Complaints and Compliments Policy

Author:	HR & H&S Officer
Reviewed by:	CEO
Authorised by:	SMT
Last review date:	**July 2024**
Review date:	**July 2026**
Relevant Staff Groups:	All staff

1. Introduction

Brainwave is dedicated to supporting children with disabilities and their families through a range of bespoke multi-disciplinary therapy programmes. We are committed to providing the best possible experience to our service users, donors, volunteers, customers, and supporters (stakeholders). This Complaints and Compliments Policy outlines our commitment to addressing concerns and recognising exceptional contributions.

2. Purpose

This policy serves to:

2.1 Provide a clear and accessible procedure for making complaints and expressing compliments.

2.2 Ensure that all complaints are managed promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

2.3 Encourage feedback from all stakeholders to help us improve our services and operations.

2.4 Acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of our volunteers, donors, and supporters.

3. Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction regarding the services, actions, or conduct of Brainwave, its team members[1], or any other party associated with the charity.

Compliment: An expression of appreciation or recognition for outstanding service, support, or contributions related to Brainwave.

4. Making a Complaint

4.1 Any individual or organisation wishing to make a complaint should do so by:

- Contacting the relevant line manager in person, by phone, email, or in writing.
- If the complaint involves a conflict of interest with the line manager or team involved, complaints can be submitted directly to the CEO or designated SMT member.

4.2 Complaints will be acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt, and every effort will be made to resolve the issue within 14 working days of receiving the complaint in writing. Complex complaints may require additional time for investigation, in which case the complainant will be informed of the delay and provided with regular updates.

4.3 Anonymous complaints will be accepted; however, they may be more challenging to investigate effectively.

[1] This includes both paid and unpaid (volunteers) team members.

5. Handling Complaints

5.1 All complaints will be treated with respect, sensitivity, and confidentiality.
5.2 Brainwave staff or designated individuals will impartially investigate complaints.
5.3 The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant in a timely manner, along with any actions taken or proposed resolutions.
5.4 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the resolution, they may escalate their complaint to the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees.

6. Expressing Compliments

6.1 Brainwave encourages stakeholders to express compliments for exceptional service, support, or contributions.
6.2 Compliments can be submitted through the same channels used for complaints or directly to the relevant team.
6.3 Compliments will be acknowledged and shared with the individuals or teams involved, and they may be recognised publicly with the consent of the parties involved.

7. Learning and Continuous Improvement

7.1 Brainwave will use feedback from complaints and compliments to identify areas for improvement in our services, operations, and volunteer management.
7.2 Regular reviews of complaints and compliments will be conducted to identify trends and recurring issues.

8. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

9. Conclusion

Brainwave is committed to maintaining transparency, accountability, and excellence in all its activities. We encourage all stakeholders to provide feedback through this Complaints and Compliments Policy to help us improve our services and recognise outstanding contributions to our mission. We are a learning organisation and feedback is invaluable in our aim to make a positive impact on the lives of the children and families we support.

APPENDIX I

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

When a complaint is received by phone, the team member taking the call should instruct the complainant to submit it in writing to the relevant manager. If the complainant cannot do so, they will be referred to the manager, who will either record the details over the phone or arrange a callback. No discussion about the complaint should occur during this initial call.[2]

Initially, all complaints should be directly forwarded to the appropriate individuals:

- Service Delivery Manager for Therapy-related issues
- Head of Retail, IT, and Maintenance for Retail and Maintenance concerns
- CEO for Fundraising matters
- Head of Finance for Finance-related issues
- Human Resources Officer for all other complaints, or if the relevant Manager is absent from the organisation.

If a complaint pertains to any of these individuals rather than their respective teams, it should be forwarded to the CEO. If the complaint involves the CEO, it should then be escalated to the Chair of Trustees.

- Within 7 working days of receipt of the written complaint, the appropriate manager will write to the complainant informing them that we are in receipt of their complaint and that we will conduct an investigation and respond in writing within 14 working days.

- All complaints will be thoroughly investigated, using the 'Brainwave Complaint Form.'

- Brainwave will aim to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, a letter will be sent to the complainant in the interim describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom

- Once the investigation into the complaint is complete, the line/area manager will inform the appropriate SMT member of the outcome and any action that needs to be taken.

[2] If the complaint was initially reported by phone, the person who took the call should receive a brief summary of the investigation's outcome, without access to detailed information about the investigation.

- Once this has been agreed by the appropriate SMT member a letter will be sent to the complainant to inform them of the outcome of the investigation. In this letter the complainant will be informed that if they are not happy with the outcome they are to write to the Chief Executive, or Chair of Trustees (depending on who managed the initial complaint and who the complaint is concerning) within 5 working days (see Stage 2 on page 5)

Stage 2

- The Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees (as appropriate) will acknowledge their letter within 7 working days and will respond with their final decision within 15 working days

Final Stage

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Chief Executive, or Chair of trustees then they are to be given the option to write to the Vice Chair of Trustees.

Their response will normally be within 10 working days to inform the complainant of the action which will be taken to investigate their complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

Note, if the complaint is concerning:

- a member of the SMT, then the complaint should be forwarded directly to and managed by the Chief Executive.

- the Chief Executive, the Chair of Trustees will manage it

- the Chair of Trustees, the Vice Chair of Trustees will manage it.