

Complaints Policy

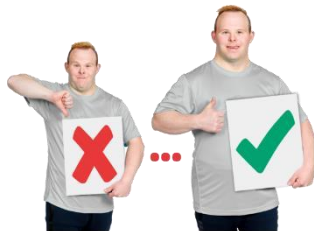
Agreed by the Board: 24 September 2024
Review date: September 2026



This policy is for all people who work for us, volunteers, trustees and anybody who uses (or has used) our services.



If you work or volunteer at Lewisham Speaking Up and you are unhappy with something, you should tell someone. If you are unhappy about something your advocate or supporter has done, you should tell someone about it.



If we know about it, we can do something about it. It tells us that we need to make our service to you better.



If you have a problem with one of our services, or you are unhappy with a worker, volunteer, or trustee, this document tells you what you can do.



The steps we take will be different depending on who the problem or complaint is about.



Sometimes the problem can be sorted out quickly by talking to a Manager or to the Director.



But sometimes it will be more serious and we will need to sort it out using a formal plan.

If your complaint is about a Trustee on the LSU board, you can speak to or write to the **Chair of the Trustees**.



They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.



If your complaint is about the Chair or co-Chair of the Trustees, you can speak to another member of the board and they must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks.

You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.



If your complaint is about a volunteer who is your advocate or a person who helps with LSU groups, then you can speak to or write to the person who supervises /supports them.

If you are not comfortable speaking to this person, you can speak to the Director. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or support with you at this meeting.



If you have a complaint about a paid worker, then you can speak to the Director and they must get back to you in writing or agree to meet you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.



If you are still not happy or if things have not changed, you can speak to or write to the Chair of the Trustees, or another Trustee. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks.



You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.



If you need an advocate to support you with any part of making the complaint, you can contact The Manager at **Advocacy in Greenwich**: they will try and find an advocate for you

The Manager
 Advocacy in Greenwich
 Equitable House
 General Gordon Square
 Woolwich
 London
 SE18 6FH

Tel: 020 8293 3720



In **all** cases, if the complaint is very serious and we think you or another person may be harmed, or we think a crime has happened or may happen, we have to tell Lewisham Social Care services, called 'Gateway'.



If your complaint is very serious and about someone hurting you or breaking the law, the managers of Lewisham Speaking Up will tell the police.

We will let you know if we have to tell someone else about your complaint.

Here is how you can make a complaint:



Send an email to
complaints@lsup.org.uk



Contact Michelle, who is the Chair of the Trustee Board, at chair@lsup.org.uk



Contact Marsh, our Director. You can call Marsh on 07593 058 464 or email him at marsh@lsup.org.uk



Lewisham Speaking Up

Registered in England and Wales No. 5320369 | Registered Charity No. 1109083

Complaints Policy

Agreed by the Board: 24 September 2024

Review date: September 2026

1. Lewisham Speaking Up (LSU) is committed to providing high quality support and services. In order to do this Lewis ham Speaking Up actively seeks feedback from people who use our services, volunteers, members of the public, partner organisations and staff.
2. LSU does recognise that there may be occasions when people may be dissatisfied with the service they have received. In these circumstances the person concerned will be made aware of the complaints policy.
3. As part of this commitment it is the responsibility of all staff and the Board of Trustees to raise awareness of the existence of the Complaints Policy and Procedure. This ensures that when individuals are dissatisfied with the work of LSU they are aware of their right to complain.
4. LSU takes all complaints made against staff, volunteers, its services, or activities seriously and views it as an opportunity to learn and develop. When a complaint has been made the complainant can expect it to be fully investigated and to be informed of the outcome.
5. LSU places great emphasis on achieving local resolution of complaints quickly and courteously.

6. LSU recognises that making a formal or informal complaint is a difficult undertaking for many people and as a result information should be provided to complainants about potential support from independent advocacy organisations, where available, to assist them through the process. Advocacy in Greenwich will support a person with a learning disability through a complaints procedure if an independent advocate is required. The independent advocate should be allowed to interview the complainant and other interested persons. They should also have access to case records. In all cases it should be verified that the independent person has permission to speak for the complainant.
7. LSU believes that any failure to act quickly will lead to an aggravation of the problem.
8. A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction about LSU, its activities, staff, volunteers, or Board of Trustees which requires a response. Complaints may also concern discrimination, provision of inaccurate information, delays, poor facilities, unacceptable policies or accusations of theft, physical, financial, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.
9. It is recognised that it is up to the Complainant to decide whether and which way to proceed with the complaint.
10. LSU acknowledges that the nature of any serious complaint may result in criminal proceedings for example in the case of Health and Safety and/or where a person's safety is at risk. In such circumstances, immediate action will be taken to report it to the appropriate authorities.

