

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

New Pathways is committed to providing the highest level of service in all of its work across all projects and with clients, external agency partners and member of the public. New Pathways welcomes opportunities to resolve any concerns informally, however it also recognises its obligation to provide clear guidelines about formal complaints and how they should be made. Complaints give us an opportunity to improve our services, procedures and governance. New Pathways will monitor the nature of complaints, and the outcomes of investigations, in order to improve the quality of our service provision.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to make clear how any individual wishing to make a formal complaint about New Pathways should proceed. This procedure also makes clear how New Pathways will respond to any formal complaint.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to any individual, other than a member of New Pathways staff or volunteer, who wishes to complain about any aspect of New Pathways' work or actions.

### **COMPLAINTS FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC**

New Pathways aims to develop successful partnerships with external agencies and members of the public. If any member of the public wishes to raise a complaint about any aspect of New Pathways' services or conduct they should follow the guidelines contained within this procedure. New Pathways will respond to all complaints in a fair and confidential manner.

### **COMPLAINTS FROM A NEW PATHWAYS CLIENT**

New Pathways is committed to providing the highest quality of service to all our clients. If a client is not satisfied with the quality of service provided, they have the right to complain and should follow the guidelines contained within this procedure.

We will respond to all complaints promptly in a fair and confidential manner. However, there may be occasions where New Pathways may be required to disclose the details of a complaint to a third party. Complainants will be advised where this is necessary.

We will ensure that no client will, in any way, be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint.

## **PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

Any complaint should be made within three months of an issue arising.

The complaint should be raised, in the first instance, with the member of staff involved. The member of staff should inform the Deputy Chief Executive of the complaint.

If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily a formal complaint may be made. This can be in writing or by email and should be addressed to the Deputy Chief Executive. The complainant should supply a name and address for all communication and must provide full details of the nature of the complaint.

The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of the formal complaint within five days of it being received by the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Deputy Chief Executive will investigate the complaint and report findings within 15 working days or request an extension to this period, providing an explanation of why this is necessary. Where an investigation extends beyond 20 working days, the Deputy Chief Executive will inform the complainant, in writing, of the expected completion date.

Further to producing the report, the Deputy Chief Executive will respond to the client within a further five working days and will indicate what action has been taken, or is proposed, to resolve the complaint. Alternatively, if the complaint is not upheld, the reasons for that decision will be fully explained.

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision by writing to the Chief Executive. The appeal must be lodged, in writing, no later than 10 working days after the initial outcome has been received.

The complainant will receive an acknowledgement of the appeal within five working days of it being received by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will investigate the appeal and will inform the complainant of the outcome of the appeal within twenty working days from the date of acknowledgement.

Where an appeal extends beyond twenty working days, the Chief Executive will inform the complainant, in writing, of the expected completion date.


**The decision of the Chief Executive is final and binding.**

If the complaint involves either the Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Executive the formal complaint may be made, in writing, to the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. All other timescales indicated in these procedures will remain the same.

Any subsequent appeal should be lodged with the Chairperson of the Board. In these circumstances the decision of the Chairperson is final and binding.

In all cases the documentary evidence gathered and stored will remain confidential to those involved.

This procedure will be reviewed in line with the Process for the Revision of New Pathways' Policies and Procedures.

Approved by:	Date of approval:	Review date:
	25/3/2021	25/3/2024