

# East Sussex Community Voice

## Complaints Policy

### Policy Schedule

Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	July 2021
2	July 2023	
3		
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### Our policy

Individuals and organisations have the right to express their views about the performance of East Sussex Community Voice CIC [including Healthwatch East Sussex] and the way in which it conducts its business.

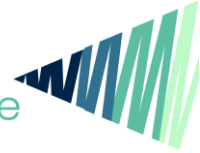
We have a Complaints Policy so that anyone using or trying to use East Sussex Community Voice services can tell us if they are unhappy about the standard of our service or the fact that we have not provided a service.

Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service received by East Sussex Community Voice CIC can make a complaint under this policy.

We will treat both concerns and complaints in the same way, and we will review this policy on a regular basis.

It is the policy of East Sussex Community Voice to:

- Listen carefully to your concern.
- Try to find a resolution
- Be polite, helpful and deal with your complaint fairly and efficiently.
- Let you know how we are getting on with your complaint, admitting any mistakes made and putting matters right wherever possible.
- Give the right of appeal against a decision made by the Executive Director through escalation to the East Sussex Community Voice CIC Board of non-Executive Directors.
- Provide reasonable adjustments to the procedure set out below to empower those who need support in making a complaint, such as the right to be accompanied to any



necessary meetings and provide accessible information in appropriate formats.

- Use your feedback to improve our service for all who need it.

Complaints we cannot deal with:

1. Complaints or concerns about the NHS, which should be dealt with through the [NHS complaints procedure](#) or via [complaints advocacy](#).
2. Complaints about the provision of social care services which should be dealt with by [East Sussex County Council's complaints procedure](#).

Our team can signpost you to the correct organisation that is best placed to handle your complaint.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

East Sussex Community Voice is committed to ensuring all complaints are handled free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

East Sussex Community Voice will monitor this policy in order to identify whether it is having an adverse impact on any group of individuals and act accordingly.

## Data protection

To help us handle your complaint we will keep a record of all the information we gather.

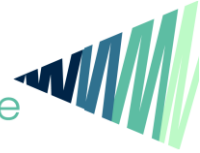
All information held and processed shall be treated in confidence. Such information will be shared with representatives of East Sussex Community Voice [including Healthwatch East Sussex] only to the extent required to resolve the complaint in accordance with this policy and procedure.

If the details of a complaint are to be used for quality improvement or training purposes, express permission will be sought from the complainant and personal details will be anonymised from all information prior to it being used.

All personal information collected by East Sussex Community Voice shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as detailed in our Data Protection Policy.

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint about East Sussex Community Voice

Let us know if you need our complaints procedure in a different format such as Easy Read, large print, another language or any other format and we will make reasonable adjustments to support you in sharing your concern or complaint with us.



1. In the first instance we would encourage you to tell us as soon as possible if you are unhappy with our service so that we can understand your concerns and quickly try to put things right for you.

The complainant should make it clear that they are making a complaint.

2. Providing information or discussing misunderstandings and misconceptions at this early stage may enable your concern or complaint to be successfully resolved.

You can discuss with any member of the team or contact us via telephone, email or letter (see our [contact details](#): ring 01323 403590 or email [info@escv.org.uk](mailto:info@escv.org.uk)).

3. If your concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally by speaking to the person or persons concerned, or is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you should notify the Executive Director of East Sussex Community Voice to enable an investigation to take place:

- **Telephone:** 07794 100 291

If you are emailing or writing a letter, then please mark your correspondence as '*Private and Confidential*' in the subject line or on the envelope.

- **Email:** [veronica.kirwan@escv.org.uk](mailto:veronica.kirwan@escv.org.uk)
- **Letter:** The Executive Director, East Sussex Community Voice, Unit 31, The Old Printworks, 1 Commercial Rd, Eastbourne BN21 3XQ

4. If your concern or complaint relates to the Executive Director, then you can notify the Chair of the East Sussex Community Voice Board.

This should be in writing via email or letter. Please mark your correspondence as '*Private and Confidential*' in the subject line of the email or on the envelope.

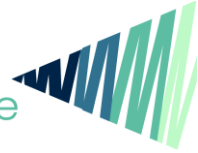
- **Email:** [complaints@escv.org.uk](mailto:complaints@escv.org.uk)
- **Letter:** The Chair, Healthwatch East Sussex, Freepost RUGY-JESR-EEBG, Unit 31, The Old Printworks, 1 Commercial Rd, Eastbourne BN21 3XQ

5. The Executive Director or Chair will acknowledge your concern or complaint in writing (or in your preferred method of communication) within 3 working days.

They will contact you to acquire as much information as possible and explain how your concern or complaint will be handled.

6. The Executive Director or Chair of East Sussex Community Voice will review and arrange the investigation of all concerns and complaints. They will gather relevant information and carefully evaluate it to decide on your complaint.

They will act to resolve your complaint within 10 working days, and will advise you of the outcome in writing, explaining the decision and how it has been reached.



If more than 10 working days are needed, you will be contacted and updated with progress and a new timescale agreed.

7. If you are not happy with the outcome at this stage, you will be able to appeal.

Please contact us within 10 days of receiving your written reply from us, and your concern(s) will be passed to a member of the East Sussex Community Voice Board who has not previously been involved with your complaint.

They will review the facts and consider all the evidence to decide if your appeal is upheld. They will share their findings and confirm their decision to you in writing within 10 working days.

The decision of any appeal will be considered final. The concern or complaint will then be closed.

**Please note** - If the concern or complaint relates to a service commissioned by another organisation, or is undertaken under contract, you may be able or advised to use their complaints procedure. You will be informed if this is the case in the initial response to your correspondence.

## Learning from concerns and complaints

Following the raising of any concerns or complaints, East Sussex Community Voice's will review the service or procedure concerned, and discuss any recommendations for change arising from it and the subsequent investigation.

The outcome of the concern or complaint, including any corresponding learning or changes to services, will be reported to the next meeting of the East Sussex Community Voice Board.

## Policy updates and amendments

The Board of East Sussex Community Voice will review the effectiveness of the complaints policy and procedures set out in this document every two years.

Any amendments to this policy and the procedures governing complaints will require a simple majority of board members voting in favour.

The amended policy document will be published on the website of East Sussex Community Voice [Healthwatch East Sussex] as soon as is practicable.