

Introduction

Suffolk 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 the 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.

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.

How to complain

If an individual or organisation is dissatisfied with the service they have received from SCF, it is hoped that, in the first instance, the complainant will feel it is appropriate to speak about the problem with the Trustee, staff member or volunteer who is involved with the particular matter, or with the Chief Executive. This will often lead to an informal resolution of the issues.

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 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 Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Should the complaint be about the Chairperson, it should be addressed to the Chief Executive, 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 Chairperson of the Grants Panel, the Chairperson 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 Chairperson.

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 Chairperson) will investigate the complaint and its circumstances to decide whether or not to uphold the complaint. The Chief Executive (or Chairperson) 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. The Complaints Register will be updated accordingly.

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 or Chairperson, as appropriate.

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.

The Chairperson will convene a panel of not less than three Trustees (i.e. the Chairman plus two others) to review the complaint and the decisions made by the Chief Executive (or Chairperson). 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 with regard to the complaint will be final. The Complaints Register will be updated accordingly.