Unscene Suffolk Limited

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

The organisation is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment. This policy and procedure explains how the organisation handles complaints. We welcome feedback and take complaints seriously as opportunities to learn and improve. We aim to resolve complaints fairly, quickly and transparently treating individuals with dignity.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to volunteers, beneficiaries, their families, carers, members of the public and stakeholders

Concerns relating to safeguarding, serious misconduct or unlawful behaviour may be addressed under our safeguarding or Code of Conduct policies.

3. Definition

Complaint. Complaints are concerns, problems or dissatisfaction about the quality of our services, actions or inaction by the organisation, its staff, volunteers, or people acting on our behalf, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected.

4. Policy

The organisation is committed to managing complaints confidentially and sensitively, ensuring all parties are treated fairly and with respect. Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout the process to support accessibility, wellbeing and safeguarding needs**.** Our complaints policy and procedure will be:

- Accessible: easy to understand, available in alternative formats/languages on request
- Fair & impartial: Investigated by someone not directly involved
- Timely: Clear timeframes, regular updates if delays occur
- Respectful: Everyone treated with dignity
- Confidential: Information shared only with those who need to know
- Learning-focused: We use complaints to improve services and systems.

5. Procedure

5.1 raising a complaint

- A complaint can be made verbally or in writing, including what happened, when, who was involved and what outcome sought.
- Email: unscenesecretary@gmail.com
- In person: Ask session leader or assistant leader/volunteer to note the concern and pass it to the Secretary by email.

.

- Time limit**:** A complaint must be raised within 3 months of the issue (or 3 months from when they became aware). We may consider older complaints if there are good reasons.

- A log of complaints will be maintained by the Secretary.

5.2 Process stages

- Stage 1: Informal investigation
    - Acknowledgement: within 5 working days (or resolved on the spot if possible).
    - Response: within 10 working days.
    - Handled by Chair or Vice Chair or most appropriate trustee if about Chair or Vice Chair.
    - Outcome: explanation, apology -where appropriate- and agreed actions/learning.

- Stage 2 – Formal Investigation
    - Acknowledgement: within 5 working days of receiving your request.
    - Investigator appointed: independent of the subject matter.
    - Investigation & response: within 20 working days (complex cases may take longer; we will update you at least every 15 working days).
    - Outcome letter will summarise findings, conclusions, solutions and learning.
    - If the person remains dissatisfied, they may request a Final Review (Stage 3) within 20 working days of the Stage 2 outcome.

Stage 3 – Final Review (Appeal)

- Considered by at least two trustees not previously involved.
- Acknowledgement: within 5 working days.
- Review & outcome: within 20 working days (paper review or meeting by agreement).
- Outcome is final for our internal process. We will signpost to external routes if applicable.

5.3 Safeguarding: If a complaint suggests a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk of harm, criminal conduct or immediate health and safety risk:

- We will prioritise safety and take immediate action under our Safeguarding procedures.
- We may need to share information with statutory bodies e.g., police, local authority, regulator

5.4 We recognise that people may be distressed. We will be empathetic, however, we may limit contact methods/frequency or close a case if behaviour is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, or persistently unreasonable. Any such decision will be documented, proportionate, and communicated with reasons and review options.

5.5 Complaints are handled in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. We will keep the information confidential and share it only when necessary to investigate or comply with the law. We retain complaint records securely for 3 years after closure, or longer if legally required.

6. Comments

A comment is defined as being an idea, suggestion or opinion on how the organisation could improve its services. If an individual wants to make a comment on the organisation's work, this may be done either verbally or in writing.
If an individual wants a verbal comment to be dealt with in accordance with this policy, rather than being seen as an informal matter, this must be made clear at the time the comment is being made. When a comment is received, it will be recorded by the organisation's Secretary, or a staff member appointed by the Secretary to ensure it is tracked and responded to within the specified timescales. The Secretary will pass the comment to the appropriate person who will reply to the person making the comment within ten working days. The reply will include details of any action which the organisation is to take as a result of the comment.

7. Compliments

A compliment is defined as being feedback which informs the organisation that it has provided a service well. If an individual wants to offer a compliment about the organisation's work, this may be done either verbally or in writing.
If an individual wants a verbal compliment to be dealt with in accordance with this policy, rather than being seen as an informal matter, this must be made clear at the time the compliment is being made. When a compliment is received, it will be recorded by the Secretary to ensure it is tracked and responded to, if appropriate, within the specified timescales. The Secretary will pass the compliment to the appropriate person who will reply to the person making the compliment, if appropriate, within ten working days.

8. Monitoring

A report on Comments, Complaints or Compliments received since the last meeting will be presented to the organisation's Board of Trustees at each of its meetings.

9. Review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy every year or sooner if required.

Date	Changes made	Review date
This Policy was reviewed and approved by the Unscene Suffolk's Trustee Board on 16 October 2026.	Based on Community Action Suffolk (CAS24) template purchased June 2026.	Octobert 2027