



# Complaints Procedure

Document and Version Control	
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## 1. Receiving the Complaint

If at any point in handling a complaint abuse is suspected, staff or volunteers must immediately follow Advocacy for All's safeguarding policies and procedures.

All clients should be made aware of the Complaints Policy.

- Complaints can be made by letter, phone, email or face to face
- Complaints received verbally will be passed to Admin to follow up and confirm the nature of the complaint
- Any written complaint must be passed to Admin in a timely manner to be processed and recorded on the Complaints Log
- This procedure can be used by any person or organisation wishing to make a complaint about the work of the organisation or individual member of staff or volunteer
- All complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously and the member of staff receiving the complaint immediately inform the appropriate manager

### 1.1 Initial recording of the Complaint

If a member of staff receives a complaint they must:

- ✓ make a note of the date and time the complaint was made
- ✓ write down the name and contact details of the person making the complaint
- ✓ inform the complainant that their details will be passed to the Admin department who will contact them
- ✓ Admin will contact the complainant to gather details of the complaint and offer to send a copy of our Complaints Policy
- ✓ Admin will offer to send our complaints form to the complainant via post or email if required
- ✓ send details of the complaint to [complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk](mailto:complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk)
- When dealing with a complaint staff must:
  - ✓ not be defensive, but must listen sympathetically and accept that there is a problem

- ✓ not assign blame
- ✓ not make any promises that they are unable to keep, or promises on behalf of other people
- ✓ treat people with respect and be friendly. Remember, everyone has the right to complain so listen carefully, and concentrate on what is being said
- ✓ be positive, and thank the person for bringing the matter to their attention

## **2. The Complaints Procedure**

All complaints should be recorded on the Complaints Log by the Admin department, even if resolved via Informal Resolution (2.1)

- Advocacy for All recognises that there are 3 stages in the Complaints Procedure:
  - ✓ problem solving
  - ✓ formal
  - ✓ review

During the complaints process the Complaints Logs should be maintained and updated regularly with any actions, conversations and outcomes

### **2.1 Informal Resolution**

- It may be possible to resolve some more minor complaints in an informal and sensitive manner by the appropriate manager
- At this stage the complainant may be satisfied that their views have been listened to and have no wish to take the matter further
- The complaint should still be recorded on the Complaints Log and any correspondence should be copied into [complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk](mailto:complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk), which is monitored by the CEO and appropriate managers
- If, however, the complainant is still not satisfied and wishes to take the issue further the complaint information should be sent immediately to the Admin Department who will liaise with the complainant and notify the CEO that the complaint has proceeded to 'Stage One - Problem-Solving - Local Resolution'. Admin will record on the Complaint Logs within 5 working days.

## **2.2 Stage One – Problem-Solving - Local Resolution**

- if it has not been possible to resolve the issue the complaint should be sent to the Admin Department ([complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk](mailto:complaints@advocacyforall.org.uk)) who will inform the Chief Executive and update the Complaints Log
- on receiving the complaint details, the Chief Executive will appoint an Investigating Officer and send them a copy of the complaint
- the Investigating Officer will investigate the complaint and, in most cases, contact the complainant to discuss the issue. Following the investigation, the Investigating Officer will complete an investigation report which must be sent to the Chief Executive for review and approval
- the complainant can have someone with them to help them understand information and the process
- the Investigating Officer will report back to the complainant within 2 weeks. If the complainant is satisfied at this stage no further action may be necessary

## **2.3 Stage Two - Formal**

- if the issue has not been resolved, the complainant should notify the Investigating Officer of the reasons that the outcome has not satisfied their complaint
- the Chief Executive will then appoint a different Investigating Officer to complete a second investigation. The Complainant must be informed of this process
- this process will also be followed if the complainant wishes to go straight to the Formal stage
- if necessary an interpreter will be provided
- following the second investigation, the appointed Investigating Officer will report back to the Chief Executive. Full records of all findings must be kept and the Complaints Log updated by Admin
- under normal circumstances the Investigating Officer will respond within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint appeal, giving a full explanation of the decision. If a response cannot be given within 28 working days an explanation should be given

- if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome no further action will be necessary

## **2.4 Stage Three - Review by Panel**

- if the Complainant is not satisfied the Chief Executive will arrange for a panel to meet within 28 working days to review the complaint and the two completed investigation reports. The panel will consist of the Chief Executive and 2 named members of the Board of Trustees
- the panel must reach a decision on its findings and complete a report within 3 working days
- it is then the responsibility of the Chief Executive to respond to the complainant with the outcome of the final investigation within 7 working days
- it is hoped that the complaint will be resolved by the end of Stage Three. However, if the complainant is still not satisfied they should be informed of their right to contact the Charity Commission

## **2.5 Recording**

The Admin Department dealing will complete and maintain the Complaints Log throughout, which can be found in the Complaints folder in the Managers Area. Only Managers will have access to this folder

## **2.6 Contact Details**

### **Advocacy for All**

The Civic Centre, St. Mary's Road, Swanley, Kent. BR8 7BU  
Tel: 0345 310 1812

### **Charity Commission Direct**

PO Box 1227

Liverpool

L69 3UG

Tel: 0845 3000 218

Website: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>

<b>RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES and INFORMATION:</b>
Grievance Policy
Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy

**UPDATES:**

Area of Procedure	Date of Amendment	Amendment
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.