

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Document number & version	A001 – 02.02
Policy owner	Chief Executive Officer
Policy lead	Senior Operations Manager
Audience	External
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Amendment date	November 2024
Next review date	July 2025

This policy explains the standards we have for managing complaints, concerns and feedback we receive from outside of Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA).

Introduction

At Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA), providing a safe and secure environment for our people and those we seek to assist is core to our mission.

This policy sets out the standards we have when responding to a complaint, concern or feedback about our work, including the behaviour of our staff or those working on our behalf.

We will address any concerns you may have about our people, the work that we do or the way we raise or spend money, as quickly and effectively as possible. Feedback is important and helps us to improve.

If you don't feel we have handled your complaint or concern as you would have expected it to be handled, we would like the opportunity to make this right. You can also take matters further if you don't feel we have dealt with the issues or actions you have raised, and this policy sets your options out.

Scope

This policy is aimed at people external to Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA). This policy applies to all that we do, in the UK and internationally.

Definitions

This is what we mean by a complaint, concern or feedback:

Surviving Economic Abuse

Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) is the only UK charity dedicated to addressing economic abuse - a form of domestic abuse.

A complaint is where someone tells us they are unhappy about the actions or lack of action by the organisation, our staff and/or volunteers, or any individual working on our behalf.

A concern is a disclosure or allegation about possible or potential abuse (including sexual exploitation or abuse), wrongdoing, risk, illegal activity or poor practice in any area of our work.

Feedback is an expression of praise or dissatisfaction: it could be an opinion, reaction, comment, compliment, suggestion or remark.

Policy statement

We welcome you getting in touch so we can respond, learn from and improve what we do. We would like the opportunity to address any complaints, concerns or feedback you may have about our people or the work that we do.

This policy describes our approach to handling complaints, concerns and feedback raised. It describes how we will manage complaints or concerns we receive, including any alleged or actual fraud, misconduct by our people (including sexual exploitation and abuse), or the way we have planned or delivered our work.

We are committed to providing a safe and responsive mechanism for handling complaints and feedback, so we can quickly address any concerns that arise around the behaviour of our people or the organisation. This also supports the way in which we learn as an organisation, so that we can improve what we do. Complaints, concerns and feedback can also be made anonymously.

What behaviour we expect from our people

We expect all our people to act with integrity as professional representatives of our organisation. We also expect our people to understand how their personal behaviour affects their own safety and security, as well as that of their colleagues, partners, funders and people who we work with.

We are committed to ensuring our high standards are met. If you see or experience any behaviour that does not meet our high standards, please let us know.

Our team members are expected to look out for and to proactively report any concerns about our work or the behaviour of our people.

What we do with complaints, concerns and feedback

We aim to make getting in touch with us as easy as possible depending on how you prefer to do this. We can be contacted in writing, email, telephone, through our website, social media, verbally.

Our aim is to make our materials available in plain language and a range of formats so that they can be read and understood. If our materials have been difficult to read or understand, we would welcome feedback as to how we could improve this for the future. If you need an alternative format, please let us know.

If you get in touch with us to complain, share a concern or provide feedback, we expect our people to take it seriously and treat you with courtesy and respect.

Our aim is to make you feel safe, listened to and given an appropriate response when you share a complaint, concern or feedback with us.

If a complaint has been made by, or about, a child or young person under 18 or an adult at risk, we take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the individual, in line with our safeguarding policies.

We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your personal and sensitive information, in line with our data protection responsibilities. Only those who are involved with responding to your complaint will be made aware of it.

We aim to respond to complaints, concerns and feedback as quickly as possible, usually within 10 working days of you getting in touch. Sometimes we may need to investigate your complaint in more detail to ensure we take the right action. Depending on how complex the concern is, we may need some more time to investigate it. If that is the case, we will contact you to keep you updated.

When the investigation is complete, we will contact you again to provide our response, including what we plan to do about it. We use anonymised feedback to improve our work.

How we use feedback to improve our work

We are committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of our work. We use all feedback anonymously to help us learn and improve our work.

We will only use the information you have given to investigate your complaint or concern, and we will look to learn from and improve through analysis of anonymous information we collect.

If you are unhappy with our response

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your initial concern, please do let us know as we would like the chance to try and make it right.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive please let us know and we will escalate your complaint, concern or feedback to our board of trustees

You also have the right to contact any of these organisations:

The Charity Commission, which regulates charities in England and Wales
www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity
Email: Whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

The Fundraising Regulator, which regulates fundraising practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
2nd Floor, CAN Mezzanine Building, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH
www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/makeacomplaint

The Information Commissioner's Office, which regulates information rights practices
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
www.ico.org.uk/concerns/handling/

Usually these organisations will take up a case after giving us an opportunity to reply or provide some more information.

Procedures supporting implementation

This policy is supported by the following procedure(s) which internally our people use to manage and respond to complaints, concerns and feedback:

- Our Complaints, Concerns and Feedback Procedure details how we review, respond and learn from complaints and feedback.

Complaints, Concerns and Feedback Procedure

If you get would like to get in touch with us to complain, share a concern or provide feedback please;

- Concisely describe your complaint, concern or feedback
- Explain what you would like done about it
- Include key dates and supporting details
- Provide any supporting evidence

Complaints, concerns or feedback, should be made as soon as possible, normally within 3 months of the date of the event concerned or as soon as the matter first came to the complainant's attention

Handling your complaint

Our team will acknowledge your complaint and aim to respond within 10 working days. Where this isn't possible, and we need more time to investigate, we will keep you updated.

Escalating a complaint

If you feel we have not resolved your complaint satisfactorily, you can ask for it to be referred to our Board of Trustees who will investigate and respond.

Sometimes we may need to investigate your complaint in more detail to ensure we take the right action. Depending on how complex the concern is, we may need some more time to investigate it. If that is the case, we will contact you to keep you updated.

All complaints will be responded to and recorded in our register of complaints. This register is reviewed by our Board of Trustees at regular intervals.

We aim to learn from complaints and feedback and implement change where we feel it is required.

Complaints, concerns or should be directed to:

Email: complaints@survivingeconomicabuse.org

Post: Complaints, Surviving Economic Abuse, 483 Green Lanes, London, N13 4BS

Phone: 07883 511347