

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

As required by the Management Committee, The Advice Centre has established this procedure for dealing with complaints from clients, so that we can resolve as many as possible within the centre.

Some of the complaints against the Centre will be well founded. We all make mistakes and so the best approach is one of honesty and realism when problems arise. Complaints must be dealt with sympathetically and quickly. Our reputation depends on this, as it is all part of our "Quality Service".

In the absence of the Chairperson, another Committee Member will be delegated to deputise and may also substitute in the procedure set out below in appropriate circumstances.

The Advice Centre will assign a Complaints Officer to oversee the process. As of January 2026 this is Sandra Mayo.

### Procedure

- Employees must alert their line manager if a client has made it known that they are unhappy with the service regardless of whether they state that they want to make a formal complaint.
- If client wishes to make informal complaint, Complaints Officer should be asked to contact client and complete the 'Informal Complaint Form' . Complaints Officer will aim to resolve before becoming formal complaint.
- If client wishes to make a formal complaint they should be asked to complete the Complaint Form and return either by email to [Sandra.mayo@stannsadvice.org.uk](mailto:Sandra.mayo@stannsadvice.org.uk), or in person/by post to the Advice Centre, addressed to the Complaints Officer.

### Formal Complaint – Stage 1

- The Complaints Officer is responsible for entering the complaint in the Central Register.
- The Complaints Officer will contact the client to acknowledge receipt of complaint and establish if they wish to meet in person to discuss further or discuss over the telephone.
- The Complaints Officer should keep a record of the conversation on client's complaint form.
- The Complaints Officer will endeavour to resolve the matter and will confirm in writing the details of any conversation and agreed outcomes.
- Stage 1 should be completed within 7 working days of receiving the complaint.

### Formal Complaint - Stage 2

- If the matter could not be resolved at Stage 1, the Complaints Officer will detail in writing, actions agreed with the client.
- The Advice Centre will carry out investigations in order to implement the actions and outcomes agreed with the client.
- The Complaints Officer will record on the Central File the actions agreed. A copy of the written response to the client will also be kept with the Central File.
- If this response is not accepted by the complainant the matter will be passed to the Management Committee.

### Formal Complaint - Stage 3

- Where the matter is not resolved by Stage 2, the Complaints Officer will advise the Centre Manager that the complaint needs to be referred to the Chair of the Management Committee. All copies of correspondence will be provided.
- The Complainant will be informed immediately by the Complaints Officer that the above action is taking place, and that the Chair of Management Committee will also be contacting any employee against whom the complaint is made.
- The Chair will review the decision made at Stage 2 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.
- The Chair will notify the Management Committee of their reason and decision within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint.
- The Chair will write to the complainant with their decision

The Management Committee decision will be final.

The Complaints Officer is responsible for ensuring all correspondence is filed with original complaint form on the Central Register.

### Corrective Action

Following a substantiated complaint, corrective action will be taken. The circumstances vary considerably, and the action required must be appropriate to the relevant facts. Any action taken relating to an individual staff member will be through the Advice Centre's disciplinary procedure.

The Complaints Officer will provide an annual report to the Management Committee on complaints received during that year.

If the unresolved complaint relates to a debt or financial matter and falls within the jurisdiction of the Financial Ombudsman Service, the complainant will be notified in writing the processes of taking their matter further with the financial ombudsman service.

