

Complaints Policy

January 2024

For external complaints

The Sheila McKechnie Foundation (SMK) is committed to providing high quality services to users. The purpose of this policy is to enable people using SMK's services or taking part in our activities to be heard when they feel things have gone wrong.

SMK recognises that everyone has the right to make complaints and that valuable lessons can be learnt from them. Your complaint may well improve things for everyone. Whatever the reason for the complaint, SMK wants to put mistakes right quickly and improve our service to you.

SMK recognises that making a complaint can be a difficult thing to do. SMK is committed to making this process as easy as possible for you and to investigate and deal with complaints in a sensitive and appropriate way. Complaints will remain confidential, with only those who need to know being informed of the situation. We will handle your information in line with all current data protection legislation.

1. Contact us

There are several different ways you can contact us to make a complaint or to make any comments on how we can improve:

- You can email us at info@smk.org.uk
- Or you can write to us at:

The Sheila McKechnie Foundation

88 Old Street

London

EC1V 9HU

Please include your name, address and contact telephone number in your email or letter so that we can get back in touch with you easily. It will really help us resolve your complaint quickly if



you can give us as much clear, specific, detail as possible about the complaint, including any documents and correspondence.

2. What will we do?

Every effort will be made to ensure that the person(s) involved in carrying out any investigation of your complaint will be impartial. They will follow the procedures detailed here to ensure that your complaint is dealt with in an objective and just way. We have a 2-stage complaints procedure:

Stage 1

We will arrange for an appropriate independent investigation to be made of the circumstances of the complaint. Depending on the nature of the complaint, this will be carried out by either a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) or the Chief Executive. We would expect most complaints to be resolved at this stage. We will respond by either email, a letter or a telephone call.

Stage 2

If the complaint isn't dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant or the nature of the complaint is such that they do not feel it is appropriate to complain to either the Senior Management Team or Chief Executive, then the complaint will be passed to the SMK Board.

Following the completion of Stage 1, you have up to 20 working days (from the date of the final response) to request that your complaint is progressed to Stage 2.

3. How long will it take?

You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days of receipt of your complaint. We endeavour to respond fully and conclusively to stage 1 complaints within twenty working days. Wherever possible we will deal with it more quickly. If we think it will take longer, we will let you know and the reason why.

If the complaint is progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2, we will endeavour to respond within 20 working days, from the date Stage 2 is began.

4. Unreasonable behaviour

We hope that both parties will engage with the complaints process with mutual respect and courtesy. We are unable to respond to anonymous complaints or matters for which the charity is not directly responsible. *We also reserve the right to terminate the complaint process prematurely, where there is unreasonable complainant behaviour.*



5. Who else can help?

Alternatively, if you do not feel completely satisfied by our response then you can contact The Charity Commission at the address below.

The Charity Commission
PO Box 1227
Liverpool
L69 3UG
0845 3000 218
www.charity-commission.gov.uk

6. Our pledge

Complaints will be viewed annually to ensure that there isn't a common pattern. If there is, further action will be taken to resolve this. We treat all comments and complaints as an opportunity to improve. We are happy to acknowledge the mistakes that we have made, sincerely apologise for them, and then try to prevent them from happening again in the future.