Procedure

1. All beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers should be made aware of the Complaints policy.
2. The complaints procedure will differ depending on whom the complaint is made against.

3. If the Complaint is minor in nature the aim should be to resolve the issue informally to the satisfaction of the complainant by either the appropriate Line Manager or the Director.
4. If your complaint is about a member of the Trustee Board, you can speak to or write to the Chair. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.
5. If your complaint is about the Chair of the Trustees, you can speak to another member of the Trustee Board. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.
6. If your complaint or problem is about a volunteer who is your advocate or a person who helps with LSU groups, then you can speak to or write to the person who supervises/supports them. If you are not comfortable speaking to this person, you can speak to the Director. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or support with you at this meeting.
7. If you have a problem with or a complaint about a paid worker, then you can speak to the Director and they must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.
8. If you are still not happy or if things have not changed, you can speak to or write to the Chair of the Trustees, or another Trustee. They must get back to you in writing or agree to meet with you within 2 weeks. You can have a friend or supporter with you at this meeting.
9. If you need an advocate to support you with any part of making the complaint, you can contact The Manager at Advocacy in Greenwich: they will try and find an advocate for you.

The Manager
Equitable House
7 General Gordon Square
Woolwich
London

E18 6FH

Tel: 020 8293 3720

10. In all cases, if the complaint is very serious and we think you or another person may be harmed, or we think a crime has happened or may happen, we have to inform the Police and/or Lewisham Social Care services, which is called 'Gateway': gateway@lewisham.gov.uk, phone: 020 8314 7777.
11. All personal information or case records relating to complaints will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Information will only be disclosed to those people with a need to know to enable them to investigate the complaint.
12. A copy of the Complaints Policy will be made available on the website, and a copy will be made available upon request.
13. All LSU staff, volunteers and beneficiaries will be made aware of this policy.
14. All contact with the complainant should be courteous, respectful and polite.
15. Complainants should be assured that making a complaint will not compromise the provision of any future services or support.
16. The Director will establish if the complainant has any kind of special needs which requires them to have additional support during the complaints process.
17. Complainants should be informed of their right to inform the Charity Commissioners of their complaint.
18. In the case of serious complaints the Director may need to seek legal advice.
19. The Director will notify the Governing Body of any complaints.

Other

Complaints can be made by letter, phone, email or personal contact – see **Making a complaint** on page 10.

1. This procedure can be used by any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint about the work of the organisation or individual members of staff or volunteers.
2. All complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant should be taken seriously and the member of staff receiving the complaint should seek to address the issue immediately.
3. All complaints should be recorded on the appropriate form.
4. It may be possible to resolve some more minor complaints in an informal and sensitive manner by the appropriate Manager or Director.
5. At this stage the complainant may be satisfied that their views have been listened to and have no wish to take the matter further.
6. Following the investigation the appointed Manager will report back to the Director. Full records of all findings should be kept securely.
7. It is hoped that the complaint will be resolved easily. However, if the complainant is not satisfied they should be informed of their right to contact the Charity Commission. They can be supported to do this by an advocate from Advocacy in Greenwich.

Making a complaint

To make a complaint you can email complaints@lsup.org.uk . Your complaint will then be handed to the most appropriate person.

You can contact the Chair of the Trustee Board, Michelle Stanistreet, at chair@lsup.org.uk

You can contact the Director, Marsh Stitchman, at marsh@lsup.org.uk or phone him on 07593 058 464.

If you wish to speak to a Trustee on the Board, you can find out their names on our website: <https://lsup.org.uk>. If you then wish to contact them you can ask the Director or our Office Manager how to contact them.

Appendices

Appendix A – Complaints Form

Appendix A

This form is to be used by the LSU staff member who has been told about the complaint, not by the complainant. It must be used for all complaints received.

COMPLAINTS FORM			
NAME:			
ADDRESS:			
CONTACT NO:			
DETAILS OF COMPLAINT:			
RECEIVED BY NAME:		DATE:	
HOW RECEIVED:	PERSON	TELEPHONE LETTER	EMAIL
ACTION TAKEN:			
COMPLAINT RECORDED:		LETTER SENT:	
DIRECTOR NOTIFIED:		DATE:	
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES NOTIFIED:			
OTHER TRUSTEE NOTIFIED: (IF APPLICABLE)			

DOES PERSON WISH TO HAVE ANY ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR COMPLAINT

Yes No

**HAS THE PERSON MAKING THE COMPLAINT BEEN INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHT TO
INFORM THE CHARITY COMMISSION? YES ☐ NO ☐. IF NOT, PLEASE SAY WHY NOT:**

REFERRED TO:

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

FINAL OUTCOME: