



STRM – SEND the Right Message Registered Charity No. 1193572

STRM Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy 1.03 Sept 25

Document Purpose

To ensure that we take account of the views and wishes of our service users and others that we come into contact with and that we are responsive, adopting a culture of continuous improvement.

Document Statement

SEND The Right Message (STRM) aims to provide a high-quality, responsive, service-user-led service. To ensure this, we need to take into account the views and wishes of those we are here to support. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service, and having a “compliments, comments and complaints” policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one way of doing this.

Document Application

This policy applies to:

Organisation-wide / Trustees / Staff / Volunteers / Contractors

Responsible for Implementation

Overall accountability: Board of Trustees

Operational responsibility: CEO / Business Manager

Author

Maggie Cleary, Chief Executive Officer

Effective Date 14-09-25

Review Date 14-09-28

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, guidance, or STRM practice.

Associated Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection & GDPR Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff & Volunteer Handbook



Approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees

Chair of Trustees: _____

Name: _____ Robert Carr _____

Date: _____ 14-09-25 _____

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1. Introduction

SEND The Right Message (STRM) aims to provide a high-quality, responsive, service user-led service. In order to ensure this we need to take account of the views and wishes of those we are here to support. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service, and having a “compliments, comments and complaints” policy and a clear procedure for resolving complaints is one way of doing this.

2. Scope

Commenting on and Complimenting Our Service

Your comments and compliments are valuable, welcome, and important, and when received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded. Comments and compliments enable STRM to:-



- understand whether our services meet the needs and expectations of the people we support
- provide positive feedback to our staff
- influence our organisational and service development
- inform our quality assurance programme

Complaining About Our Service

STRM recognises that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers make mistakes or get things wrong. To learn from such mistakes, we need to be aware of them and encourage people to comment or report them. Such comments or complaints will always be taken seriously, recorded and responded to as detailed in the procedure for resolving complaints which accompanies this policy statement.

If a complaint is made which involves a Safeguarding issue, then the STRM Safeguarding Policy takes precedence

3. STRM Commitment

STRM is committed to:

- Acting in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.
- Creating safe, inclusive, and respectful environments.
- Promoting transparency and accountability.
- Taking proportionate and fair action when concerns arise.
- Ensuring appropriate training and support is available.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- Provide strategic oversight.
- Ensure appropriate policies are in place.
- Monitor compliance and risk.

Chief Executive Officer

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Provide leadership and operational oversight.
- Escalate serious concerns to the Board where required.

Managers / Coordinators

- Ensure staff and volunteers understand this policy.
- Address issues in line with procedures.
- Maintain appropriate documentation.

Staff and Volunteers

- Comply with this policy at all times.
- Raise concerns promptly.
- Act in line with STRM values and standards.



5. Policy Provisions / Procedure

This section should contain the practical detail relevant to the subject matter.

Include:

- Definitions (if needed)
- Clear step-by-step processes
- Reporting routes
- Documentation requirements
- Timescales (if relevant)
- Escalation procedures

Keep language clear, procedural, and proportionate.

5.1 Making a Complaint

Anyone dissatisfied with the service provided by STRM may file a complaint.

Where appropriate, we encourage concerns to be raised informally with the member of staff or volunteer involved, as many issues can be resolved quickly. However, there is no requirement to do this before making a formal complaint.

Complaints may be made by:

- Email
- Telephone
- In writing
- In person

5.2 Recording Complaints

All complaints, comments and compliments will be recorded within STRM's secure CRM (Lamplight) and handled confidentially in accordance with our Data Protection & GDPR Policy.

5.3 Acknowledging Complaints

We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

As a small grassroots charity, we aim to investigate and respond to complaints as quickly as possible. Where additional time is required due to the complexity of the complaint or staff availability, we will keep the complainant informed.

5.4 Investigation

Complaints will normally be investigated by the CEO or Business Manager.

Where a complaint relates to the CEO, Chair of Trustees or a trustee, it will be investigated by an independent trustee or another appropriately appointed person.

Where appropriate, we may:

- Speak to those involved.
- Review records and documentation.
- Seek additional information.
- Consider any supporting evidence.

5.5 Outcome

Where appropriate, we will explain any further steps available if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome.

- our findings;



- any action taken;
- any improvements identified.

Where appropriate, lessons learned will be shared internally to support continuous improvement.

5.6 Data Protection Complaints

Complaints relating to the handling of personal information will also be managed in accordance with STRM's Data Protection, GDPR & Information Governance Policy.

Where required, complaints will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation and relevant Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance. We will investigate such complaints without undue delay and keep the complainant informed of the outcome.

Individuals who remain dissatisfied after receiving STRM's response may raise their concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Further information about raising concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is available on the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

5.7 Safeguarding

If a complaint identifies an actual or potential safeguarding concern, the matter will immediately be managed under STRM's Safeguarding Policy. Safeguarding responsibilities take precedence over this procedure where necessary.

5.8 Learning and Improvement

STRM values feedback and will use complaints, comments and compliments to improve services, identify learning opportunities and strengthen organisational practice.

6. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Informal action
- Formal action under relevant HR or volunteer procedures
- Escalation to safeguarding or regulatory authorities (where applicable)

Nothing in this policy prevents STRM from reporting concerns to external agencies where required by law or necessary to protect children, adults at risk, staff, volunteers, or the organisation.

7. Monitoring and Review

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the CEO and Board of Trustees.

The policy will be formally reviewed in line with the review date stated above or sooner if required due to legislative change, operational need, or identified risk.

Trends and themes arising from complaints, comments and compliments may be reported to the Board of Trustees to support organisational learning and continuous improvement.

If policy relates to staff or volunteers, include:



Volunteers are not employees, and this policy does not create a legally binding contract of employment.

If policy relates to safeguarding, include:

All concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded in line with STRM procedures.