

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Owner: *The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*
Relevant to: Service Users and Stakeholders (including Volunteers)

Office Use only:

Department Family:	**SLT Owner:**	**Approval/Re-approval Date:**	**Implementation Date:**	**Next Review Date:**
Governance	CEO	July 2026	01 January 2024	July 2029

New Policy or Substantive Policy Review

Version	Date	Policy Development Agreed by *(SLT Owner)*	Policy Development Author	Draft Policy Verified by	Policy Approval	Impact Assessment *(if applicable)*
V1	01 January 2024	CEO	RHB HR Manager	CEO	CEO	Completed

Rationale for new or substantive policy review	As part of the 2023 Review of all policies it was determined that the Complaints Policy and Procedure should be redrafted to create more defined stages and a more formal process to enable Headway to handle complaints.

Please make explicit if change/review relates to procedures, guidelines and associated documents only

Periodic Policy Review / Change History

Version	Date of Review / Revision	Description of Change	Reviewed By	Approved By *(SLT Owner)*
V2	March 2025	Inserted section six and added additional information in respect of transfer of data	RHB	RHB
V3	July 2026	Insertion of further clarity regarding complaints relating involving volunteers and regarding disclosure of evidence	RHB	LG

Communication

To be agreed by SLT Team

All Staff Email	x	Team Meetings	
Newsletter		External website	x

Contents Page

1. Policy Statement 3
2. Definitions 3
3. Principles 3
4. Scope and Limitations 4
5. Procedure 4

A. Stage One – Informal 5

B. Stage Two – Formal 5

C. Stage Three – Appeal 6

6. Support 6
7. Regulator Complaints 6
8. Data 7
9. Monitoring and Review 7
10. Supporting/Related Documents 7

Overview of the Complaints Procedure 8

1. Policy Statement

Headway – the brain injury association (Headway UK), is committed to providing members, organisations, individuals, volunteers, and funders with the best possible service. We want to know about concerns and resolve them quickly. This policy aims to ensure that you know how to make a complaint and that it will be dealt with fairly.

2. Definitions

YOU and **YOUR:** refer to the person making the complaint.

COMPLAINT: is a report to us that you are not satisfied with the Headway's services or goods.

SERVICE USERS: includes individuals that use Headway services, such as people directly impacted by brain injury, including survivors, their family members and carers, professionals accessing Headway support via the website, publications or helpline, or corporate and individual members of Headway UK.

STAKEHOLDER: includes volunteers, fundraisers, professionals, contractors, corporate partners, and others that come into contact with Headway.

3. Principles

The procedure aims to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved.

We will handle complaints sensitively.

The procedure is accessible to all regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation. Headway UK will not treat anyone less favourably for bringing a complaint in good faith.

Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the services that are offered to the complainant.

Complainants are treated with respect and courtesy and receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.

We will share information relating to a complaint only with those individuals who need to know in order to investigate, respond to, or resolve the matter. Individuals who are the subject of a complaint will normally be informed of the allegations or concerns relevant to them and given an opportunity to provide their account and respond to those concerns. Headway UK is not obliged to disclose the complaint in full and will only share information that is considered necessary to enable a fair investigation, taking into account confidentiality, the rights of third parties and data protection obligations.

Headway UK will make every effort to ensure that Headway staff observe the confidential nature of issues raised. People making complaints are also expected to

respect confidentiality. On rare occasions, Headway UK may not be able to keep all information confidential. We may need to tell someone to protect you or other people from harm. The investigator will tell you if they need to share the information with people outside of Headway UK.

Learnings from complaints will be used to improve Headway UK's work and drive forward a culture of continuous improvement.

Headway UK staff, volunteers, branch volunteers, and retail volunteers are expected to co-operate fully with any complaint investigation. This includes providing information, records, statements, and access to relevant people or activities where requested. Headway UK's volunteer-led branches and retail operations form part of Headway UK and are therefore required to support the organisation in establishing the facts and resolving complaints fairly, thoroughly and without unnecessary delay.

4. Scope and Limitations

This policy applies to all who use and are impacted by Headway UK and its services, except:

- Staff: Complaints from staff should be raised via the Grievance Policy.

