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Complaints/ Concerns Policy

1. Policy Statement

Headway West Sussex believes that all service users and anyone who has contact with us have a right to expect that robust policies and procedures are in place for dealing with their concerns or complaints. All concerns and complaints will be dealt with professionally and taken seriously. We look upon them as opportunities to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.

We believe that anybody using, supporting or working within our organisation should always be given the opportunity to make a concern or complaint formal, especially if they feel that a concern or complaint made informally has not been taken seriously or has not been dealt with to a satisfactory conclusion.

We believe that a failure to listen to or acknowledge concerns or complaints might lead to an aggravation of problems, dissatisfaction and possible litigation. Most concerns and complaints if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be dealt with and resolved to the satisfaction of all.

3. Our Responsibilities

We are responsible for ensuring that

- all staff, volunteers and service users have access to and are aware of this policy
- safeguards are in place to protect the rights of the service user.
- staff and volunteers are aware of how to take a complaint forward.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all service users, staff, volunteers, and Trustees.

8. Procedure

Complaints and concerns policy Signed off: 01/08/2015 Review: 01/08/2018

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How to Complain

Service Users may need the assistance of an *independent advocate in order to take the complaint forward on their behalf.

[*Independent – if the complaint is concerning the conduct of Headway Staff or volunteers, they should not take on the role of independent advocate.]

Headway West Sussex would encourage any complainant to discuss their concerns informally in the first instance, such as discussing the problem with the people themselves or speaking with a senior staff member. This may resolve the issue and avoid going through a formal complaints process which can often be difficult and distressing.

Unfortunately dealing with a complaint informally may not always resolve the problem and a more formal approach is required.

In order for the complaint to be dealt with effectively, the complaint should be put in writing in the first instance to the Chair of Headway West Sussex marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'. This includes a complaint which is being made about a Trustee/Committee member.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 10 working days.

Following this, a more formal investigation into the complaint will take place. The formal investigation might involve interviewing the staff involved and the complainant [and advocate if applicable] if more information is required.

Headway will endeavour to resolve the complaint within 28 days [from the date of acknowledgement.]

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he / she may ask for the complaint to be dealt with by Headway UK.