



## Swindon Seniors Forum (SSF) Complaints and Grievance Policy

### **Objective: Fair and Prompt Resolution**

At Swindon Seniors Forum (SSF), our commitment is to address complaints and grievances fairly and promptly. We adhere to the rules of natural justice, ensuring that no one is a judge in their own case. Parties are informed of allegations against them, given an opportunity to respond, and entitled to have their case heard by an unbiased and impartial tribunal.

### **Exceptions to Responding to Complaints**

There may be rare occasions when SSF chooses not to respond to a complaint. This includes situations where a complainant is being abusive, prejudiced, or offensive, engaging in harassment towards a member of the management committee or the forum, or when a complaint is incoherent or illegible.

### **1. Initial Reporting and Assessment**

- a. All complaints or allegations should be directed to the Chair, who will promptly report the matter to the next Management Committee meeting.
- b. In cases of serious complaints, the Chair may call for an ad-hoc committee meeting if the regular meeting is not within a fortnight from the complaint date.
- c. The Management Committee members will be involved intermittently throughout the grievance process to ensure independent perspectives are available for potential appeals.

### **2. Impartiality and Investigation**

- a. If the person complained against is present during a meeting, they shall temporarily leave until the matter is concluded.
- b. Unless the allegations are trivial, the Management Committee will appoint unbiased members or an independent investigator to examine the circumstances in detail. This may involve interviews with involved parties.
- c. The investigation team will present a report with recommendations at the subsequent Management Committee meeting.

### **3. Complaint Resolution Process**

- a. Complaints will be logged, and efficient resolution, preferably through a telephone call, will be sought to fully understand the issue and its context.

- b. If a call is not suitable, a written response will be provided within two weeks of the complaint date. Unsatisfied parties can request further discussion at the next management committee meeting, with a written response within seven working days.
- c. If dissatisfied with the response, the complainant may attend the next scheduled management committee meeting, giving seven days' notice.

#### **4. Interview and Hearing Protocol**

- a. Any interview or hearing must adhere to the rules of natural justice, allowing the subject of a complaint to be accompanied by a friend, colleague, or representative.

#### **5. Management Committee Decision and Appeals**

- a. The report will be presented by the investigation team or independent investigator, allowing the accused individuals to be present, accompanied by a representative.
- b. The Management Committee will decide on appropriate actions, including warnings, suspensions, or expulsion.
- c. Parties involved will be invited back to hear the decision. Appeals can be raised within two weeks of the decision date, and the Management Committee's decision shall be final after the appeal process.

#### **6. Recordkeeping**

Formal records of complaints will be securely kept for an appropriate period but not retained longer than necessary.

Swindon Seniors Forum (SSF)

Date of policy: November 2023, Next review date: November 2025.

Reviewed and amended by the SSF Chair, November 2023.

Signed by Norma Thompson, January 2024.