



# Solihull Action through Advocacy

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **Policy Statement:**

Solihull Action through Advocacy (SAAtA) aims to provide high quality advocacy services to individuals but recognises there may be occasions when the users of the advocacy service or persons connected to those who use the service, feel that the quality or level of service received has been less than they could reasonably expect.

All service users will be informed of their right to complain and where to access this Complaints Policy.

Anyone using the advocacy service can be assured at all times that their right to complain will not affect their future use of the advocacy service or their right to an advocate.

#### **Purpose:**

In the event of anyone having a concern or complaint regarding the actions of staff or volunteers working for SAAtA, we will make all reasonable attempts to remedy the issues raised. This applies equally to any person using the advocacy service, or to persons connected to someone using the advocacy service e.g. family member, social worker, care worker etc.

We work in partnership with other advocacy organisations to ensure that anyone who may experience difficulties in making a formal complaint has access to someone who is independent of SAAtA so that they are supported through the process.

The Chair of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the complaints policy and process.

### **Complaints procedure:**

#### **Stage One – Informal Complaint:**

- In the first instance any complaint or concern should be directed to the manager of the area of advocacy to which the complaint or concern relates, to see if it can be resolved informally. If any person feels unable to talk to the

project manager or if it is inappropriate to do so (for example because the complaint concerns that individual) another manager should be contacted.

- The designated manager will review the informal complaint and will contact the complainant within 5 working days to provide a response and to suggest any remedy/corrective actions that have been identified.
- It is hoped that in most cases, complaints will be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at this stage.
- Informal complaints and any actions taken will be recorded by the designated manager on a “Complaint Record” form (Appendix 1) and will be provided to the CEO to include in the complaints register.

### **Stage Two – Formal Complaint**

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their informal complaint or they feel they want the complaint looked into more formally, they should make a formal complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.
- If the complainant requires support they will be offered access to independent advocacy from another agency.
- A formal complaint can be made in writing but may be made verbally to the CEO. If a formal complaint is verbally received, the CEO will produce a written summary of the complaint and ask the complainant to agree that it represents an accurate reflection of the complaint.
- The CEO will conduct an investigation into the complaint. In some circumstances (such as where the CEO is the subject of the complaint for example) it may be appropriate that the investigation be conducted another appropriate person. The investigation will take into account all relevant circumstances and it may be appropriate to hold a complaint hearing with the complainant. The exact remit of the investigation will differ on a case-by-case basis and will be the responsibility of the CEO to determine.
- The outcome of the investigation and recommendations for resolutions will be given to the complainant in writing within 28 working days of the day on which their complaint was received. If in exceptional circumstances the investigation is going to take longer than the 28 working days then the complainant will be contacted and notified.
- The complaint should be recorded on a “Complaint Record” form (Appendix 1) and included in the complaints register along with the written outcome and any supporting documentation.

### **Stage Three – Board Review:**

- If the Complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome after a formal complaint, they should request a review by the Board of Trustees.
- A review request must be made directly to the Chair of Trustees in writing stating the reason(s) why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint. If the complainant requires support to produce a written request they will be offered access to independent advocacy from another agency.
- The Chair of Trustees will convene a panel to review the complaint and investigate further if necessary. The committee will consist of the Chair of Trustees, one other Trustee and one member of SATA’s service user Advisory Board.
- Having reviewed the complaint and the outcome at Stage 2, the panel will produce a written report of its findings and any recommendations that have

been made. This will be provided to the Complainant within 28 days from the day on which their request was received by the Chair of Trustees

- With the permission of the complainant, the report may also be provided to any other person that the panel feels has a legitimate interest in the result of the investigation.
- The decision of the panel will be final.
- The Panel's report will be passed to the Chief Executive to be included in the complaints register.

### **Recordings:**

- The Chief Executive Officer will record all complaints in the complaints register and all stages of the complaints' investigation will be dealt with in the strictest confidential manner.
- If a complaint is of an allegedly criminal offence or concerning moral or physical safety of a person the scheme advocates for, and the Trustee Board are satisfied as to the seriousness of the complaint, immediate action will be taken to report it to the appropriate authorities.
- Solihull Action through Advocacy will keep a written record and monitor all formal complaints received. This record will include the nature of complaints, time taken to respond, action taken and outcomes. Outcomes will be monitored in terms of user satisfaction and implications for future service delivery and training.
- The written record will be available for inspection by fund providers but will be anonymised.

### **Role of Trustees and Management**

- Complaints will be reported at each Trustee Board meeting and a review of complaints will be conducted every year to identify any trends and areas for improvement and to ensure lessons have been learned and appropriate action has been taken to improve services.
- Complaints and compliments are a standard part of the supervision process.

**Complaint Record Form**

Name of Recorder	
Name of Complainant	
Date Complaint Received	

Complaint Stage	1 (Informal)	2 (Formal)	3 (Board Review)
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Description of Complaint (please be as detailed as possible)

Details of Investigation Undertaken (if applicable)

Details of Recommendations/Actions (if applicable)

Date response provided to Complainant	
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Response provided	In Writing	Verbally
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**Please include any relevant documentation and return with this form to the CEO**

For completion by CEO:	
Date complaint form received	
Complaint added to register	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature	