



HEAR US CROYDON

Croydon's Mental Health Service Users Group

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Hear Us

QUALITY MANUAL



Section G Commitment to Quality

G1.1 Complaints Procedure

AGREED DATE:	17/02/2021
LAST DATE OF REVIEW:	14/06/2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	14/06/2025
VERSION #:	V11



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A) INTRODUCTION

This procedure is principally concerned with complaints made against Hear Us staff, trustees or volunteers. There will be occasions when it will be appropriate to use this procedure to provide a framework for an investigation of a dispute or machinery for an appeal.

B) PRINCIPLES

1. The opportunity to make a complaint or grievance is an essential right for all those who use the services provided by Hear Us. Complaints can be a valuable way of evaluating and improving our services and of ensuring they are responsive to the needs and preferences of users.
2. Hear Us's complaints procedure is intended to be speedy, effective and easily understandable. To ensure fairness, any investigation required, will be carried out by someone who was not directly involved with the incident relating to the complaint.
3. Hear Us recognizes that making a complaint can be difficult and stressful for the person making the complaint. Appropriate assistance will be offered to the complainant. At any stage, a complainant may seek the help of an independent advocate and Hear Us will provide information on this on request.
4. A complaint can also be stressful for a person against whom a complaint is made and that person may also need assistance and support. Any member of staff or volunteer against whom a complaint is made will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms.
5. Every effort will be made to try and resolve any problem as soon as possible with the person concerned. If it is necessary to take the matter further, it will be done in line with the procedure described below.
6. Some complaints have or may have financial or legal consequences for Hear Us. In such cases, its insurers require Hear Us to cease direct contact with the complainant. It may then be necessary in the interests of the complainant to refer them to another agency both for assistance with the complaint and to ensure that their service needs are met.



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7. This procedure for handling complaints may have financial or legal consequences for Hear Us.
8. Hear Us will respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and any person complained about, subject to the provisions of Hear Us's Confidentiality Policy. This states that, if a complaint is to be properly investigated and action taken as a result of the complaint, it may not always be possible to avoid a breach of confidentiality. The permission of the complainant will be sought for this but, when the welfare of the complainant or other people is seriously at risk, it may be necessary to breach confidentiality even if that permission is withheld.
9. The outcome of all complaints and investigations will be reported in confidence to the Board of Directors and in writing to the complainant. A report on Complaints will also be made available to funders of Hear Us's services as part of the evaluation of these services.
10. This Procedure should be read in conjunction with Hear Us's Confidentiality Policy and Harassment Policy, and with the complaints procedures for the particular project concerned in the complaint.
11. Hear Us will make efforts to ensure that every user of its services is aware that this procedure exists. The procedure is described below. Copies of this policy and procedure will be available on request at all Hear Us projects.

C) PROCEDURE

1. 1st Stage: informal discussion with the person concerned. The Project Manager may be asked to help to resolve the complaint informally.
2. 2nd Stage: a formal complaint in writing should be sent as follows:
 - Complaint against a member of staff or volunteer: to the Chief Executive
 - Complaint against the Chief Executive: to the Chair
 - Complaint against a trustee: to the Chair
 - Complaint against the Chair: to the Chief Executive, for the attention of the trustees



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The person who receives the complaint will carry out an investigation, or, where appropriate, appoint someone else to do so. The investigator will report the results in writing within four weeks to the complainant and the relevant members of staff.

If the complainant or the person about whom the complaint is made is unhappy with the results of this they can then ask for the complaint to be referred to the 3rd Stage. This request should be made in writing to the Chair of Hear Us at Orchard House, 15a Purley Road, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6EZ within 28 days of the date of the letter giving the investigator's results. After this date, the matter will be considered closed.

3. **3rd Stage:** On receiving the complaint the Chair will consult with another trustee to decide whether the complaint should proceed to this level. If they decide it should not, the Chair will write to the complainant explaining why. If they deem that it should, the Chair will set up a panel to consider the complaint. The panel will generally consist of three people, one of whom will be a service user. These will usually all be trustees, but the Chair may replace one or more of the trustees with people independent of Hear Us if appropriate. The panel will aim to meet within 28 days, although this may take longer in complicated cases.
4. The panel will invite to the meeting the complainant and the person or persons against whom the complaint has been made. Any such person may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter, or by an independent advocate.
5. The panel will report their decision and any recommendations in writing to the complainant and to any persons against whom the complaint was made within 21 days. The decision of the Panel will be final.

D) COMPLIANCE WITH INSURANCE

- 1 This complaints procedure takes into account the specific requirements of our professional indemnity insurance policy.



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Version Control

Version #	Author	Date	Version Notes
V6	T Oldham	12/08/2022	Review Completed
V8	T Oldham	14/04/2023	New Revision – annual review
V9	T Oldham	14/04/2024	Annual review
V10	E Yates	13/06/2024	Add G.1.1 AQS requirement for compliance with insurance.
V11	T Oldham	14/06/2024	Annual review
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