



LeadingLights

Leading Lights Complaints Policy

This policy covers complaints made about services that have current Leading Lights accreditation or complaints made about Leading Lights. Complaints may be from clients of services, funders, staff, organisations or the general public.

SafeLives expects Leading Lights accredited services to deliver services in line with the standards set out by Leading Lights. SafeLives will take breaches of standards seriously. SafeLives reserves the right to revoke accreditation where there is evidence of a breach.

When SafeLives receives a complaint about an accredited organisation we will respond to this in a timely and effective manner, in line with the following complaints procedure.

It is our policy to take complaints regarding Leading Lights accredited services seriously and to ensure that they are promptly responded to and investigated at an appropriate level (where the complaint is applicable to the standards). We are also committed, whenever possible, to taking action to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of similar problems.

The procedures outlined below are intended to be used when an organisation or individual wishes to complain about a Leading Lights accredited organisation.

Any formal complaints will be reviewed by the Internal Accreditation Panel, who will decide what, if any, actions will be taken. Appeals will be reviewed by the SafeLives board of Trustees.

Procedure A: Complaint made to SafeLives regarding an accredited service

In most circumstances a complainant should first follow the internal complaints procedure of the organisation. If they are unable to reach a resolution they can then complain to SafeLives.

SafeLives understands that there may be circumstances where a complainant may not wish to pursue a complaint directly with an organisation (for example, if the complainant is a client of

the organisation). In these circumstances, the complainant can request that SafeLives lodge a complaint to the organisation on their behalf. SafeLives will consider carefully whether or not it can represent the complainant (client). If SafeLives does do this then procedure B will be followed.

Any complaint about a Leading Lights accredited service should be made to SafeLives as soon as possible.

Where a current investigation is ongoing (e.g. internal or external such as an employment tribunal) then SafeLives will not investigate the complaint until these processes are complete.

Anybody wishing to complain about a Leading Lights accredited service should initially contact the Leading Lights Programme Lead in writing (via email or post) outlining the details of the complaint, with copies of all relevant information including the original letter of complaint and the response from the accredited organisation (where there was a response), any further correspondence and the alleged breached organisation's Complaints Policy and Procedures.

Upon receipt of a written complaint regarding an accredited organisation, SafeLives will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five working days. This will outline SafeLives' role and the process that will be followed.
- appoint a complaint lead – this will usually be a member of staff, but may be an independent person if we believe there is a potential conflict of interest.
- aim to meet the complainant to clarify the complaint and to decide what action SafeLives will take. This meeting can be in person, via phone or online.
- contact the accredited organisation to inform them of the complaint made against them and request information.
- consider all information including potential safety issues.
- decide whether further action is required.
- keep the complainant informed.
- keep the accredited organisation informed.
- undertake further actions as appropriate, and make recommendations.
- notify the complainant and the accredited organisation of the outcome of the investigation, within 30 days of receiving the complaint, or, as soon as possible thereafter.
- confirm outcomes in writing to all parties.

Potential outcomes of an investigation:

1. There are no concerns and the complaint is found to be unsubstantiated
2. The complaint is substantiated and the service is given an action plan to address the concerns found.
3. The complaint is substantiated and Leading Lights accreditation is removed (this could be if the service are not prepared to address the gaps found).

SafeLives may alert commissioners if we have serious concerns about a service and/or if we remove accreditation.

If any party remains dissatisfied after investigation, they can appeal to SafeLives Board of Trustees within one calendar month of the decision. After consideration of an appeal the decision of the Board of trustees will be final; there will not be any further recourse to appeal within SafeLives. Contact details for appeal are in appendix 1.

Record keeping and review

SafeLives will maintain a confidential record of all complaints and the outcomes of any investigations and appeals in line with our existing Data Protection policy. These will be reviewed annually and fed into development and training for services.

Procedure B: SafeLives lodges a complaint on behalf of a client

If a client requires SafeLives to make a complaint on their behalf about a Leading Lights accredited service they should contact Leading Lights to outline the details of the complaint. This could be via phone, email or post.

Leading Lights will either transcribe the complaint (then ask the complainant to check this for accuracy) or ask the complainant to put this in writing themselves.

Leading Lights will seek the consent of the complainant to share their personal information with the accredited service. If the complainant does not consent then Leading Lights will clarify with the complainant what, if any, specific personal information can be shared with the service.

Leading Lights will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five working days. This will outline SafeLives' role and the process that will be followed.
- appoint a complaint lead – this will usually be a member of staff, but may be an independent person if we believe there is a potential conflict of interest.
- aim to meet the complainant to clarify the complaint and to decide what action SafeLives will take. This meeting can be in person, via phone or online.
- Offer the client a referral to an alternative domestic abuse service where appropriate
- contact the accredited organisation to inform them of the complaint made against them and request information.

If appropriate, SafeLives will then lodge a complaint with the accredited organisation in line with their complaint policy. The following steps may be taken:

- contact the accredited organisation to inform them of the complaint made against them and request information.
- consider all information including potential safety issues.
- decide whether further action is required.
- keep the complainant informed.
- keep the accredited organisation informed.
- undertake further actions as appropriate, and make recommendations.

- notify the complainant and the accredited organisation of the outcome of the investigation, within 30 days of receiving the complaint, or, as soon as possible, thereafter.
- confirm outcomes in writing to all parties.

If any party remains dissatisfied after investigation, they can appeal to SafeLives Board of Trustees within one calendar month of the decision. After consideration of an appeal the decision of the Board of trustees will be final; there will not be any further recourse to appeal within SafeLives. Contact details for appeal are in appendix 1.

Record keeping and review

SafeLives will maintain a confidential record of all complaints and the outcomes of any investigations and appeals in line with our existing Data Protection policy. These will be reviewed annually and fed into development and training for services.

Procedure C: Complaints about Leading Lights:

SafeLives is committed to continuous improvement in order to support services to deliver high quality services to victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

We will consider complaints made about Leading Lights by accredited services or services that have been unsuccessful in achieving accreditation.

All services are provided with the opportunity to feedback on their Leading Lights journey via evaluation forms. Feedback is analysed and fed into an annual report that is then reviewed by the Accreditation panel and used to develop and improve the programme.

Initially complaints and feedback should be sent to Leading Lights. However if the complaint relates to the Leading Lights Practice Consultant then complaints can be made to other staff (outlined in Appendix 1).

Appendix 1

If you wish to make a complaint about a Leading Lights accredited service or would like further information about this policy/procedure please contact the leading Lights Practice Consultant:

Name: Frances Keel

Email: frances.keel@safelives.org.uk

Mobile: 07825 941 439

Postal address: Suite 2a Whitefriars, Lewins Mead, Bristol, BS1 2NT

If your complaint is in relation to the Leading Lights Practice Consultant you can contact the Senior Practice Consultant within the Practice Team, Daniel Ryan:

daniel.ryan@safelives.org.uk

To appeal the outcome of a complaint you can contact the SafeLives Board of Trustees:
Chair of Trustees
SafeLives
Suite 2a Whitefriars
Lewins Mead
Bristol
BS1 2NT