

SATEDA Complaints Procedure

Reviewed: Dec 2022

Purpose

This document sets out the process by which SATEDA will deal with any complaints received from external stakeholders, in a sensitive, effective and efficient manner.

Introduction

SATEDA is committed to providing a high-quality, transparent, trauma-informed and accessible service to women and children. To do this, we need you to tell us when we get things wrong, and we want to address and help resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

What this policy covers

This policy covers complaints about the standard of service you should expect from us and the behaviour of our staff in delivering that service. We refer to these complaints as 'service complaints'.

Our responsibilities

Our Leadership Team has overall responsibility for this policy and a review of the complaints register will be completed every 6 months.

The CEO is responsible for making sure we implement and comply with the procedures it outlines.

We reserve the right to change the policy at any time.

All staff are responsible for identifying and recording complaints and escalating where required. (Please see process chart appendix 1)

We will record your complaints confidentially. For information about how we handle personal data, please see our privacy notice.

Procedure for Making a Complaint

Timescales

If you wish to make a complaint, you should do so within three months from the date of the incident where possible. Waiting longer could make it difficult to investigate your complaint and, in some cases, mean that we are not able to action an investigation unless there are complex or exceptional circumstances to consider.

Examples of complex or exceptional circumstances include:

- You have only just found out or been made aware of a problem
- An extension is needed as a reasonable adjustment
- Ill health, bereavement, or other serious personal circumstances
- Gradual gaslighting and coercion where it is difficult to pinpoint an exact incident

When escalated to a formal complaint, we aim to send a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint. If we need to contact you for further clarification, or your advocacy agency for consent, the 20 working days will start from the date we receive the clarifying information requested. If we are not able to meet this deadline, we will notify you and let you know when we will respond.

Stage One

A complaint can be made in several ways:

- In person
- By phone: 01795 417251
- By email: admin@sateda.org
- Via our website: www.sateda.org/contactus
- By Letter: SATEDA, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

In the first instance, we would expect stage one to result in resolution whereby either;

- The complaint is made directly to the team member it involves for it to be acknowledged and resolved
- The complaint is received by another member of staff who will work to resolve the complaint on behalf of the complainant

Any member of staff can deal with a complaint informally if the complaint is simple. But if the person who received the complaint cannot handle it because they are unfamiliar with the issue, they will pass it on to someone who can help as soon as possible.

It is expected and hoped that most matters of concern can be identified and discussed at an early opportunity, enabling matters to be resolved quickly, sensitively and respectfully.

If not immediately resolved, your complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days and a formal response should be received within 10 working days.

Any matter that can't be resolved at this stage will be addressed at Stage Two.

Stage Two

A complaint will be escalated to this stage when:

- Stage One did not bring mutual agreement on the matter
- The issues are complex or require a detailed investigation
- The complaint relates to issues that have been identified as serious. These can include matters of serious misconduct

On receipt of the complaint, the investigator will acknowledge the complaint within two working days.

An investigation will consult with both parties and SATEDA will respond formally to the complaint within 20 working days. The SATEDA Board of Trustees will also be notified of the complaint and it will be logged on our complaints register.

If the matter requires extensive investigation, notice will be given to extend the time scale for response.

If the matter concerns Board members, a third party will be asked to conduct the investigation.

Should the complainant wish to make a complaint about the CEO, they should move from stage one straight to stage three if they are unhappy with the response received at stage one.

Stage Three

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received within Stage Two, they will be informed of their right to appeal and request a further investigation into their complaint by the SATEDA Board of Trustees. This further request, appealing the outcome of Stage Two, must be made in writing and within a period of 10 working days from the date of the response provided at Stage Two (or Stage One if the complaint is regarding the CEO).

On receipt of a further request for a formal investigation to the Board Trustees, an initial acknowledgement should be received within 2 working days.

The Trustees will contact both parties and an investigation will be conducted. The Board of Trustees will then meet to discuss the matter of the complaint in detail and agree on a response. The response will be made within 20 working days of receiving the request for a further investigation following the conclusion of Stage Two.

Feedback

If your complaint is not a service complaint and does not fall within the scope of any other SATEDA policies, we will treat it as constructive feedback.

When you provide constructive feedback, this information helps us to understand more about

the service we provide and it can help shape our future work, even if we are unable to take immediate action on the issues raised.

Examples of what will be considered feedback include:

- Dissatisfaction with the type of work that we do
- The policy or regulatory decisions we make
- Comments about our policies or policy decisions.

Signed off:

Janet Garnons-Williams

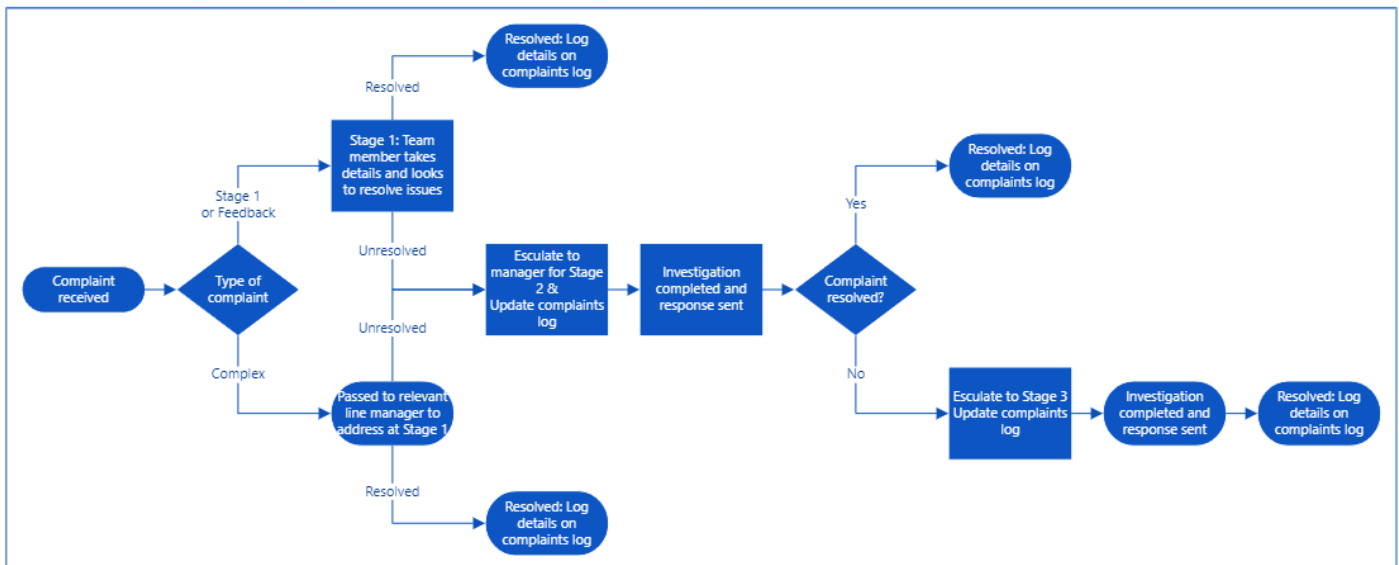
Appendix 1

Process for managing complaints and Dissatisfaction

All complaints and service failures need to be logged on the complaints log to improve performance and help identify training needs and therefore comments and complaints should be encouraged to help SATEDA strive to make continual improvements.

The complaints log is accessible by line managers who can input data on behalf of those without access.

The flow chart below illustrates the process for complaint handling. It is expected that all team members will be able to resolve service issues without the need for the complaint to be escalated. For example, this could be where a staff member has forgotten to call back when promised or a drop in was advertised wrong. A complaint like this can often be resolved with an apology and putting the information right.



The escalation process is there for people who would like a written response or if the matter is considered more serious and requires investigation.