



## **Complaints Policy and Escalation Policy (DRAFT)**

### **Purpose**

We regard a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about our organization, our staff, our volunteers, our partners, our contracted service providers or anyone else acting on our behalf. Every attempt should be made to resolve issues, problems, or misunderstandings directly between the affected people.

An online form will be available for accepting complaints. In addition, a complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

### **Our Intention**

To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint; to publicize the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint; to make sure everyone within the organization knows what to do if a complaint is received; to make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way; to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired; to gather information which helps us to improve what we do. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **Procedure**

Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account through complaint form found in the footer of the Pathway To Hope website ([www.pathwaytohope.org](http://www.pathwaytohope.org)) so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words. When that is not possible, the person who receives a complaint should: Write down the facts of the complaint, take the complainant's name, email address and telephone number, note down the relationship of the complainant to Pathway To Hope, share the complaints procedure, tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.

## Resolving Complaints

**Stage One** The complaint will be formally acknowledged within 48 hours to complainant and will be forwarded to our Executive Director within 2 working days. An acknowledgement will confirm who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint procedure will be attached. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they should try to do so if possible and appropriate. If it has not already been resolved, an appropriate person (typically the Executive Director) will investigate and take appropriate action within 5 working days. We may ask the member of staff who dealt with the complainant to reply to the complaint. You may be asked to meet the complainant to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This will be done within 5 days of the end of our investigation. Within 2 days of that meeting we will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and any solutions agreed with you. If they do not want a meeting or it is not possible, we will send a detailed reply to the complaint. This will include suggestions for resolving the matter. This will be done within 5 days of completing our investigation.

## Escalation Process

**Stage Two** If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the Executive Director will open a formal Grievance within 48 hours of receiving the request. The acknowledgement will confirm who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply. The Board Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Stage 2 complaints will receive a definitive reply within 30 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. The decision taken at this stage is final. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they can contact the Kansas Attorney General at 120SW10th Avenue, 2nd Floor Topeka, KS 66612 (785)291-3950

## Continuous Improvement

**Stage 3** We monitor and review the effectiveness of our complaints handling process to ensure that this continuously improves and learnings from complaints handling are carried through into the

organization. This policy does not cover complaints from staff who should review the Grievance Policy (found in the employee manual). Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Executive Director. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

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