



## Complaints Policy

Owner	Sam Best – Chief Operating Officer				
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Everyone who uses or who works in partnership with SWEDA have the right to express dissatisfaction, disquiet, or concern about their experience of SWEDA and its services and should feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. The complaint may be about a service, a particular individual (paid or unpaid) working for SWEDA or on SWEDA’s behalf, or about material produced by SWEDA. (Paid employees and volunteers working for SWEDA should raise their concerns through our grievance procedure).

At SWEDA we believe that Complaints are resolved by:

- Being Open, Honest and Transparent
- Apologies are sincerely given and received.
- Respecting and protecting individuals’ rights
- Accepting responsibility for our mistakes
- Making changes that show learning as a result of looking into a complaint.

SWEDA staff should encourage discussion and act on issues raised by service users (including contractors, partners etc) before they develop into complaints. However, when complaints arise, service users should feel they can bring them to the notice of SWEDA staff or management without concern of victimisation.

We want to learn from people who use our services about ways in which we can improve them. We therefore welcome complaints as well as compliments. Most complaints can be resolved informally. However, we recognise that some people may not feel able to discuss a complaint with a staff member or may feel that this approach has not produced a satisfactory result. For such situations we have a formal Complaints Procedure.

A copy of our complaint’s procedure will be displayed at our offices, in our counselling rooms, on our website and also will be produced on request. Staff will explain how and to whom to complain and how complaints are dealt with.

Complaints will always be dealt with in the strictest confidence. If others need to be informed, this will be discussed beforehand with the person making the complaint.

Complaints should be dealt with informally within four weeks. If it is likely to take longer, SWEDA will keep the complainant informed in writing.

All complaints will be recorded, with details of findings, action and outcome.

## Complaints procedure

### Stage One

If you are a service user and have a problem or concern with your Counsellor or Support Worker then you should in the first instance raise your concern with our Therapeutic Services Manager, who will support you with the complaint process.

If you have a problem with any other part of our service or a member of staff, then please tell a staff member of your choice, who will support you with the complaint process. This enables us to understand your concern and helps us reach a satisfactory solution for all concerned.

Details of the complaint and the solution will be recorded and kept in a password protected file.

If this informal process does not resolve your issue, or if you feel you would rather speak to someone who is not part of the staff team, then the complaint should be escalated to stage two.

### Stage Two

If informal discussions are unsuccessful in resolving your complaint, and you remain dissatisfied, you can make a formal complaint by writing to:

For service complaints: our Clinical Lead at: [nerissashaw@swedauk.org](mailto:nerissashaw@swedauk.org)

For all other complaints: our Chief Operating Officer at [sambest@swedauk.org](mailto:sambest@swedauk.org) For complaints relating to a member of our Senior Leadership Team, please email our Chair of Trustees: [chair@swedauk.org](mailto:chair@swedauk.org)

On receiving your letter, the Complaint Handler will reply within seven days explaining the process that will follow. The Complaint Handler will undertake an investigation, into your complaint. This may involve a meeting with you at a time and place convenient to yourself. The Complaint Handler will produce a report of the investigation and will then inform you in writing what action is proposed to resolve the complaint.

The whole process – from the receipt of your letter to reaching a proposed solution – should not take more than four weeks.

If you do not feel that a satisfactory conclusion has been reached, then the complaint should be escalated to the final stage.

### Final Stage

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your formal complaint, you can appeal in writing to SWEDA's Chief Executive Officer via [paula@swedauk.org](mailto:paula@swedauk.org) within 10 days of you being advised of the previous decision. It must outline the detail of your complaint and the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome.

The Chief Executive Officer will review the way your complaint has been handled and carry out their own investigation. Their decision will be made in writing to you within 4 weeks of receipt of your appeal.

This decision will be the final one from SWEDA; there are no further in-house procedures. You would need to get advice from an organisation such as the CAB or a solicitor as to any further steps you may be able to take.

If your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, then the complaint will be handled by the Board of Trustees, who will follow the same procedure as above.

You may have a supporter to help you during any part of the complaints procedure. This may be a friend or advisor helping to write a letter, accompanying you to any interview or meeting, or any other help you need. Advocacy services, the CAB, and other voluntary organisations offer this kind of help. It is not possible for anyone in SWEDA to help you in these ways when you are making a complaint about SWEDA.