

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Complaints Policy

**Category:** external agencies



SoLO  
Life  
Opportunities

38 Walnut Close  
Chelmsley Wood  
Birmingham  
B37 7PU

Charity No. 1102297  
England Company No.  
5025939

## Policy Statement

### Introduction

SoLO acknowledges that, from time to time, mistakes will occur and that occasionally the organisation will fall short of its goal to deliver excellent standards of service. SoLO's vision identifies, as one of its values, integrity. Therefore, SoLO would seek to work, in all areas, with honesty, transparency and open dialogue. SoLO's approach to dealing with complaints is to listen non-defensively to the issues that have been outlined, to make an unbiased judgement to identify what has led to the complaint. SoLO will strive to work in a positive way to address the issues and to put right anything that has gone wrong. SoLO recognises that complaints can often lead to learning for the organisation and improved services.

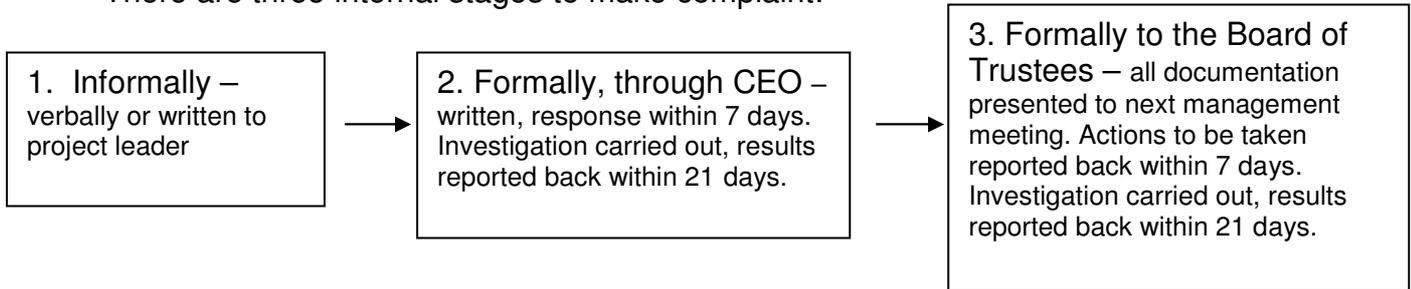
If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, actions taken or suggestions made, to address the complaint, the following policy will provide a vehicle for the complaint to be further investigated and responded to.

### Purpose

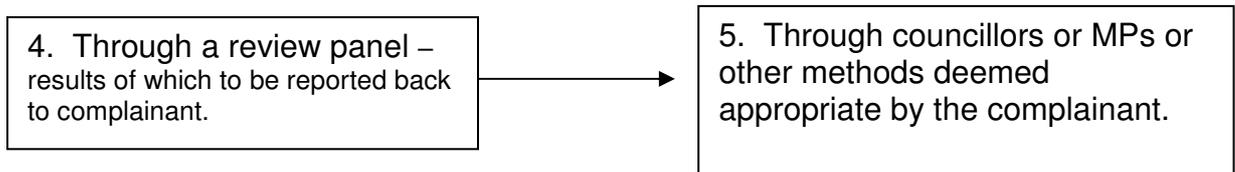
- To provide a framework for dealing promptly and equitably with issues that are raised by service users, i.e. people with learning disabilities, their parents or carers (as opposed to staff and volunteers who will use our internal grievance procedure).
- To ensure that our services and service providers are meeting the needs of the service users in an appropriate manner which takes into account their rights and ensures their health and safety at all times.
- To ensure that SoLO is accountable for the services it provides.

## Procedure

There are three internal stages to make complaint:



There are two external stages:



## The Process

### Informally

In the first instance, the complainant should approach the project leader to discuss the issue with a view to working towards a mutually agreed solution. This approach can be verbally via the telephone or in writing to the project leader at SoLO, 38 Walnut Close, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7PU.

Complaints can be brought to the project leader's attention during the project but should **not** be aired during the project itself (for health and safety reasons). If necessary, time should be set aside outside of the project to enable the issue to be discussed fully, either by telephone or at SoLO's offices.

### Formally through Line Management

If the project leader cannot deal with the matter, or the complainant is not satisfied by the project leader's response, the complaint should be passed to the CEO, in writing.

The complaint should state clearly:

- who the complaint is from
- what the complaint is about
- what steps have been taken to respond to the complaint
- who, from SoLO, has dealt with the complaint.

The CEO will respond to the written complaint within seven days of receipt.

An investigation will be carried out by the CEO and the result of that will be reported to the complainant within 21 days of the start of that investigation.

### **Formally to the Management Group**

In the event that the complainant is not satisfied by the investigation carried out by the CEO, all the documentation will be presented to the next Trustee Board meeting (these take place every month). In the event of exceptional circumstances, a Trustee Board meeting will be called to deal with the complaint. (Exceptional circumstance is deemed to be when the health or safety of service user(s) is in question)

The complainant will be contacted within 7 days of the Trustee Board meeting to give details of the action to be taken. If deemed appropriate, a full investigation will be carried out by one of the Trustees and the results of that investigation will be communicated, in writing, to the complainant within 21 days of the start of that investigation.

### **Via a Review Panel**

In the event that the complainant is not satisfied by the investigation carried out by the Trustee Board, if deemed appropriate, a review panel will be set up comprising of:

- a Trustee of SoLO (not the chair).
- a committee member of another voluntary organisation working with people with learning disabilities.
- A representative from one of our funding agencies.

The review panel will be presented with all of the documentation from the investigations carried out previously and respond direct to the complainant.

### **Through other external methods**

Reaching the end of SoLO's own complaints procedures does not affect an individual's right to contact their own local MP or any other person they deem appropriate to notify.

### **Dealing with complaints**

At all times, SoLO will endeavour to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible in a cordial manner that will encourage open communication. All information will be treated in compliance with the data protection act and on a 'need to know' basis.

Information sent out will be in an accessible format appropriate to the needs of the complainant. If an advocate is needed, SoLO will make contact with appropriate agencies if required.

Any complaint will be treated with respect and used to improve the overall quality of the service provided.