**OCAY**

**OLDER CITIZENS ADVOCACY YORK**

The Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET

Registered Charity 1173795

**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Complaints should be viewed as a valuable response to the service OCAY offers. They can provide a measure of quality assurance and can help to improve the service. All complaints, whether verbal or written, are considered important – they should be taken seriously and responded to promptly.

OCAYs complaints procedure is for use by anyone who is a current, prospective or former partner of the service or has contact in any way with the service. There are two ways for complaints to be made – informally and formally.

**1: Informal**

* In the first instance issues should be taken up directly with the advocate or staff member concerned.
* In some cases, dissatisfaction can be resolved at the time by the person receiving the complaint.
* The Advocacy Manager should be kept informed of the issues and the action taken, and a record kept. This must be filed in the Complaints File held in the OCAY office.
* If a complaint cannot be resolved at the time, the complainant should be advised to take the matter up with the Advocacy Manager.
* A record should be kept of the issues and the action taken. This must be filed in the Complaints File held in the OCAY office.
* If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Advocacy Manager and/or if the complaint is about the Advocacy Manager, the complainant should be advised to make the complaint formally in writing using the procedure below.

**2: Formal**

* If the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, then the complaint should be made in writing and sent marked ‘confidential’ to the Advocacy Manager, unless the complaint concerns the Advocacy Manager in which case it should be sent to the Chair of OCAY. (Please see below)
* Formal complaints will be responded to with a letter of acknowledgement within three working days.
* An offer of an appointment to discuss the issue with the Advocacy Manager will be made, inviting the complainant to bring a friend or other representative with them to the meeting should they so wish.
* A full investigation of the complaint will be made by the Advocacy Manager, and a response made in writing as soon as possible and not later than four weeks from the time the complaint was made.
* Should the investigation of the complaint be of a nature which requires a longer period, a holding letter will be sent to the complainant explaining the reasons why.
* If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the Advocacy Manager, they may take the complaint to the Chair of OCAY who will follow the same procedures as outlined above.
* In the absence of the Advocacy Manager all complaints will be passed to the Chair of OCAY.

**3: Complaint Relating to the Advocacy or Operations Manager:**

If the complaint concerns the Advocacy or Operations Manager, then a full investigation of the complaint will be made by the Chair of OCAY, and a response made in writing as soon as possible and not later than four weeks from the time the complaint was made.

**3.1**: **General**

* All complaints are in confidence between the complainants and OCAY.
* This procedure must be referred to in OCAY publicity and directly to people using or wanting to use the services provided by OCAY.
* Complainants have the right at all stages to help and support that they need to progress their complaint. OCAY will actively encourage this at all stages of the complaints process and help if appropriate or advise the complainant of their right to independent support.