



Complaints Procedure

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD) is committed to providing high quality services delivering support, training and advocacy for family members affected by a loved one's substance use. If you are unhappy about a service you have received from us please tell us, as this will allow us to improve our services.

This document outlines how we will investigate your complaint and what you can expect from us.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction either about the standard of service we provide, or about our action(s).

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things such as:

- Our standard of service;
- Treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff or volunteer;
- Delays in responding to your requests;
- Failure to provide a service;
- A decision made by Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs;
- Conduct of a representative of Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs.

Complaints may be about someone working on our behalf, or about more than one aspect of our service.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't respond to through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- Complaints about another service;
- Complaints of a discriminatory nature against staff.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint, including people who wish to complain on behalf of someone dissatisfied with our service. As we offer a confidential support service, feedback cannot be given to third parties who wish to make a complaint, without signed consent from the initial service user.

How do I make a complaint?

You may make a complaint by phoning our head office, in writing (email or post) or via our website.

When complaining, please include the following information to allow us to investigate your complaint fully:

- Your full name, telephone number and address;
- Your preferred means of contact;
- As much information about the complaint as you can;
- What you feel has gone wrong;
- What you believe would be appropriate action for us to take to resolve the matter.

Anonymous complaints

Any complaints made where the complainant does not wish to disclose their identity will be taken seriously. All information given will be investigated fully; however without the identity of the complainant we will unfortunately be unable to provide feedback of the outcome of our investigation.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Complaints should be submitted within 6 months of the event you wish to complain about. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after this time. If you feel that this time limit should not apply, please include this information with your complaint.

Contact Details

It is vital that the complaints manager does not have day-to-day contact, or knowledge of the person whom the complaint is about. To ensure impartiality, complaints should be made to Scott Clements, our Head of Programmes. If there is a conflict of interest the case will be passed to the Board Chair – Isabel McNab to manage the investigation.

Scott Clements

Head of Programmes

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

Edward House

199 Sauchiehall Street

Glasgow

G2 3EX

Tel: 0141 465 7523

Email: feedback@sfad.org.uk

Anyone who believes there is a conflict of interest can declare this by contacting CEO Justina Murray on 0141 465 7540, who will appoint a new named person if appropriate.

What happens once I have complained?

We take all complaints seriously, and will inform you of who is dealing with your complaint. This named person will be responsible for the investigation, and will feedback our findings to you. Each party's complaint will be heard separately. You have the right to attend the complaints panel meeting and be accompanied by a supported or representative of your choosing.

Our complaints procedure has 2 stages:

Stage One

We aim to resolve all complaints swiftly. This could mean an apology, or explanation of what has gone wrong in order to resolve the situation.

We aim to resolve complaints at stage one in 5 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we cannot resolve your complaint at stage one, we will explain the reasons for this. We may suggest moving to stage two – you can choose to do this immediately, or after some thought.

Stage Two

Stage Two complaints are those that have either not been resolved via the Stage One process, or are particularly complex and have been deemed appropriate for Stage Two proceedings.

With Stage Two complaints we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days.
- When appropriate, discuss your complaint with you to fully understand why you may be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One Procedures.
- Provide a full response to your complaint, detailing our findings and outcome within 28 working days.

If for any reason, our investigation is likely to take longer than 28 working days, you will be informed and kept fully updated on the progression of your complaint. The person responsible for managing the complaint has the right to halt proceedings at any stage due to legal action. Once an investigation relating to our counselling services has been completed and the period of appeals has lapsed, a 'Report to COSCA at Conclusion of Complaints Proceedings' will be submitted to COSCA.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against a decision you must submit your request in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the named complaint manager. This should be submitted within 5 working days of

receiving notification of the outcome of the investigation. The first of these five working days, is the day on which you receive written confirmation of the decision.

Once an appeal is requested, you will be informed of the date and time of the appeal meeting. If you feel you have a legitimate reason why you cannot attend this meeting then you should notify the complaint manager immediately. The meeting may be delayed to facilitate your attendance if this is considered reasonable. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a supporter or representative.

At the appeal meeting, you will be invited to state your case, and your supporter or representative can summarise this on your behalf, although they cannot answer questions directed to you, on your behalf.

The meeting will then be adjourned to allow consideration of the information provided. The outcome will be communicated, in writing within 5 working days. The decision at this stage will be final.

Sanctions

Once investigations have concluded the complaint manager will make recommendations based on the evidence heard. This may result in sanctions being placed on the individual against whom the complaint has been made, such as:

- Ceasing to practice either temporarily or permanently
- Change of work role
- Change of management structure
- Undertaking further training
- Provision of coaching from an appropriate mentor
- Being placed on a personal improvement plan
- Suspension or termination from role

All sanctions will have clearly defined commencement and conclusion dates. During these dates, there will be ongoing monitoring of the individuals progress via reviews, increased line management, and clearly defined actions to be met within the agreed time period. Sanctions will not be applied until the possibility of an appeal being upheld expires.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

If, after we have completed a full investigation, you are still unhappy with the outcome of our findings you can contact COSCA (for complaints regarding our counselling services), or OSCR for all other complaints.

Normally, these bodies cannot look at events which have happened more than a year ago, or if the matter is being considered in court.

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)

16 Melville Terrace

Stirling

FK8 2NE

01786 475 140

www.cosca.org.uk

OSCR

2nd Floor, Quadrant House,

9 Riverside Drive,

Dundee DD1 4NY

01382 220446

www.oscr.org.uk

If you need help making a complaint

You can ask a friend, relative or advocate to contact us on your behalf. If you wish someone to act on your behalf, we will ask you to sign a disclaimer to allow us to discuss the complaint with the person acting on your behalf. We will not disclose any information that is not pertinent to the complaint you have made.

You can also request an independent advocate by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance on 0131 260 5380 or www.siaa.org.uk

We aim to make our service as accessible as possible, therefore if you need this information in another format such as large print, Braille, or another language please contact us on 0141 465 7523 or info@sfad.org.uk