

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Status of document:	Approved
Version:	1.0
Classification	Official
Author/Owner	Jon King
Approved By:	SLT
Date approved for release	05/02/2024
Next scheduled review date	05/02/2027

1. Policy Statement

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) believes that having an accessible, clear complaints procedure is vital to making sure the views of its external stakeholders, associates, contractors, partners and general public are heard. Complaints can also provide valuable opportunities for us to learn and improve. Each complaint will be received constructively to learn more about the views and experiences of those affected by what we do. This will make sure that we are more accountable to stakeholders and funders.

A complaint may be about the standards, performance, decisions or actions of one or more of our staff members, trustees, associates, researchers, agency workers or anyone else working on our behalf. It may relate to our services, or to our organisation generally.

2. Our values

- Progressive
- Inclusive
- Credible
- Transparent
- Committed

Our values express what is important to us. They guide everything we do; what we expect from each other; and what everyone who connects with us can expect.

3. How will SCIE do this

SCIE will:

SCIE will regard feedback from any person or organisation that wishes to complain about the way we have dealt with them as a valid complaint, informally or formally – see below. Our aim is to improve our service delivery and to put right any shortcomings within our control.

Your complaint will be confidential and information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know to help resolve it. Occasionally, if the complaint is very serious, such as if it suggests that laws have been broken, or it involved harm to yourself or to others, other people might have to be involved. This will be discussed with you at the time. We will handle all information in line with GDPR (please see our separate Data Protection Policy for further information). Learning from a complaint can be shared more widely, for example by discussing it with the team.

Informal Complaint

SCIE aims to provide services of a high standard. We hope that most problems can be resolved by simply getting in touch with your regular contact at SCIE or project director. They will deal with your enquiry or comment promptly and do their very best to put things right. If you remain unhappy, you can contact the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to make a formal complaint.

In the case of a serious complaint where a person is at risk or harm has been experienced, this would go straight to a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

We expect you to:

Stage One

Please make a formal complaint as soon as possible, when the events are fresh in your mind, and no later than six months from the date of the issue or incident happening.

You can email your complaint directly to Jon King, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources at jon.king@scie.org.uk who will share it with the relevant Director at SCIE to investigate. You can also send complaints by post to Jon King, Social Care Institute for Excellence, One High Street, Egham, TW20 9HJ and include:

- Full details of the complaint.
- Contact details.
- Any information regarding any previous attempt to resolve this matter.
- What you would like the solution to be.

We will acknowledge your complaint within one week for email and two weeks for postal complaints where possible, and let you know how long we think we'll need to investigate it. We may need to contact you again for further details that will help us to investigate your concern further.

The relevant Director will consider your complaint and at the end of the investigation, will send you a report confirming the outcome of the complaint. It will also include further details of who to contact if you are not happy with the outcome.

If we don't hear from you within 14 calendar days of sending confirmation of the outcome, we will assume that the issue is resolved. However, if the problem arises again, please do come back to us.

Stage Two

We hope our initial response will resolve the issue, but if you are unhappy with it, please write to the Chief Executive who will investigate your complaint. The Chief Executive can be contacted via kathryn.smith@scie.org.uk or via our postal address. Please do this within 14 calendar days of being notified with the outcome of the complaint. The Chief Executive will either look at your complaint personally or will appoint a trustee or external advisor to investigate. If necessary, the trustee or external advisor may need assistance from a member of staff too.

The Chief Executive or person they have appointed may need to discuss the situation with you again as we try our best to resolve the issue. We'll confirm the outcome of this further investigation in writing and aim to respond within 14 calendar days.

If you remain unhappy with the further investigation by SCIE, you might be able to take the complaint to the [Charity Commission \(see their guidance note CC47 – Complaints against Charities for further information\)](#).

External Reference

As the nature of our work can involve working with adults at risk, we are especially aware of our safeguarding responsibilities (we have a separate Safeguarding Policy). We will respect any requests for confidentiality when a complaint is made but, in some cases, our safeguarding responsibilities mean that, we are obliged by law to report the complaint to the appropriate body (e.g., the Disclosure and Barring Service, known as DBS, General Medical Council, known as the GMC, or the police). If this happens this may be made separately to any investigation that may take place.

Disciplinary Procedure

If a complaint prompts an investigation into the behaviour or actions of one or more of our staff members, SCIE will use our separate Disciplinary procedure to fairly deal with the matter. This may mean that details of the complaint are used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings. The person who made the complaint will be made aware of the matter has been dealt with asked whether they agree to have their name disclosed.

4. Who this applies to?

This procedure is available for external stakeholders, associates, contractors, partners, and organisations to use. It may also be used by any member of the public who may wish to raise any issue with us. Concerns from any of our staff members should be taken forward through our separate Grievance procedure.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

You are responsible for sending

- Full details of the complaint
- Contact details.
- Any information regarding any previous attempt to resolve this matter.
- What you would like the solution to be.
- No later than six months from the date of the issue or incident happening

SCIE is responsible for considering your complaint impartially and at the end of the investigation, we will confirm the outcome of the complaint. We will also include further details of who to contact if you are not happy with the outcome.