

## **Southern Advocacy Service - Complaints Policy and Procedure**

### **General statement**

Southern Advocacy Services aims to provide its members, organisations and individuals with the best possible service. We positively welcome suggestions you may have for how we can improve our service.

Usually, a word with the person at the point of service delivery will suffice should a problem arise. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided fall short of what they could reasonably expect. We also want to know about these occasions so that we can make good the problem and plan to avoid its repetition. If you have a complaint, we would like you to tell us about it.

### **This is what you should do:**

1. If you have a complaint to make, it should be made to the Chief Executive, Jan Gavin who will try to resolve the issue.
2. You can make the complaint in a way which suits you i.e. by letter, email, in person or by telephone.
3. Once we receive your complaint, we will acknowledge it in writing (normally within 7 days of receipt). Remember to keep a copy of your letter.
4. Jan Gavin shall - in consultation with the HR Manager - investigate the complaint. (See separate check list).
5. Jan Gavin shall communicate the results of the investigation to you in a letter within a reasonable time - normally 28 days
6. You have the right - if dissatisfied with the results of the inquiry - to put your case in writing, or personally at a meeting with two Trustees of Southern Advocacy Services. Should you wish to do so you must notify Jan Gavin within 14 days of the date of the outcome letter at 5 above.

If attending personally, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate to help put your case. (The Trustees also has the right to have an advisor present).

7. The decision of the Trustee's will be final.

8. Where appropriate, Southern Advocacy Services will make a written apology to the complainant and agree any further action necessary to make good the cause of the complaint.
9. All formal complaints and the response made to them will be recorded and filed in a secure place.
10. The Trustee Board shall be informed by Jan Gavin at the first available meeting of the number and nature of any formal complaints and their outcome, and consideration will be given to the implications these have for the planning and management of future services annually, as part of Southern Advocacy Services self-evaluation.
11. Continued complaints about the same issue already raised and investigated will not be investigated further unless new evidence is produced to support such complaint.
12. We reserve the right to deviate or change our approach to complaints where the CEO or Trustees believe appropriate having regard to the complaint, the resources and time required and given the size of Southern Advocacy Services which is a not for profit organisation.

**Southern Advocacy Services complaints procedure will be available to organisations and individuals who use its services.**

\* If a complaint relates to the CEO, an alternative person will be allocated. This person will be a nominated Trustee of Southern Advocacy Services.

**This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:**

- Complaints Checklist

**Review date: April 2020**