- Complaints relating to autonomous local Headway charities: Headway recognises that it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish between Headway UK and the work of autonomous local Headway charities that are affiliated to Headway UK. Local Headway charities (groups) are independent registered charities, so if your complaint is regarding your local Headway, you should contact the charity directly to explain that you wish to make a complaint and therefore would like to receive a copy of their own complaints procedure. You can find their details at Groups and branches | Headway

For the avoidance of doubt, Headway UK retail stores and Headway UK volunteer-led branches operate as part of Headway UK. Where a complaint relates to these services, staff and volunteers are required to support Headway UK in investigating the complaint, including by providing information and participating in meetings where reasonably requested.

5. Procedure

If your complaint is about Headway UK, including issues relating to our chain of retail stores or our network of volunteer-led branches, there are three stages below that can be used to try and resolve the problem.

If a complaint is about the CEO then it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, marked private and confidential, and sent to chair@headway.org.uk.

A. Stage One – Informal

Most problems are straightforward and can be resolved quickly.

You should speak to or email the staff member, or their line manager if known, as soon as possible when a problem arises. Staff will try to work with you to find a solution quickly and let you know what they can do to resolve the issue.

If you do not know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email complaints@headway.org.uk .

In order for us to help you resolve the issue, please ensure that you provide as much information as possible regarding your complaint.

You should receive a response usually within 10 working days. If you are not satisfied with the response you should continue to follow the procedure outlined below to make a formal complaint.

B. Stage Two – Formal

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage One, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage Two, either through your contact at Stage One, or directly when raising your complaint.

To complain formally you should email complaints@headway.org.uk or in writing FAO Complaints, Headway – the brain injury association, Bradbury House, 190 Bagnall Road, Old Basford, Nottingham, NG6 8SF.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within two working days.

An appropriate manager will be assigned to investigate your complaint.

Once we have completed our investigation, you will receive a written response.

We aim to respond no later than 20 working days from the date of acknowledgement. The investigator will keep you informed. It can take longer to investigate complex matters. The investigator will let you know if the investigation will take longer than 20 days.

If your complaint is upheld, the investigator will let you know the outcome and what action we will take, if any.

Where the complaint is not upheld, the investigator will let you know the reasons for this and how you may appeal.

C. Stage Three – Appeal

If you are not satisfied, with the Headway UK's response, you have the right to an appeal.

To make an appeal you should write to the relevant department Manager/Director as detailed in the complaint outcome letter.

The letter should be sent within30 days of the date of you receiving your outcome letter. You should include your full reasons for your appeal. If as a reasonable adjustment for a disability, you require an extension to this time frame then please raise this with the relevant department Manager/Director as detailed in the complaint outcome letter.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your appeal within five working days.

This will be the final decision of the complaints process and will ensure that the Appeal Manager has reviewed the investigation and made any further enquiries.

We aim to respond no later than 20 working days from the date of acknowledgement. The Appeal Manager will keep you informed throughout the appeal in particular if this will take longer than 20 days.

6. Support

You may also find the following as helpful resources and forms of support in relation to your complaint;

- Citizens advice Citizens Advice
- If you are complaining about in person services in Northern Ireland, the Patient and Client Counsel www.pcc-ni.net

7. Regulator Complaints

If you are not happy with the way in which Headway UK has handled your complaint, you can contact the relevant regulator.

If your complaint relates to a fundraising matter and you are dissatisfied with Headway UK's response to your complaint you can contact the Fundraising Regulator https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/ to access its independent complaints procedure.

Alternatively, you can contact the Charity Commission. Further guidance on when and how to make a complaint about a charity is available at www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity.

If your complaint is in relation to in person services provided within Northern Ireland you may refer the matter to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, details of which are available at Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman | NIPSO .

8. Data

All complaints will be logged on Headway UK's CRM system in order to track and monitor complaints. Your data will be held in line with our Data Retention Policy.

We may on occasion need to share your details of your complaint, including your personal data, with other organisations. Where this is the case, this will be discussed with you and your consent obtained.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

10. Supporting/Related Documents

The Grievance Policy provides details on what staff members can do if they have issues at work/ complaints.

Overview of the Complaints Procedure

Stage One - Informal

Speak to or email the staff member, or their line manager if known, as soon as possible when a problem arises. Where your complaint is against a Headway Branch you should speak to the lead volunteer and/ornetwork coordinator for Headway UK

They will try to work with you to find a solution quickly and let you know what they can do to resolve the issue.

You should receive a response usually within 10 working days

Stage Two - Formal

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage One, or you prefer your complaint to be formally investigated it can be escalated to Stage Two.

You should receive a response usually within 20 working days

Stage 3 - Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the response from Stage Two you can appeal the decision.

You should receive a response usually within 20 working days.

This exhausts Headway UK's internal complaints process.