



**Solihull Action
through Advocacy**

Policy: Complaints

Date of Review: February 2021

Date of Next Review: February 2023



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.

Because SAAtA is committed to continually improving our services, staff and volunteers are required to be proactive in identifying potential complaints and ensuring that users of the service are reminded of their right to complain and supported to do so where necessary and appropriate.

Anyone using the advocacy service can be assured at all times that exercising 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 anyone representing or acting on behalf of 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. a family member, social worker or care worker.

We work in partnership with other advocacy organisations to ensure that anyone who may experience difficulties in making a complaint has access to someone who is independent of SAAtA and who can support them through the process.

Complaints procedure:

Stage One:

- 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. The complainant will be contacted within 5 working days of making the informal complaint by the designated manager. If

any person feels unable to talk to the manager or if it is inappropriate to do so, the CEO should be contacted.

Stage two:

- If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with any suggested resolutions or they feel they want the complaint investigated more formally, they should refer the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer. This should ordinarily be done in writing but exceptions will be made for those for whom this would present an unreasonable barrier to making their complaint.
- The CEO will carry out an investigation. In some circumstances it may be designated to another appropriate person to carry out the investigation. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend on the nature of the complaint and will be for the CEO (or another appropriate person) to determine.
- The outcome of the investigation and recommendations for resolutions will be given to the complainant in writing within 28 working days. If the investigation is going to take longer than the 28 working days then the complainant will be contacted and notified.

Stage three:

- If the complainant is still unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint at stage two, then it will be referred to the Client Leadership Committee of the Board of Trustees (“the Committee”).
- The Committee will convene a panel to investigate the matter further. The panel will consist of at least 3 Committee members, at least 2 of whom should be Trustees. at least 1 client member of the Committee.
- The panel will report their findings to the complainant in writing within 28 working days. If this stage of the investigation is to take longer than 28 working days then the complainant should be notified.
- Any other person who in the panel’s opinion has a legitimate interest in the result of the investigation will also be contacted with the permission of the person making the complaint.
- The decision of the panel will be final.

Recordings:

- All stages of the complaint will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.
- SAAtA 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.

Role of Trustees and Management

- All compliments and complaints recorded in the register will be regularly reported to Client Leadership Committee.
- The Committee (supported by the CEO) will seek to identify trends and to be assured that lessons have been learned and appropriate action has been taken to improve services.
- Complaints and compliments will be a standard part of the supervision process for staff and volunteers.

Communication of this policy

- A downloadable copy of this policy will be made publicly available on the SAAtA website
- A hard copy will be provided on request
- All clients will be informed of the existence of this policy and of their right to complain. This will be done by advocates as part of their first contact with a new client. Printed materials will be available to support with this where appropriate.
- SAAtA will ensure that this policy is available in an accessible format(s) and that, where appropriate, support is available to assist users of the service to understand the policy and the complaints procedure.