

## **Circles South East – Complaints Procedure**

This complaints procedure applies to volunteers, Service Users (or their carers) or any member of an external agency/organisation who would like to raise a concern about the work of Circles South East (CSE).

CSE aims to provide high quality services which meet your needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time; if we are not getting it right please let us know.

In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation. A complaint can be made by anyone who has dealings with the organisation, and can concern any aspect of our work.

If you are unhappy with the actions of an individual in the organisation (staff member, volunteer, service user, trustee etc.) sometimes it is best to speak to them directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to a member of the Senior Management Team (contact details are included at the end of this document). Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within 5 working days.

Circles South East's policy is:

- to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- to publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- to make sure everyone at CSE knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- to make sure that complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired;
- to gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

### **Making a Complaint**

#### *1. Time Limitation for Complaints*

Complaints should be made within 12 months of the incident or of becoming aware of the incident that give rise to the complaint.

Where the complaint is made after the 12 month time limitation, discretion may be used by the Chief Executive to accept the complaint where it is considered to be sufficiently serious or where there were reasonable grounds for the delay and it is still possible to investigate fairly and effectively despite the delay.

## *2. Consent*

When a complaint is made on behalf of a volunteer, Service User, or by a carer, and it is necessary to share sensitive/personal information, it will usually be necessary to obtain the volunteer/service user's written consent before a response can be made.

In the case of a child, the representative must be a parent, guardian or other adult who has a role to care for the child. Where the child is in the care of a local authority (LA) the representative must be a person authorised by the LA.

Where more than one organisation is involved in a complaint, CSE will ensure consent is obtained from the complainant prior to involving other organisations.

## *3. Confidentiality*

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## *4. How to make a complaint/complaints handing procedure*

Should you wish to make your complaint formal you can do so by writing to

### **How to make a complaint**

#### ***Informal complaints***

Complaints can be made informally to any member of CSE staff. We encourage the people we work with to share their experiences and when this is dissatisfactory we always aim to put things right. CSE try to make it easy for a complainant to contact us and to provide feedback or make a complaint. These are the ways to get in touch with us:

1. Face to face: if you are dealing with a member of staff or volunteer, you wish to complain and you feel comfortable in doing so, then please speak to them directly. It may be possible to resolve the issue immediately. However, if that is not possible, then he/she will record the details of your complaint and this will trigger our response.
2. You can contact the relevant member of staff from the Senior Management Team or the Chair/Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees (contact details are included at the end of this document).
3. You can call us on 01235 816050 and your complaint will be documented.
4. You can email us on [info@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:info@circlessoutheast.org.uk)
5. You can write to us at our head office Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XD

#### ***Formal Complaints***

If, after speaking with someone from CSE directly, you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to the Chief Executive, a member of the

Senior Management Team or the Chair of the Board of Trustees either via email [complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk) or via our postal address (included at the end of this policy). If your complaint is about the Chief Executive, please write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within 3 working days. The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within 28 working days from it being acknowledged, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered and we will discuss with you a new timeframe for the proposed resolution of the complaint.

If after we have responded you are not satisfied, please write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within 5 working days, who will report the matter to the next meeting of the Trustees. They will then decide on any further steps to resolve the situation.

### ***External Stage***

As Circles South East is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

### ***Resolving complaints***

Our commitment to you is to address each complaint in a sensitive, fair, transparent, equitable, professional and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process.

We will operate at all times from the premise that any person is entitled to express his or her views on our services and that those views should be taken seriously where this is warranted. We will not, however, tolerate any abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour towards any of our staff, volunteers, service users or other stakeholders and may decline to investigate a complaint further in such circumstances.

### **Contact details:**

Postal address:  
Circles South East  
Baptist House  
129 Broadway  
Didcot  
Oxon  
OX11 8XD

**Jan Thompson – 07780 438210 or [jan.thompson@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:jan.thompson@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager responsible for Contract Development.

**Sarah West – 07721 239937 or [sarah.west@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:sarah.west@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager responsible for Project Vigilant

**Dom Williams – 07918 083903 or [dom.williams@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:dom.williams@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager responsible for The Hub services.

**Ashleigh Palombo – 07469148930 or [ashleigh.palombo@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:ashleigh.palombo@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager responsible for the London Circles Project and Circles ReBoot.

**Chris Wilson – 07776960740 or [chris.wilson@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:chris.wilson@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager responsible for The Clink partnership and Kent, Surrey & Sussex Circles and Enso

**Alex Downer - 07876865637 or [alex.downer@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:alex.downer@circlessoutheast.org.uk)**

Senior Manager for South Central Circles project and Training Lead

**Nora Holford – 07804 595019 or [complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk) – PLEASE WRITE**

**‘FAO CHAIR OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES’ WITHIN EMAIL SUBJECT**

Chair of Board of Trustees for Circles South East

For all formal complaints please email: [complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk](mailto:complaints@circlessoutheast.org.uk)