



# **Complaints Policy for Clients**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy has been informed by the Advocacy Charter and Doing Well, Doing Better Standards for Health Services.
- 1.2. Generally, the purpose of our Complaints Policy is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation as we feel this can resolve concerns with greater speed and efficiency.
- 1.3. The Complaints Policy plays an important part in improving ASC's accountability to stakeholders and supports improvement of its services by responding to feedback. All feedback is important to us and if we can improve our service as a result of any concerns, we will do so.
- 1.4. ASC encourages feedback about our service from our clients, professionals and other organisations.
- 1.5. All complaints to ASC will be logged in a central point and will be dealt with constructively, impartially and effectively in accordance with the complaints procedure.
- 1.6. This policy is applicable for clients. This policy does not apply to professionals, who should refer to our Complaints Policy for Professionals. Employees or trustees of ASC should refer to ASC's Grievance Policy & Procedure.
- 1.7. All feedback or concerns to ASC, will be dealt with in an open and fair way.

## **2. How to Make a Complaint / Compliment**

- 2.1. A complaint / compliment can be made in writing (letter or email) or verbally. Notes will be made of any verbal complaint and you will be asked to sign and date them. You will be given a copy of the signed notes.
- 2.2. If you have a complaint / compliment about our organisation, please contact:

The Finance and Admin Manager  
Advocacy Support Cymru  
Charterhouse 1  
Links Business Park  
Fortran Road  
St. Mellons  
Cardiff  
CF3 0LT

Tel: 02920 540444

Or email: [lsimms@ascymru.org.uk](mailto:lsimms@ascymru.org.uk)

- 2.3. Any complaint against the Executive Director should be addressed to The Chair of the Executive Committee.
- 2.4. ASC will not process anonymous complaints.
- 2.5. On receiving a complaint, an Investigating Manager will be allocated to you.
- 2.6. For any complaint you may have a supporter to help you through the process and / or make the complaint for you. This can be a friend, family member or other professional.
- 2.7. If you wish to use a supporter in making a complaint, you will need to supply ASC with written authorisation for them to act on your behalf. Appendix 1 attached can help you to do this.

### **3. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

- 3.1. Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Policy is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation as we feel this can resolve concerns with greater speed and efficiency. We will, however, always be guided by you and will always conduct a formal investigation if you wish us to do so.
- 3.2. Investigating Managers dealing with complaints must always explore every option to resolve complaints by working with you to agree a satisfactory outcome.
- 3.3. The Investigating Manager assigned to investigate your complaint will acknowledge it within 5 working days. The Investigating Manager will meet with you in person if you wish them to do so.
- 3.4. The Investigating Manager will consider whether the complaint should be escalated to Stage 2 (Formal Investigation) where the severity of the complaint warrants this.
- 3.5. The Investigating Manager will try to resolve your complaint in a timely way so that a written response can be provided within 15 working days from first receipt of your complaint. The response will include a written summary of the Manager's conclusions and will include any action taken. If this timescale cannot be met, the Investigating Manager will write to you to inform you of the reasons why.

#### **If You Are Dissatisfied With the Outcome of the Informal Investigation**

- 3.6. If you are dissatisfied with our response under Stage 1, then you should inform the Finance and Admin Manager that the complaint has not been resolved. We would ask that you do this within 10 working days of receiving your outcome letter.

- 3.7. The Finance and Admin Manager, will pass on the complaint to the Investigating Manager in order that they can proceed with a formal investigation. They will contact you within 5 working days of you registering your dissatisfaction and will then proceed with a formal investigation (Stage 2 of our Complaints Procedure).

#### **4. Stage 2 – Formal Investigation**

- 4.1. The Investigating Manager handling your complaint will aim to complete a formal investigation within 25 working days of you registering your dissatisfaction.
- 4.2. The outcome of the formal investigation will be communicated to you within 5 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.

#### **5. STAGE 3 – Appeal Process**

- 5.1. If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 2, then you should inform the Finance and Admin Manager that you wish to appeal. We would ask that you do this within 10 working days of the date the Stage 2 outcome has been communicated.
- 5.2. You will be asked to provide reasons why you are not satisfied with outcomes to Stages 1 and 2 of the Complaints Procedure in order to inform the appeal.
- 5.3. The Finance and Admin Manager will pass on the Complaint to another member of the Senior Management Team to Act as Appeals Manager. The Appeals Manager will confirm with you that the appeal is being undertaken within 5 working days.
- 5.4. The Appeals Manager will review documentation relating to Stages 1 and 2 of the complaint process. The review may also include a meeting with you or an interview with any staff member involved. This is likely to extend the timescale.
- 5.5. The Appeals Manager will either uphold the findings, decisions and actions taken or identify and offer to implement an alternative resolution(s) (which may include upholding the original complaint).
- 5.6. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to you within 25 working days of you registering your dissatisfaction.

#### **6. IF YOU REMAIN DISSATISFIED.**

- 6.1. Please inform the Finance and Admin Manager, who will escalate the complaint to the Executive Director within 5 working days of you registering your dissatisfaction. The Executive Director will review the appeal.

- 6.2. The Executive Director will either uphold the findings, decisions and actions taken or identify and offer to implement an alternative resolution (which may include upholding the original complaint).
- 6.3. The outcome of the review will be communicated to you within 25 working days of you registering your dissatisfaction.

**IF YOU ARE STILL DISSASATISFIED.**

- 6.4. After the ASC complaints procedure has been exhausted, and you still remain dissatisfied then you may refer your complaint to the Charity Commission. We will support you to do this if you require.

## Appendix 1

### Letter of Authorisation

I wish to make a complaint about Advocacy Support Cymru, using its Complaints Procedure.

I would like the following person to act on my behalf:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

The Finance and Admin Manager  
Advocacy Support Cymru  
Charterhouse 1  
Links Business Park  
Fortran Road  
St. Mellons  
Cardiff  
CF3 0LT