



## **Advantage Participant Complaint Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

We always aim to provide a high standard of care in all our services. Our customers' views are important to us and help to ensure our services are consistently meeting people's needs. If you are unhappy with any of our services it is important that you let us know.

If a complaint alerts us to possible abuse or neglect we will inform the Board. The Board will decide how to investigate, report as necessary to statutory agencies and will monitor outcomes.

### **2. Making a suggestion**

Often people feel more comfortable about suggesting improvements rather than complaining formally. Anyone receiving services, and their friends/ family, may make a suggestion.

First you should speak to the Project Manager or their Deputy.

If you prefer, you can make a suggestion in writing. If you have a suggestion that Advantage, as a company, needs to consider you can send it to:

The Director

Advantage, Sloefield Business Park, Sloefield drive, Carrickfergus. BT38 8GX

Or email: [info@advantage-ni.com](mailto:info@advantage-ni.com)

### **3. Making a complaint**

We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from investigating to help us improve the service we provide. We treat all complaints in confidence.

Advantage assures participants and their families that it will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

### **4. Who can complain**

Anyone affected by the way Advantage provides services can make a complaint.

A representative may complain for the affected person if they:

- have died
- cannot make a complaint themselves, or
- have given consent for the representative to act on their behalf

If you are not happy about making a complaint yourself and you do not know someone who can talk or write to us on your behalf, we will be happy to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you.

## **5. How you can make a complaint**

You can complain:

- in person
- by telephone
- through a member of our staff
- through an advocate or representative
- by letter
- by email

Where someone complains orally we will make a written record and provide a copy of it within 3 working days.

## **6. Anonymous complaints**

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure; however it is better if you can provide contact details so we can tell you the outcome of our investigation.

## **7. Responsibility**

The Director has overall responsibility for dealing with all complaints made about Advantage services.

We will provide as far as is reasonably practical:

- any help you need to understand the complaints procedure; or
- advice on where you may get that help.

## **8. How we handle complaints**

The Director may ask one of the management team to investigate the complaint. That person will have enough seniority and experience to deal with the issues raised by the complaint.

We will acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days and give you the name and contact details of the person investigating it.

We will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. We aim to have all complaints finished within 28 working days unless we agree a different time scale with you.

When we have finished investigating, we will arrange to meet with you to discuss the outcome, and write to you with:

- Details of the findings;
- Any action we have taken; and
- Our proposals to resolve your complaint.

## **9. Time limits**

You should complain as soon as you can after the date on which the event occurred or came to your notice. If you complain more than twelve months later, we may not be able to

investigate properly. But we shall also consider whether you had good reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

#### **10. Further steps**

At any stage during the process, if you are not happy with the way the service is dealing with your complaint you can contact the Director at:

Advantage, Sloefield Business Park, Sloefield drive, Carrickfergus. BT38 8GX  
Telephone 02893 356730

Once we have dealt with your complaint, if you are not happy with the outcome you can seek advice from an experienced advice worker, for example at a Citizens Advice Bureau, or the office of the relevant ombudsman on whether an ombudsman could take on a particular complaint.

You can find your nearest Citizens Advice Bureau here: [www.citizensadvice.co.uk/offices](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk/offices)

Or contact:

Citizens Advice Bureau  
46 Donegall Pass, Belfast, BT7 1BS  
028 9023 1120  
[info@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@citizensadvice.co.uk)

\*We can provide this policy in other languages or in other formats on request