# Swindon SEND Families Voice
## Compliments and Complaints Policy

*Shaping services together for families of birth to 25-year-olds with additional needs or disabilities in Swindon*

## 1. Overview

1.1 Swindon SEND Families Voice (SSFV) is committed to maintaining high standards in the way we engage with, involve and represent parent carers. We welcome feedback from individuals, organisations and anyone who works with or engages with us. Feedback, including compliments and complaints, helps us evaluate and improve our work.

1.2 The objectives of this policy are to:

- ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how complaints will be handled;
- ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, consistently and sensitively within clear timescales;
- provide a fair and effective way for people to raise concerns about our activities or representatives; and
- ensure compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our work.

1.3 SSFV will:

- listen carefully and take complaints seriously;
- maintain confidentiality wherever possible;
- record and manage complaints securely in accordance with applicable data protection legislation;
- investigate complaints fairly and objectively;
- provide the complainant with the outcome of the investigation and information about any right of appeal; and
- identify and act on learning arising from complaints.

## 2. Definition of a Complaint

2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action, decision, service or behaviour, whether or not the complaint is ultimately found to be justified.

A person may make a complaint if they believe an SSFV representative has:

- failed to meet the SSFV Code of Conduct;
- made a mistake in the way they have engaged with or represented parent carers;
- failed to act appropriately; or
- otherwise failed to meet the standards reasonably expected of SSFV.

2.2 This policy applies to complaints about SSFV and/or people acting on its behalf.

## 3. Compliments and Complaints Procedure

There are two stages to the complaint's procedure:

Stage One – Complaint and Investigation

Stage Two – Independent Review

## 3.1 Compliments

Verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the Chair or Administrator and may be shared with the relevant individuals. With appropriate permission, compliments may be used for reporting or publicity purposes.

## 3.2 Stage One – Complaint

SSFV aims to resolve complaints quickly and satisfactorily. Where appropriate, a complaint may be resolved informally through an explanation, apology, clarification or other appropriate action.

Individuals wishing to make a complaint should contact:

Chair: nali.ssfv@outlook.com

Administrator: swindonsendfamiliesvoice@outlook.com

Telephone: 07486 873405

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Where a verbal complaint is made, the person receiving it will make a written record.

Where possible, complainants should provide details of the concern, the people involved, relevant dates and the outcome they would like to see.

3.3 Complaints will be acknowledged within 7 working days and recorded by the Chair or Administrator. A person who is the subject of a complaint will not be responsible for recording or investigating that complaint.

3.4 Complaints will be investigated fairly and objectively. Where a complaint involves a member of the Steering Group, that person will not take part in the investigation or decision making.

Where a complaint concerns the Chair, the Chair will take no part in the investigation or decision. The Administrator, or another appropriate person appointed by the Steering Group, will oversee the investigation and the remaining eligible Steering Group members will determine the outcome.

3.5 A written response will normally be provided within 30 working days, setting out the outcome and any appropriate actions arising from the complaint.

3.6 If an investigation cannot be completed within 30 working days, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected date of the final response.

3.7 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they may request an Independent Review within 14 working days.

## Stage Two – Independent Review

3.8 An appropriately experienced person who is independent of SSFV and has not previously been involved in the complaint will be asked to review the complaint and the Stage One investigation.

3.9 The Independent Reviewer will consider whether the investigation was fair and whether the outcome was reasonable. They may recommend that the outcome is confirmed, that further investigation is undertaken, or that appropriate changes or actions are made.

The Independent Review is the final stage of SSFV's internal complaints procedure.

## 4. Anonymous Complaints

4.1 Anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered where sufficient information is available. The ability to investigate may be limited where further information is required.

## 5. Data Protection and Confidentiality

5.1 SSFV may need to hold personal information about the complainant and others involved in order to investigate and respond to a complaint.

Information will be stored securely, accessed only by those who need it and handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

5.2 SSFV will maintain confidentiality wherever possible. However, confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed, for example where information must be shared by law or where there is a safeguarding concern.

## 6. Monitoring and Learning

6.1 Compliments and complaints will be monitored by SSFV to identify trends, learning and opportunities for improvement.

6.2 The Steering Group will review relevant complaints and any actions arising from them. An annual summary of compliments and complaints may be reported to the Steering Group without identifying individuals.

**Reviewed/Updated:** December 2026

**Next Review Date:** December 2027

**Policy Responsibility:** Steering Group