

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) is committed to providing a high standard of service and welcomes constructive comments and recommendations and will respond openly to complaints about SCF. Complaints will be monitored, the significance of any lessons to be learnt from them carefully considered, and information from this will be fed in to the planning process as appropriate.

Scope

This policy relates to any aspect of the operation of SCF. It can be used by any person or body who feels dissatisfied with the way they have been treated, or their case has been dealt with. This applies to concerns or complaints about any action by a member of staff of the Foundation, a Trustee, a donor, a Panel Member of the Foundation, or a volunteer who is representing or acting on behalf of the Foundation in some other capacity. It also applies to concerns relating to an application for grant assistance from the Foundation.

This policy lays out the procedure that should be followed if any person, group or organisation believes that they have a complaint about any action, outcome or the level or quality of service offered by SCF, its Trustees, staff or volunteers (see Appendix 1).

The Policy

Aims

By creating this policy SCF aims to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- make sure everyone in our organisation knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- learn from complaints and feedback to help us to improve what we do.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, in line with relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Chief Executive. All complaints received will be recorded in SCF's Complaints Register (see Appendix 2) and reported to the Board of Trustees.

Complaints process

Informal Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from SCF, we hope that in the first instance you would feel it appropriate to speak about the problem with the member who is involved with the

particular matter, or with the Chief Executive. It is hoped that this would lead to a resolution of the issues in the most informal way. If that is not successful, however, or if you are not prepared to follow that course of action for whatever reason, then the following information is provided to guide you on how you can take the matter forward in other more formal ways.

We hope that most complaints can be considered as close to the timing of the problem as possible. It is for that reason that, ideally, we ask that all initial complaints are made within 2 weeks of any problem arising; however there is no time limit set for when a complaint will can be made to the Foundation

Formal Complaints

If an informal resolution is not successful, or if the complainant is not prepared to follow that course of action for whatever reason, then a formal complaint should be made in writing using the Complaints, Compliments and Enquiries Form (Appendix 1) to the Chief Executive, stating clearly the nature of the complaint, who the complaint is being made by, and including any relevant dates, times, places and names of people involved.

If a complaint involves the Chief Executive and a complainant feels unable to discuss it with her/him, the complainant may write to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Should the complaint be about the Chairman, it should be addressed to Vice-Chairman, or in the absence of a Vice Chairman, the Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee, who will convene a committee of other Trustees.

Where a complaint relates to a decision regarding the award (or non-award) of a grant, the decision may need to be reviewed by a specially convened panel, consisting of the Chairman of the Grants Panel, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and an independent person.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within seven working days, and a record of the complaint will be logged in the Complaints Register. All complaints received, together with a copy of the response to the complainant, will also be notified to the Chairman.

If the complainant needs an advocate or interpreter, the SCF will help the complainant to find suitable assistance. However, the complainant remains responsible for engaging and paying for any services involved.

Progressing a complaint

The Chief Executive (or Chairman or Vice Chairman as the case may be) will investigate the complaint and its circumstances to decide whether to uphold the complaint. The Chief Executive (or Chairman) will communicate the result of the investigation, together with any decisions for subsequent action that will prevent a recurrence or put right any earlier inappropriate action. This investigation should be completed within four weeks from receiving the complaint.

How to appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of this investigation, they may put their case, in writing, to the Chief Executive, Chairman or other trustee as set out above as appropriate.

The Chief Executive (or other investigating officer) will convene a panel of not less than three Trustees (i.e. the Chairman plus two others) to review the complaint. The panel will communicate their decision and the results of their review to the person who made the original complaint, with a clear explanation of the decision and the reason(s) for reaching it. This review should be completed within four weeks from receiving notification of the person's dissatisfaction. The

panel's decision regarding the complaint will be final. The Complaints Register will be updated accordingly.

Contact Details

Illegal Activity

If your complaint has to do with suspected illegal activity, or if you have been the victim of a crime, please call the police in the first instance on 101.

Report serious concerns to the Charity Commission, for example if a charity is:

- not doing what it claims to do
- losing lots of money
- harming people
- being used for personal profit or gain
- involved in illegal activity

Charity Commission

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Complaint about Fundraising

SCF is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and is committed to the highest standards in fundraising practice. If your complaint relates to fundraising and you feel it remains unresolved after going through the General Complaints process, then the Fundraising Regulator can investigate your complaint (England & Wales only). You should contact them within two months of receiving your response from us.

Fundraising Regulator

1st Floor
10 St Bride Street
London
EC4A 4AD
0300 999 3404
enquiries@fundraisingregulator.org.uk