

Complaints Policy

Purpose	This policy sets out Headway Tyneside’s approach to complaints about any of our functions, activities or services.
Scope	Headway Tyneside Trustees, Staff & Volunteers
Approver	Trustee Board
Last Approval Date	13 th December 2023
Review Cycle	At least every 3 years
Next Review	By December 2026 at latest

1. Purpose

Headway Tyneside is committed to providing high quality services that improve the lives of people with Acquired Brain Injuries, and their families/carers. We realise that sometimes things will go wrong, or that not everyone will agree with what we do and we are committed to listening and responding to all feedback received.

A complaint is dissatisfaction with a service received, or a claim that we have failed to meet expected standards, relevant Codes of Practice, laws or regulations. Complaints will always be recorded, may require an investigation and will always receive a formal response.

This policy applies to anyone who comes into contact with Headway Tyneside and wishes to complain about their experience and/or our performance.

2. Principles

Everyone should feel able to let us know when we haven’t met expectations and submit a complaint if necessary. The principles underlying this policy are to ensure that:

- Our complaints procedure is transparent and visible;
- It is easy to contact us and make a complaint;
- Complaints are investigated and responded to in a timely manner;
- Everyone involved in the process is treated with respect, courtesy and fairness;
- We learn from complaints to improve our services and processes.

We will not tolerate threatening, abusive or unreasonable behaviour by any complainant. If such behaviour persists, we will cease communication with them immediately. If behaviour is so extreme it threatens the safety and welfare of others, we will consider reporting the matter to the police.

3. Responsibilities

All Trustees, Staff & Volunteers

To listen to & review all feedback, including formal complaints and see it as a potential opportunity to learn and improve what we do.

Trustee Board

To investigate formal complaints and provide a response in a timely manner.

4. Complaints Procedure

Anyone with a concern about our services is encouraged to raise it with the individual/team providing that service in the first instance, if they feel able to do so. Issues can often be put right quickly and simply.

If they do not feel able to raise a concern with the team involved, and/or if they wish to submit a formal complaint, then the individual should contact the trustees via the address at the head of this policy, or via email to chair@headwaytyneside.com. Headway Tyneside staff and volunteers may also suggest an individual raises a formal complaint.

When a complaint is submitted, it should state:

- A brief summary of what happened;
- When and where it happened;
- Who was involved;
- The outcome the complainant would like to see;
- The complainant's name, and details of the best way to contact them.

Headway Tyneside will contact the complainant within 7 days to confirm receipt, and to give them the name of the trustee/s who will lead any investigation and provide a formal response.

It may be necessary for the appointed trustee/s to contact the complainant for further information as part of that investigation.

Headway Tyneside will provide a full response to any complaint as soon as possible, and ideally within 1 month.

All complaints will be treated with an appropriate degree of confidentiality, with names and information only shared as necessary to assist in understanding what has happened and to respond.

The trustee/s appointed to conduct the investigation will generally not be/include the Chair, so that the Chair is available for any subsequent appeal by the complainant.

If a complainant wishes to refer their complaint to an external regulator (eg. the Charity Commission, Fundraising Regulator or Information Commissioner's Office), they are entitled to do so. Generally, an external regulator will expect a complainant to have followed Headway Tyneside internal process first to try to resolve the issue.

5. Record Keeping

Records of complaints received and the responses provided will be held and retained on Headway Tyneside's internal Microsoft Office Sharepoint for 7 years.

Depending on the number of complaints received, the Trustee Board will review the records for trends at least annually.

Headway Tyneside will comply with the reporting requirements of the Charity Commission.

Data Protection: When an individual makes a complaint, Headway Tyneside will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Such data will be utilised only for the purposes of dealing with the complaint, and any related compliance and legal purposes.