

Complaints Procedure

Introduction and Principles

As part of its commitment to ensuring the standard and quality of its service and facilities, ASDFH has established this procedure to deal with complaints from clients. Complaints provide useful feedback information from clients and, where appropriate, will be used to improve services and facilities.

The Procedure comprises of a number of stages, both informal and formal. Clients who have a complaint to make should raise it directly with the staff concerned at the earliest opportunity, as matters that are dealt with informally at an early stage have the best chance of being resolved effectively.

Only where the informal procedures have been completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied should the formal stage be instigated.

There may be occasions where an informal approach is not appropriate, and the client may wish to proceed directly to a later stage in the procedure, giving reasons for doing so. In such situations, the recipient of the complaint should decide at which stage in the procedure the complaint should most appropriately be considered, taking account of its particular nature and circumstances.

In respect of particularly serious complaints, the client may write directly to the Charity Manager without having followed the informal and formal stages of this procedure set out below. In such cases, the Charity Manager shall decide whether to refer the complaint for consideration by a The Committee or whether it should more appropriately be referred to an earlier stage in the procedure.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible and in any case within eight weeks, of the events or actions (or lack of actions) which have prompted the complaint. ASDFH will not normally consider complaints made after this period, unless there is good reason for the delay.

Every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly and objectively and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily.

Complaints will be dealt with positively and constructively. If a complaint is upheld ASDFH will seek to provide an appropriate response and will correct any mistakes or misunderstandings and will take any other action as appropriate. If a complaint is not upheld then reasons for that decision will be given.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that enquiries will have to be made to investigate the matters that are the subject of the complaint. An individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint and to comment on it. If this presents a problem for a client who wishes their complaint to be given complete confidentiality, he or she is advised to discuss how the complaint might be addressed with an appropriate officer.

ASDFH will treat all complaints seriously and will deal with them without recrimination. The effectiveness of any complaints procedure depends on ASDFH being able to collect appropriate information from the parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For

this reason, anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure. It is at the discretion of the member of staff receiving an anonymous complaint to determine how the matter is handled.

The time limits set out in this procedure will normally be followed. However, where, for good reason, this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

Clients seeking help in using this procedure, or if they are uncertain as to whom their complaint should be referred, should seek advice from the Charity Manager.

Most complaints can be resolved informally and where practicable a complaint should be dealt with as close as possible to the point at which it arises. The complaint should therefore be made initially to the appropriate member of staff who seems best placed to deal with the matter. A Client should normally expect to receive a written or verbal acknowledgement within five working days and a full response within fifteen working days of receipt of the complaint.

Formal Procedure

If the client is not satisfied with the response at the informal stage, he or she may initiate a formal complaint by completing a Formal Complaint Form and submitting it to the Charity Manager.

Copies of the Formal Complaint Form may be obtained from the Charity Manager or taken from the end of this document.

The information to be given on the Formal Complaint Form is as follows:

- (a) Details of the complaint
- (b) A statement of the steps already taken to try to resolve the complaint informally and why the response has not been considered to be satisfactory
- (c) The form of resolution or redress sought

The Charity Manager will acknowledge receipt of the Form within five working days and will determine whether the complaint should be dealt with by the Charity Manager, or whether the complaint should more appropriately be investigated by the Activities Coordinator or Activity Leader. In the event that the complaint is referred to the Activity Coordinator or Activity Leader, the Client will be informed accordingly.

The person dealing with the formal complaint must be independent of the source of the complaint and will attempt resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstances. This may include:

- (a) Correspondence between the parties
- (b) Negotiation with the client or with appropriate members of staff or with both
- (c) Facilitation of a conciliation meeting between the client and the staff concerned
- (d) If both parties agree, referral for mediation.

If a meeting with the client takes place, the client may be accompanied by a supporter, or a member of staff.

It is expected that the formal procedure should normally be completed and a written response sent to the client within twenty working days of receipt of the completed Formal Complaint Form.

Informal Complaint Form

Stage One

- Please give as many details as possible including any dates, times and details of incident.
- Confidentiality might not be possible depending on the nature of the complaint.
- This in no way affects your position as an ASD Family Help client/user, volunteer, staff member or service provider.
- Please use extra paper as required.

Full name and address of person completing the form	
Telephone number Mobile number Email address	
Nature and details of complaint Details of your complaint, including dates of incidents or events if appropriate. Supply copies of any relevant documents. If you need more space, continue on separate sheets of paper and attach them.	
What would you like to see happen next?	

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this form is true.

Signed:

Date:

This complaint form should be returned to the Charity Manager, preferably by email, to contact@asdfamilyhelp.org

Formal Complaint Form

Stage Two

The completion and submission of this form initiates a formal Complaints Procedure.

You should only complete it if either (a) you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled informally or (b) you feel that the substance of the complaints is such that attempted informal resolution is inappropriate or (c) you feel the seriousness of your complaint is abuse.

The completed form should be submitted to the Charity Manager. If you want help or advice in making your complaint you can contact the Chair or the Charity Manager of ASD Family Help.

<p>Full name and address of person completing the form</p> <p>In the case of a group complaint, please attach details of all complainants on a separate sheet. We will usually correspond with one person in the group whose details should be given here.)</p>	
<p>Telephone number</p> <p>Mobile number</p> <p>Email address</p>	
<p>Nature and details of complaint</p> <p>Please set out the details of your complaint, including dates of incidents or events if appropriate. Supply copies of any relevant documents. If you need more space, please continue on separate sheets of paper and attach them to the form.</p>	

<p>Please explain what steps you have taken to resolve your complaint informally</p> <p>Attach copies of any relevant correspondence.</p>	
<p>Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received at the informal stage.</p>	
<p>What would you like to see happen next?</p> <p>Please indicate, without prejudice, what outcome or further action you are wanting in resolution of your complaint.</p>	

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this form is true.

Signed:

Date:

Note:

- The Charity Manager will acknowledge receipt of the Form within five working days and will determine whether the complaint should be dealt with by the Charity Manager, or whether the complaint should more appropriately be investigated by the Activities Coordinator or Activity Leader. In the event that the complaint is referred to the Activity Coordinator or Activity Leader, you will be informed accordingly.
- In order to investigate your complaint fully, any member of staff mentioned in the complaint will be made aware of the issues you have raised and will have an opportunity to comment on them.