



## **Complaints procedure**

**Reviewed and updated 18 November 2022**

**Approved by Chairman SCF**

Sussex Cancer Fund (SCF) 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 Sussex Cancer Fund 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. We will review complaints at least annually at a Board meeting, to ensure we learn and improve.

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Sussex Cancer Fund.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in SCF, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

### **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 Directors of Sussex Cancer Fund

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints**

Written complaints may be sent to Sussex Cancer Fund, Sussex Cancer Centre, Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton BN2 5BE or by e-mail to [uhsussex.scfadministrator@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.scfadministrator@nhs.net)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01273 664930 or in person to any of Sussex Cancer Fund's staff or Trustees/ Directors.

### **Receiving Complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded as follows;

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

- Write down the facts of the complaint using the Complaints Log
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Sussex Cancer Fund, e.g. donor, volunteer, sponsor
- 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

### **SCF procedure for 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 Sussex Cancer Fund Chairman within five business days.

As stated previously, on receiving the complaint, the person receiving it records it in the Complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it 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 five 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 a month. 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 Board of Directors. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

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

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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.

### **External Stage**

As Sussex Cancer Fund is a charity, the complainant can complain to the UK Charity Commission at any stage.

### **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 a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

The Board may decide to invite a professional third - party person to manage a complaint about the Chair, or the Board in general, or about a specific trustee(s)