

## COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Policy Statement**

Headway East London (“Headway”) believes that everyone who accesses our services or comes into contact with the organisation has the right to complain or comment on any aspect of that service or contact. We are committed to handling all complaints efficiently, fairly, and sensitively. In line with adult social care legislation, we offer a one stage formal complaints procedure.

#### **Purpose**

This policy aims to:

- a. Ensure there are clearly defined procedures for recognising and dealing with complaints, comments, or suggestions.
- b. Ensure that all complaints are dealt with efficiently, fairly, and sensitively and within clearly defined time limits.

#### **Scope**

This policy shall apply to all Headway members, clients, family members, supporters and the public who come into contact with Headway.

Any staff member or volunteer wishing to raise a complaint should follow the Headway Grievance Procedure.

### **What should I expect if I make a complaint?**

If you make a complaint, you can expect:

- your complaint to be thoroughly investigated
- your complaint to be dealt with in a timely manner
- to be kept informed of the progress of your complaint and if timelines need to change
- to be informed of the outcome of your complaint
- that action will be taken if necessary
- that organisational learning will be captured and implemented because of your complaint

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Complaints** shall be taken to include any form of dissatisfaction experienced as a result of Headway’s services. The complaint may be pursued by any of the procedures detailed below:

**Staff** shall include anyone employed by Headway and any other person(s) Who is working for Headway.



**Volunteers** shall include anyone who has been accepted as a volunteer through the volunteer recruitment process and who subsequently offers their time to Headway free of charge.

**Members** shall include survivors of brain injury accessing any Headway East London service.

**Family member** shall include anyone who is a relative or unpaid carer of a person with acquired brain injury.

**Supporter** shall include anyone who is on the supporter mailing list of Headway or who supports the organisation in any other way.

**Stakeholder** shall include any other person/body that has an interest in Headway e.g. a funder, community organisation.

**Services** shall include all support and services offered by Headway.

**Senior Manager** shall include any member of the Senior Management Team appointed to deal with the issue concerned.

**Resources** shall include any items used in the investigation or pursuit of a complaint. This shall include financial, time or staff resources.

## **PROCEDURE**

**At no time should anyone who is the subject of the complaint under consideration be involved in its investigation and adjudication, other than to provide witness evidence in relation to any allegations brought against them as and when requested.**

### **Informal Stage**

The informal stage intends to resolve the concern without a thorough investigation and uses a collaborative problem-solving approach to find a resolution without the issue developing into a formal complaint.

The informal process is appropriate when:

- The complainant requests the concern is dealt with informally
- The concern is not serious or complex
- A concern is raised and can be resolved before it develops into a formal complaint

Informal Complaint process:

1. Tell any member of staff your concern
2. They will offer you the chance to provide your concern in writing or, providing they are able to, they will write down what you say
3. The member of staff will share the concern with their manager as soon as reasonably possible, and they will work with you and the staff member to agree an action plan to resolve the issue within 5 working days of the concern being made
4. If you are not happy with the outcome you can raise a formal complaint

All frontline staff at Headway may be involved with the resolution of informal concerns.

Dealing with informal concerns may involve:

- A frontline staff member having a discussion with the person raising a concern to determine what their concern is and how best to resolve it

- This may involve:
  - Conveying to the person raising a concern that they and their concern is being taken seriously
  - Listening actively to the complainant's concerns and reiterating them to confirm they have been understood and recorded accurately
  - Asking questions about resolution of the issue for example asking, "what do you think would help?" or making suggestions as to how the concern may be best resolved for the complainant's consideration
  - Agreeing an action plan together
- If another person is involved or connected, it may be appropriate, if both agree, to bring people together to conciliate
- A written record of steps taken will be kept by the staff member dealing with the concern and a written summary will be provided to the complainant if it is deemed appropriate to do so.

### **Complaint Not Concluded**

It is hoped that the majority of concerns can be addressed via this informal process, but where a complainant is not satisfied with the result of the informal stage then the formal complaints process will be followed. The person will be provided with details of how to make a formal complaint and will be provided with assistance to set down the nature of their complaint in writing if needed.

### **Formal Complaints process**

1. A complaint can be made to any member of staff at Headway. You can either write it down to just tell the member of staff you want to make a complaint.
2. The staff member will provide any complaint directly to the Chief Executive Officer "CEO," or a member of the Senior Management Team if the CEO is not available.
3. You can make your complaint directly to [SMT@headwayeastlondon.org](mailto:SMT@headwayeastlondon.org).
4. Once it has been received, your complaint will be acknowledged in 3 working days.
5. The CEO will assign an Investigating Officer usually at the level of manager or above depending on the nature of the complaint.
6. The Investigating Officer will investigate the complaint and try to establish the facts. This may involve interviewing other people or checking records. A record of any interview will be checked and signed by the interviewee.
7. If independent advocacy or support is required by anyone involved in the complaints process, the Investigating Officer will ensure this is organised.
8. The investigation should be completed within 28 working days. If the investigation is going to take longer, a progress report will be provided to the complainant with a timescale for completion.



9. At the end of the investigation, the CEO will write to you with a formal response to your complaint including details of what has been found during the investigation.

### **Stage 2**

- If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you can take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

### **Data Protection**

All information will be processed and kept in line with Headways Data Protection Policy. Anonymous data will be used in monitoring reports to statutory funders.