

Selsey Community Forum



Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Selsey Community Forum is committed to providing all our stakeholders with the highest standard of service and complaints will be treated very seriously. Complaints received from external individuals or other sources are to be fully investigated, handled fairly and politely dealt with as quickly as possible.

Our policy is to

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure the staff, volunteers and Trustees know what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and promptly.
- To make sure that complaints are addressed and that relationships are repaired.
- To ensure that complaints are monitored in order to improve our services.
- To maintain a Complaints Log and report to Trustees on any complaints received.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission, decision, or a service of Selsey Community Forum, whether it is justified or not. This may result from the action of a staff member, volunteer or Trustee or from an activity or programme of work in which we are involved.

Complaints may come from any individual or organisation that has been in contact with Selsey Community Forum and/or our services. A complaint may be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing, or via social media.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the Selsey Community Forum Grievance Policy.

Confidentiality

All information relating to the complaint will be handled sensitively, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Only people who need to know about the complaint will be informed of it. Selsey Community Forum will only hold on to any personal data provided for as long as it is needed to properly investigate and resolve the complaint.

Complaints Procedure

We may receive a complaint by phone, email or post as well as through other channels, such as social media.

The Selsey Community Forum representative who receives a complaint will:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Selsey Community Forum, for example, a beneficiary, volunteer or partner organisation.

- Advise the complainant of our complaints procedure.
- Advise the complainant of what will happen next and how long it will take.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by email or by post so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

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 quickly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Regardless of whether the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the appropriate manager or project lead within two working days. On receiving the complaint, they will record it in the Complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they will investigate the complaint and take appropriate action.

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

The appropriate manager or project lead will acknowledge complaints within four working days.

The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant may expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure will be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 10 working days. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been completed, a progress report will be sent to the complainant with an indication of when they may expect to receive a full reply.

Regardless of whether the complaint is found to be valid or not, the reply to the complainant will 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 be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

At this stage, the complainant should forward their complaint to the Chair of the Trustees. The Chair will acknowledge the request within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement will say who will deal with the case and when the complainant may expect a reply.

The Chair of the Trustees may investigate the case or delegate another Trustee to do so (where there is no conflict of interest). This will 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 will be kept informed of developments.

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 the review has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will 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 Trustees decide it is appropriate to obtain external assistance to resolve the issue.

Charity Commission

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of the Trustees review of their complaint, they can complain to the Charity Commission. Further details are available at:

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

How to Make a Complaint

When making a complaint to Selsey Community Forum, please describe the issue you are complaining about with as much detail as possible. Please include dates and times as well as the names of any representatives you were in contact with. Please also provide copies of any relevant documentation if appropriate. Please state how you believe Selsey Community Forum might address the complaint, if possible. Importantly, please provide your name and contact details as we will not respond to anonymous complaints.

Written complaints can be emailed: mail@selseycommunityforum.uk

Alternatively, they can be posted to: Selsey Care Shop, 121 High Street, Selsey, PO20 0QB

To make a verbal complaint, please call 01243 201616

Other Matters

A written record is to be retained detailing the outcome of all complaints and all Formal Notifications.

Any complaints related to a safeguarding issue are to be dealt with in accordance with Selsey Community Forum's Adult Safeguarding Policy or Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

All staff and volunteers are to be provided with appropriate induction training.

This policy is applicable to all the activities in which Selsey Community Forum is or becomes involved; it is to be reviewed and updated as necessary at least annually.

Reviewed and Approved by Trustees: November 2024

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Mike Nicholls, Chair, Selsey Community Forum