



**South Essex
Rape & Incest
Crisis Centre**

**Complaint or
compliment**



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Complaint or compliment

SERICC opened in 1984 and covers the areas of Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood.

As a voluntary organisation and a registered charity, the organization is confidential and independent from social services, the police and other official agencies.

SERICC provides a service to women and girls over 13 years old who have been raped, sexually assaulted, experienced child sexual abuse, sexual harassment or who have experienced any form of sexually violence or attempted sexual assault at any time in their lives.

You can ring SERICC if something is happening in your life now or if you are having difficulties about something that has happened in the past. You can also phone if you are worried about your child, someone else in your family, or someone you know. If you ring us we can offer telephone counselling and 'one to one' counselling, emotional support and practical information. We will not tell you what to do or judge your actions.

SERICC seeks to work in ways that demonstrate equality, respect and care and our aim is to be an organisation which is accepting of difference (age, disability, race, faith, sexuality and class) and to be non-judgemental.

We work to provide information and resources that can be used by all women to help themselves.

Making a complaint means speaking up about something you do not like or something you are not happy with – making a complaint can be a good way of making things change for the better. *It is OK to complain.* SERICC needs to know what is wrong with our service so we can try to make the service better.

You can complain or compliment about anything to do with the service you receive from SERICC.

You can discuss anything you are unhappy about with SERICC by talking to your counsellor who will arrange for you to talk with SERICC's Director and we will try to sort the problem out.

If the complaint is about your counsellor you can discuss it with SERICC's Director or you can put your complaint in writing and send it to SERICC's chairwoman. She is not an employee of SERICC but is a volunteer on SERICC's Management Team and will make sure your complaint is taken seriously.

It is important that you put your issues and complaint in writing and in this letter please say what the complaint is

- Date and time/s of when the problem happened
- Details of anything else you think are important

It is important that you tell us whether or not letters can be sent to the contact address you have given your SERICC counsellor or whether you need any letters to go to a different address or telephone messages be left on a telephone number that you have given to us.

Making a complaint

Where a service user has a grievance or complaint they will be asked to put this in writing. No action will be taken unless the complaint is in writing. The letter should include;

- details of the complaint
- date and time of the incident
- details of any witnesses to the incident

If the complainant has literacy difficulties, an advocate can act on their behalf or assist them in making the complaint.

In the event of a complaint being received 3 months after the alleged action or event took place, the complainant must first establish an acceptable reason for delay in order the complaint to be investigated.

The letter should be addressed to the **Chairwoman of the management team at SERICC, The Hall, West Street, Grays, Essex. RM17 6LL**. The Chairwoman will communicate the results of the enquiry to the complainant within a reasonable time (*Normally 28 days*).

All specified time limits will be met unless this is not possible due to annual leave; personal ill health, family circumstances etc. and the complainant will be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Chairwoman will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 7 working days.

The investigation will commence within **seven working days** of receipt of the complaint. The chairwoman shall undertake to investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint.

The Chairwoman will liaise with the appropriate member of staff and determine whether the matter is to be dealt with initially as a minor or serious incident. A serious complaint is one that could lead to dismissal or criminal proceedings.

If the matter is deemed at this stage to be of a minor nature, the Chairwoman will normally convene a meeting with the service user to discuss the complaint. Where appropriate, the service user can be accompanied by a friend, or advocate when attending the initial meeting.

The Chairwoman will provide the employee(s) with a copy of the complaint at the earliest opportunity and inform them of their right to seek advice.

The Chairwoman will interview the staff involved and if further information is required, interview other persons and/or obtain further documentary evidence. The employee(s) may arrange for a trade union representative or nominated person to be present at any interviews.

It should be borne in mind that it may be possible to settle a complaint by having an informal meeting with the complainant and the member of staff concerned together, with the consent of all parties.

A file will be opened which will include details of the complaint and notes of action taken. Written records of all interviews will be kept in sufficient detail to facilitate the application of appeal procedures. Notes of any discussions will be made and these notes will be shared with the service user and their advocate.

Unless the matter appears to be unusually complex, the span of the enquiry should not be more than six weeks. Should this not be possible, and then all parties should be regularly informed of the situation, no less than every four weeks.

Unless the complaint is withdrawn, an investigation may only be concluded when the investigating Chairwoman is satisfied that all necessary information has been obtained and considered.

On conclusion the complainant should be advised in writing as to the outcome of the investigation and the reasons for the final outcome, together with any proposed or intended consequential action (*Normally within 28 days*).

The staff member(s) subject of the complaint will also be advised of the outcome.

If the complaint is established, the method of redress or apology will be discussed with the member(s) of staff and the action agreed.

If during the course or on conclusion of an investigation evidence is revealed that leads to an allegation of misconduct or incapability, this should be pursued separately through the disciplinary process.

Contact us

Tel: 01375 380609

Fax: 01375 387053

Counselling Telephone line is open on:

Wednesday 10am – 12pm

Thursday 12noon – 4pm

Saturday 10am – 1pm

'One-to-one' counselling by appointment only

SERICC

The Hall

West Street

Grays

Essex RM17 6LL

Tel: 01375 381322

Fax: 01375 387053

Email: sericc@sericc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 287762



Do you need to talk to someone about

rape or sexual abuse?

It could have happened a long time ago or more recently.

If you are worried, need support or information, you can call our helpline:

**SOUTH ESSEX RAPE
& INCEST CRISIS CENTRE**

01375 380609

www.sericc.org.uk

Our 24 hour answerphone will tell you our helpline times, or leave a message and we will call you back as soon as possible.

We offer a confidential helpline, 'one-to-one' counselling and support for women and girls who have suffered or are suffering sexual violence.

Run for women, by women

