



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

### **Introduction**

We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that we can sometimes get things wrong, despite our best intentions.

MINDHEART Creative Therapies C.I.C. views a complaint as an opportunity, as well as a chance, to put things right for the person making the complaint and to improve the service that MINDHEART offers. We would not be able to do so or learn for the future if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. Therefore, we value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to a formal investigation or legal proceedings. We will try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the person making the complaint to agree on an outcome which is satisfactory to them and MINDHEART.

Whether your complaint is justified or not, our reply will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, conclusions we have reached because of the investigation, and any action we have taken or are taking as a result of your complaint.

We will ensure that all information received and produced in connection with a complaint is treated as confidential and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that relevant data protection requirements are all met.

The information below sets out our Complaints Procedure.

### **Complaint**

A 'complaint' in this Procedure means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to MINDHEART that requires a response from us.

### **Where complaints may come from**

Complaints may come from users of MINDHEART's services and members of the local community, or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in MINDHEART.

### **Complaints which cannot be dealt with under this Procedure**

This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from staff or volunteers.

Whilst complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from MINDHEART; it will not deal with complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of the Board of Directors that they amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints or challenges.

MINDHEART expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

## **How to make a complaint**

### First Stage

If you have a complaint, you can contact us in person or by phone, email, or letter.

To help us investigate and address all complaints, we ask you to provide us with as much information as possible.

This should cover:

- The nature of your complaint
- Where and when what you are complaining about happened
- The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)
- What outcome you are hoping for (but we are not obliged to resolve the complaint in that way)
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address)

Who you should contact within MINDHEART will depend on how you decide to make contact and who you wish to make a complaint about. We have indicated below who you can contact.

### **Verbal complaints**

You can make a complaint by telephone or by speaking to us in person in any of the following ways, during office hours.

If your complaint is about any member of staff or volunteer, you can send an email to [complaints@mindheartcreativetherapies.org](mailto:complaints@mindheartcreativetherapies.org) and ask to speak to a Managing Director. They will either speak to you about the complaint, or if they are not the appropriate person to do so, arrange for the appropriate person to speak to you on the phone. Alternatively, you can speak (or arrange to speak) in person to the appropriate person about your complaint.

If you do not feel that you can approach any of the above verbally for any reason, you can instead write to us as follows.

### **Complaints in writing**

If you would prefer to write to us, please send your complaint to us as follows:

*Either* by letter addressed as follows: MINDHEART Creative Therapies C.I.C., 7 Bell Yard, London, WC2A 2JR.

*or* by email to [complaints@mindheartcreativetherapies.org](mailto:complaints@mindheartcreativetherapies.org)

Once MINDHEART has initially received your complaint, we will normally deal with it as follows:

Who the complaint is about - Who will investigate, deal with, and respond to you

Any member of the team (apart from Nicola Thorp) ☐ Yolanda Calzado Gil

Any member of the team (apart from Yolanda Calzado Gil) ☐ Nicola Thorp

Any member of the team (apart from Nicola Thorp and Yolanda Calzado Gil) ☐ Nick Cramp

### **Timescales for all First Stage complaints made by phone, in person or in writing.**

MINDHEART will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible but if we cannot do this (for example, if we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within the following timescale:

- By phone or in person, either immediately or on the same day if you phone us or contact us in person

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- By email, within 72 hours if you contact us by email
- By letter, within five working days if you contact us by letter

Our acknowledgement will inform you of when we will next contact you either with a proposed resolution or update. It will also inform you of the person's name dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and deal with it and respond to you with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent indicating when a full reply will be given.

### Second stage

If for any reason, you are not happy with the resolution of your complaint under the First Stage procedure outlined above, you can bring this to our attention as follows.

Please address a further letter/email to us setting out clearly the complaint details, explaining why you were not satisfied with our response under the First Stage and what you would like us to do to put things right.

### Third stage

Please address a further letter/email to us indicating that you would like to escalate the matter further. MINDHEART will reply with the appropriate escalation route depending on the nature of the complaint (e.g., Community Interest Company Regulator).

### **Follow up**

For us to make improvements to MINDHEART and its services, we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will only be used to improve MINDHEART and its services.

### **Taking your complaint outside MINDHEART Creative Therapies C.I.C.**

#### **Other Authorities**

- If you believe there is criminal activity within MINDHEART, you should inform the police
- If you suspect fraud connected to MINDHEART, you should report it using the Action Fraud Online Reporting Service at [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or call 0300 123 2040
- If you have information about possible terrorist activity connected to MINDHEART
- If a complaint relates to your personal data, it may be appropriate to contact the Office of the Information Commissioner.

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Next Review: April 2025