Feedback and complaints policy

History	Adopted	Last review	Next review
	Jan 2017	September 2026	September 2028
Approval authority	CEO		
Responsible office	Business Development		

An easy read version of this policy is available. Ask any member of staff or find it on the website http://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/contact/

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1. Policy statement

Reason for policy:

To outline how we will respond to both compliments and concerns in a timely, appropriate and fair manner. This policy sets the standards we will uphold for all complaints, whether they are justified or not.

Who should read this policy

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and third-party organisations who act on our behalf.

2. Definitions

Feedback

Feedback can be positive and negative. It may highlight areas of improvement but is not an expression of dissatisfaction. Feedback should be acknowledged, considered and recorded.

Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, regarding the standard of service, actions or inaction, policy or position of The Advocacy Project staff, volunteers or organisations working on our behalf from a member of the public.

Fundraising

Complaints or feedback regarding our fundraising practice should be sent directly to comms@advocacyproject.org.uk .

3. Why is your feedback important?

We are committed to delivering a high standard of service and we want to make sure that you are satisfied with anything that we do and the services that we provide. We love to hear when things have gone right, but also want to know if things have not gone so well so that we can ensure we can improve and to them better next time. This is why we welcome all feedback, whether positive or negative.

We take all comments and complaints seriously and aim to resolve your concerns in a timely manner and learn from our mistakes to improve.

We are committed to accessible and alternative communication to facilitate people to provide feedback.

We're happy to accept your complaint or comments in the best way for you to communicate. This could be through speech, written or by using a communication tool such as talking mats. Please let us know and we will support you with this.

4. Telling us that we've done something well

We value our staff and it is important that they know when they are doing a good job or have exceeded expectations. We use compliments to build on success and continue to provide excellent levels of service.

We will acknowledge your compliment within 3 working days of receipt. Details will be passed to the relevant manager who will ensure that the team or staff member receives your thanks.

5. Telling us if you are unhappy about something we have done

Please let us know if you're unhappy with something that we have done or the service you have received. Making a complaint or raising your concerns will not affect your current or future service, you will continue to be treated fairly and sensitively.

You will receive a response from us about your complaint in 3 working days.

We welcome your feedback because it is used to help us improve.

We understand and respect that some people may need advice and support from an independent advocate or interpreter to make their complaint, to pursue it, to understand the process and the outcome.

Complaints should be made within 12 months of the eventualities that caused the problem, or the complainant realising there is a problem.

6. How you can make a complaint

Stage 1

We hope that most concerns can be settled easily and quickly by discussing the problem with the member of staff involved. If you tell them what is worrying you, they will try to find a solution, or advise you who the best person is to speak to.

You can make a complaint:

- Verbally
- In writing
- Through assisted communication

We will:

- Listen to you
- Think about what you've said
- Find out what happened
- Take action (as appropriate)

If you make your complaint verbally or by telephone, we will give you an accessible written record of your complaint and give you the opportunity to change it if required. This can be as written text or in easy read.

Stage 2

If your concerns cannot be immediately resolved or you are unhappy with the outcome, you can raise the issue with a manager. The manager will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days and will contact you within 7 working days.

If you make your complaint verbally or by telephone, we will give you an accessible written record of your complaint and give you the opportunity to change it if required.

The manager will:

- Listen to you
- Think about what you've said
- Find out what happened
- Take action (as appropriate)

They will contact you within 14 days to tell you what the outcome is and what action will be taken.

If we make a mistake, we will apologise and try to take some practical action to put things right.

We will ask you to suggest what you would like us to do.

Stage 3

If you remain unhappy with our response to your complaint, you can request that the complaint is escalated to stage 3.

This is where a senior manager who is independent from the service that you're complaining about looks at your complaint and reviews how the complaint was investigated to check that all relevant information has been considered.

We ask that you let us know that you want to move to stage 3 within 20 working days from the date you received the communication from the manager in stage 2.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days.

In order for us to consider your request, you will need to explain why you are still unhappy and what you would like to happen to put things right.

The senior manager will:

- Listen to you
- Think about what you've said
- Find out what happened
- Take action (as appropriate

We will aim to do this within 20 working days. A complex case may take longer, but we will keep you informed of progress and likely timescales.

Stage 4: Appeal

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint after stage 3, you have the right to escalate your complaint for a final review to The Advocacy Project's Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board if the complaint is about the Chief Executiv

The outcome of Stage 4 review is final. e.

We will let you know the outcome of the review in a timely manner and in a way that best suits you

7. Ways to give feedback to The Advocacy Project

You can contact us on:

Email HR@advocacyproject.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8969 3000

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to speak to us.

You can make a complaint using these forms:

- Easy Read form
- Feedback form

You can make a complaint in these alternative formats:

- By telephone
- Letter
- Email
- Audio tape or CD
- Braille

If you need help to complain, we can make sure you have support from:

- A British sign language interpreter
- A Makaton communicator
- An independent advocate

If you need another form of communication, please let us know.

All information we gather as part of the complaints process is covered under the data protection act and we will keep your information safe.

8. Making a formal complaint about The Advocacy Project to a Government department

In certain circumstances, you may be able to complain about us to the Charity Commission. More information about the sorts of issues that the Charity Commission would consider is provided on their website: www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome and are complaining about a service that is funded by a Local Authority or the NHS, you can complain to the Commissioner of that service. We will explain to you in the response to your appeal.

Lessons learnt

We strive to improve from our mistakes and to actively listen to our beneficiaries.

We will conduct quarterly reviews to analyse the root cause of complaints and feedback for reoccurring themes or trends which may highlight areas of improvement. We will report this data to the board quarterly.

Appendix 1


Incident
12
Raise the complaints within 12 months of the incident
STAGE 1
We will respond to you within 3 working days
3
STAGE 2
We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days
3
We will contact you within 7 working days
7
We will respond to you within 14 working days.
14
Please tell us you want to move to stage 3 within 20 working days of the Stage 2 response.
20
STAGE 3
We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days
3
We will respond to your complaint within 20 working days
20
STAGE 4 APPEAL
You will receive a response to your complaint in a timely manner
Close complaint