



**The Society for Existential Analysis**

**Complaints Policy and Procedures**

*Last updated: January 2025*

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to make clear the ways in which various complaints involving The Society for Existential Analysis ('SEA') or its members are best made and may be handled.

## **2. Activities and status of SEA and its membership**

For the purpose of making a complaint involving SEA or a member of SEA, certain facts need to be considered, as follows:

- **The SEA is an Organisational Member ('OM') of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy ('UKCP') via the Constructivist and Existential College ('CEC');**
- **The SEA is a charity**, and as such is registered with The Charity Commission (**charity number 1039274**);
- **The SEA is a Data Controller**, and as such is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office ('ICO') (**registration number ZB293591**);
- The SEA, as an **accrediting organisation within UKCP**, accredits psychotherapy training programmes that are ran by Training Organisations ('TO');
- Of its membership, **some SEA members are also individual members of UKCP**, either having qualified for registered membership (as a psychotherapist, psychotherapeutic counsellor, etc.) or as a trainee member of UKCP. Of these, some have qualified via, or are training on, a course accredited by SEA, and some have not.

## **3. General Complaints regarding SEA**

### **3.1 Raising a complaint**

Complaints relating to the SEA's general activities may be directed to the Executive Committee ('EC') of the SEA in the first instance. These may be sent via email to any of the following Honorary Officers of SEA, who are all sitting members of the EC:

- Chair - [chair@existentialanalysis.org.uk](mailto:chair@existentialanalysis.org.uk)
- Vice Chair - [vicechair@existentialanalysis.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@existentialanalysis.org.uk)
- Treasurer - [treasurer@existentialanalysis.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@existentialanalysis.org.uk)
- Secretary - [secretary@existentialanalysis.org.uk](mailto:secretary@existentialanalysis.org.uk)

### **3.2 Handling a complaint**

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

#### **3.2.1 Timely resolution:**

- Following receipt of the complaint it will be discussed at the next available meeting of the EC. Should the complaint result in any conflict of interest with any sitting member of the EC they will be excused from the discussion and any decision pertaining to resolution.
- The complainant will be responded to as soon as possible, and if resolution is not immediate a timescale for addressing the complaint will be set out.
- Any timescale will be set by taking into account the nature of the complaint and any potential resolution.

#### **3.2.2 Transparency:**

- The complainant will be informed of the process to be followed to address the complaint.
- Complainants will be kept informed as the process proceeds.
- The rationale for any resolution will be clearly set out to the complainant, including an acknowledgement of any mistakes made and actions relating to any lessons learned.

#### **3.2.3 Fair and thorough investigation:**

- All complaints will be heard in good faith, with the intention to understand both the complaint and the outcome that the complainant would like.
- If further clarification of the complaint is needed, the complainant will be asked for this additional information.
- Should any volunteers to SEA be subject to a complaint, they will be informed where possible, details of the complaint shared with them as appropriate and an opportunity for a response from the volunteer given.
- Wherever possible, complaints will be investigated by individuals who are independent of the events complained about. If this is not possible, given the nature and severity of the complaint the Society may seek an independent third-party to hear and investigate the complaint.

#### **3.2.4 Evidence-based decisions:**

- The SEA endeavours to reach decisions on complaints that are proportionate, appropriate and fair. The reasons for any decisions will be evidence-based and clearly communicated.
- When responding to a complaint, the SEA will acknowledge any mistakes that have been made and take proportionate action to put things right.

### 3.2.5 Learning and improvement:

- A record will be kept of any complaints received, the outcomes of any investigation and the reasons for decisions reached.
- The SEA will seek to learn from any complaints received, including any pattern of complaints that may arise.
- The SEA will implement any improvements to how it conducts its activities that may arise from investigating complaints as quickly and effectively as possible.

## 4. Escalation and other kinds of complaints

As noted in Section 2 above, the SEA has a range of roles and its membership comprises individuals who are also UKCP registrants. As such, given the nature and seriousness of the issue at hand, the appropriate body to whom to make the complaint and the procedure followed will depend upon how it pertains to the SEA's or SEA member's status, as follows:

**4.1 SEA as a charity** – any serious complaints regarding the SEA's charitable activities ought to be made to The Charity Commission or other relevant body. Guidance on how to do this is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>;

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**4.2 SEA as a Data Controller** – complaints relating to the SEA's activities as a Data Controller ought to be directed to the ICO. Guidance on how to do this is available here: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

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**4.3 SEA as an OM of UKCP** – any complaints with respect to the SEA as an OM of UKCP ought to be made to the CEC;

**4.4 SEA as a UKCP accrediting organisation** – any complaints relating to training courses that the SEA accredits ought to be made to the TO itself. However, for serious complaints about the running of the course complainants are encouraged to make SEA aware of the issue at hand. Complaints relating to the SEA's activities as an accrediting organisation ought to be raised with the CEC.

**4.4 An SEA member who is registered with UKCP** – any complaints relating to the conduct of a member who is registered with UKCP ought to be directed to the UKCP and their Complaints and Conduct Process ('CCP'). More information on this, including how to make a complaint, is available here:

<https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/ukcp-members/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint/>

## 5. Sanctions against SEA members and volunteers

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint, it is possible that along with learning points for the SEA one of the outcomes may be that an SEA member or volunteer (including a member of the ExCo) is found to be at serious fault. It is noted here that the SEA's Constitution (notably sections 4 and 6) allows for the termination of SEA membership for "...good and sufficient reason..." and removal of members of the ExCo for failure "...to execute their duties with appropriate care and diligence" (amongst other reasons).