

# Stepping Out in Somerset CIC

## Complaints Policy

Reviewed: February 2022

Date of next review: February 2023

Responsibility: DSL

### 1. Introduction

This policy sets out Stepping Out in Somerset 's (SOIS) approach to any member, associated family member, staff, customer and visitor, dissatisfied with their experience across SOIS.

1.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with SOIS's:

- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

1.2 The Directors are available to listen to and act on views and concerns and to encourage discussion and action on issues raised by members, staff and other parties before they develop into problems and formal complaints. However, should you remain unhappy with the outcome of these discussions, then you should consider following the formal complaints procedure.

### 2. Complaints procedure

2.1. You have the right to make a complaint, to be heard and to receive a response regarding any issues in SOIS which concern you. Any views you have will be taken seriously.

2.2. A complaint may be made by you, or a person acting on your behalf, verbally or in writing to Justin or Sue Philcox at Devon House, Church Rd, Bawdrip TA7 8PD Tel: 01278 686351

2.3. A person acting on your behalf may be a staff member of your choice, a family member, support professional or a local independent advocate.

2.4. A Director will carry out a thorough investigation into the issues raised by you and shall, within 28-working days after the date on which the complaint is made (or such shorter period as may be reasonable in the circumstances) inform you of the action (if any) that is to be taken.

2.5. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you or the person acting on your behalf, may appeal the decision by writing to the Directors at Devon House, Church Road, Bawdrip, TA7 8PD, Tel. 01278 686351.

2.6 In the case of an appeal, the Directors will review the original complaint, investigation and produce a report within 28-working days of the appeal letter.

2.7 If the complaint is directly linked to one or both of the Directors, the appeal should be addressed in writing to the HR Team, CitrusHR Ltd., 18E Charles St. Bath. BA1 1HX. Please note the appeal stage reviews due process, diligence and certifies that all information

presented has been considered, the original complaint is not reinvestigated. This represents the end of the formal complaints procedure.

2.8 Where concerns have not been addressed you may wish to contact the local council who commissioned the placement. Contact details will be on the letter offering the placement or by contacting your SEND Case Worker or Social Worker.

2.9 You will not be victimised for making a complaint.

2.10. A record of complaints will be maintained by directors showing the details of any investigation, the action taken and outcomes. This record will be made available to the Council on request.

### 3. Unreasonable complaints procedure

3.1 On occasion, the actions or behaviours of a member, associated family member, staff, customer or visitor can take up a disproportionate amount of staff time when there is no realistic possibility of a satisfactory resolution even after following the guidance in points 1 and 2 above.

3.2 It is recognised that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may be upsetting or distressing circumstances leading to any complaint and SOIS accepts that being persistent can be positive when pursuing a complaint.

3.3 However, the actions of individuals who are angry, demanding or persistent can result in harassment of SOIS staff and unreasonable demands. It is these actions that SOIS considers unacceptable. These actions can include:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour (in person, by phone, email or use of social media)
- Unreasonable demands
- Unreasonable persistence (resulting in the harassment of groups or individual members of staff)

3.4 The manner in which SOIS will manage the actions of an unreasonable complainer will depend on the nature and extent of their actions. If it adversely affects SOIS's ability to carry out its work and provide a service to others, we may restrict the complainant's contact with us in order to manage the impact of their actions. This could include the restriction of contact in person, by telephone, letter, electronically or through social media sites. We will advise individuals in advance when their contact is going to be restricted. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to involve the police to protect staff whom they have a duty of care for.

3.5 SOIS will endeavour to maintain at least one form of contact. In extreme situations or where the unacceptable nature/frequency of contact (through any medium) persists, SOIS will consider legal action against them. This could include but is not limited to injunction proceedings on the basis that an individual is directly affecting SOIS in undertaking its wider service delivery.