork.org.uk

Stage Five – External review

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 (for complaints relating to fundraising) or the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (for complaints relating to therapeutic support).

We aim to work in an honest and transparent way to the highest ethical standards. If you believe we have not met these, you can raise any serious concerns with the Rape Crisis England and Wales team via their website

If the complaint is about the Head of Operations, it will be escalated to the CEO. If the complaint is about the CEO, it will be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees to investigate. The stages outlined above may be contracted as a result.

| Stage / Process | Time frame for response from Survivors' Network |
|--|--|
| Complaint received | |
| Acknowledge and send copy of policy | 5 working days after complaint received |
| Stage 1: Resolve informally between complainant directly with relevant SN staff / volunteer, if appropriate. If not appropriate or resolution not possible, move to: | 14 working days after complaint received |
| Stage 2: Relevant manager to investigate | 30 working days after passed to Stage 2 |
| Stage 3: CEO to investigate / review | 15 working days after passed to Stage 3 |
| Stage 4: Chair of Board of Trustees to investigate / review | 15 working days after passed to Stage 4 |
| Stage 5: British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, Rape Crisis England and Wales to investigate | https://rapecrisis.org.uk/complaints/ https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/how-to-complain-about-a-bacp-member/ |

Complaints that we may not be able to investigate

Whilst we do not put a time frame on any complaints received (you can complain about something irrespective of how long ago it happened), we will be limited in our ability to carry out an investigation where something happened over two years ago and the longer ago, the more restricted we will be in our ability. It may be that a complaint relates to an incident that happened such a long time ago that we will not be able to investigate at all.

Sometimes, we may define a complaint as an unreasonable complaint, and in these circumstances, we may decide not to investigate a complaint. This decision is only taken on very rare occasions and will always be taken as a joint decision by more than one person to include the CEO and/or the Chair of Trustees.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the

outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.

- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint, where the complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on the organisation by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

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.