



# SHARED CARE SCOTLAND

## Shared Care Scotland Complaints Procedure

Shared Care Scotland is committed to providing the best possible service we can. We aim to be efficient and effective in all our customer relationships and to be supportive, polite, and considerate.

If you think that we have treated you unfairly, made mistakes or given you the wrong information we have a complaints procedure.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and all personal information that we may collect (including, but not limited to, your name, telephone number, email and postal address) will be collected, used and held in accordance with the provisions of data protection law.

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Shared Care Scotland.

Written complaints may be sent to the following address:

- Shared Care Scotland at Dunfermline Business Centre, Izatt Avenue, Dunfermline, KY11 3BZ
- Or by email to: [office@sharedcarescotland.com](mailto:office@sharedcarescotland.com)
- Verbal complaints may be made by phone to: 01383 622462
- Or in person to any of our staff or Board Directors
- We will then endeavour to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and respond within 20 working days.

You may be disappointed if we turn down your application to our Short Breaks Fund, but you cannot use this complaints procedure to appeal against our decision *if we have followed our published process correctly*.<sup>[1]</sup> Making a complaint will not affect your chances of being awarded a grant and it will not affect the level of service you receive.

*Shared Care Scotland*

Ver. 2022



## Complaints Policy of Shared Care Scotland

Shared Care Scotland views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person [or organisation] that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Shared Care Scotland knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Shared Care Scotland.

### Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Shared Care Scotland.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

A complaint should be made as soon as possible but normally no later than six months after the incident or event; the later the complaint is made, the more difficult it will be to investigate.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use Shared Care Scotland's Grievance policies.



### Anonymous complaints

Any anonymous complaint received will be noted and an investigation will be carried out to the best of our abilities with the information provided but we will be unable to notify the complainant of our findings.

### Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Shared Care Scotland.

### Questions and Further Information

If you have any questions or require further information about any aspect of this Complaints Policy or about our Complaints Procedure, please contact the Chief Executive at the address on page 1.

### Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Last reviewed: August 2022



## Handling Complaints: Procedure for Shared Care Scotland Staff

### Publicised Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to Shared Care Scotland at our office address or by e-mail.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to any of Shared Care Scotland's staff or Directors.

*(If approaching staff or Directors about a complaint at an event, we may take contact details and arrange to speak with the complainant out-with the event.)*

### Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Staff will need to make a written record of complaints received by telephone or in person. The note or record will be sent to the complainant for agreement before commencing investigation.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address, email address and telephone number and establish the complainant's preferred contact method
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Shared Care Scotland (for example: supplier, member, etc.)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see page 7



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## Resolving Complaints

### Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chief Executive.

On receiving the complaint, the Chief Executive (or, in the CEO's absence, the most senior member of staff) will see that a record is made in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they may delegate an appropriate person to investigate and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within **5 working days**. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within **20 working days**. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within **5 working days** of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.



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The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within **20 working days**. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

The complainant can complain to the Scottish Charity Regulator at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Regulator can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <http://www.oscr.org.uk/>

## Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

## Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

A report of any complaints received by the organisation will be provided to the Board on an annual basis.



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## APPENDIX

### Tips for Handling Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation. e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal