

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

The Advice Centre hopes that everyone is happy with the service they receive. We strive to provide quality, fairness, and consistency to all our members. Should you believe that we have fallen short in our efforts, you can use this procedure to raise a complaint. Our Advice Centre Charter will offer guidance as to the service we offer. The Charter can be found on [The Advice Centre webpage](#).

This procedure is designed to provide a means to resolve a dispute between The Advice Centre and any complainant regarding the service received. Whilst you have an ongoing complaint regarding the service, you will not be able to receive support from The Advice Centre as this would present a conflict of interest. A complainant has the right to be accompanied by a third party throughout the complaint process. Your third-party support cannot be anyone from The Advice Centre or anyone mentioned within this document (Head of Advice and Lettings, Director of membership, or sabbatical officers) due to the conflict of interest, but can be anyone associated with the University (i.e. fellow University of Southampton student or tutor). All complaints will be recorded and kept on file and will be treated in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy of The Advice Centre. A copy of this Complaints Procedure will be displayed in The Advice Centre.

Stage 1

The complainant should email the Head of Advice and Lettings (sam@susu.org) to discuss the complaint. They will endeavour to resolve the matter at this stage and will invite the complainant to discuss the complaint. They will inform the complainant of the outcome by email within 5 working days of meeting the complainant. If the complainant remains dissatisfied or if the complaint is against the Head of Advice and Lettings, the procedure set out at Stage 2 will be followed.

Stage 2

The complainant will be asked to email their complaint to the Director of membership (sonia@susu.org), providing as much detail as possible. The Director of membership will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter at this stage. The complainant will receive a response from the Director of membership within 10 working days of the complaint being received. The response will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage the procedure set out at Stage 3 will be followed.

Stage 3

Where the matter is not resolved at Stage 2, the Director of membership will refer the complaint to the Union President, sending copies of all correspondence. If the President deems that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily, and that there are no grounds for further action, they will write to the complainant within 5 working days, summarising the procedure that has been followed and the action that has been taken and advising the complainant of their decision that no further action is warranted.

If the President deems that the complaint warrants further action, a Complaints Panel will be convened, comprising the President and two other Sabbatical Officers. The panel will review the decision made at Stage 2 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved. The Complaints Panel will notify the complainant of its decision and the reasons for that decision within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The Panel's decision will be final.

Contact Details

If you wish to make a complaint about The Advice Centre, please email the Head of Advice and Lettings, sam@susu.org.