



## **Complaints Policy**

- 1 Gateshead Hatzola (Hatzola) recognises the importance of an effective and efficient complaints policy. It also recognises that complaints provide useful management information about the quality of service from the perspective of service users.

Within this policy and procedure, Hatzola adheres to the regulations set by the Care Quality Commission:

- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints
  - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 17: Good Governance
  - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 20: Duty of Candour
- 2 Complaints can be communicated to Hatzola through a variety of channels:
    - Informal complaints may be made verbally to a trustee, the Co-ordinator or the Clinical Director.
    - Formal complaints may be made in writing to a trustee, the Co-ordinator or the Clinical Director.
    - Complaints may be made directly to the Care Quality Commission.
  - 3 Any volunteer or employee receiving a complaint should direct the complainant to the Co-ordinator or, if the complaint involves the Co-ordinator, to the Nominated Individual.
  - 4 Nothing will prevent a complainant from escalating an informal complaint at any stage.
  - 5 If the complaint is received by the Co-ordinator, he will normally carry out the investigation. If it is received by the trustees or the Clinical Director, they may delegate the investigation to the Co-ordinator or to another volunteer or employee.
  - 6 If the complaint is against a specific volunteer or employee, they will normally be informed of the nature of the complaint, unless this may prejudice the investigation. Where appropriate, they will be suspended from duty for the duration of the investigation.
  - 7 Where the complaint is against the Co-ordinator, a trustee or the Clinical Director, they will be precluded from participating in the investigation.
  - 8 The investigators may take statements from volunteers or employees, from members of the public or from other witnesses. They may approach Halachic, medical or legal professionals for advice.
  - 9 Volunteer or employees being interviewed as part of the investigation may choose to be accompanied by a supporter.

- 10 When investigations have been completed, the trustees will discuss the outcome and make a decision as to whether the complaint is upheld in part or whole. The standard of proof employed will be the civil standard of balance of probabilities.
- 11 Where appropriate, the trustees may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a volunteer or employee as a result of their investigation.
- 12 At all times, confidentiality will be maintained. No other volunteers or employees will be informed of the investigation or its outcome. Where necessary, the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential. Where there are learning outcomes from the investigation, these will be conveyed in general terms without any indication that they have arisen from a complaint against specific individuals.
- 13 The complainant and the volunteers or employees involved will be informed of the outcome of the investigations within the timescales specified below. A written response will normally be provided to all parties, except where a verbal response is deemed adequate for an informal complaint.
- 14 A written record of the investigation and the outcome will be maintained by the trustees. This will be confidential except where it is required to be produced as part of a CQC inspection or in the course of legal action or a criminal investigation.
- 15 If a complainant or a volunteer or employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process, they may request that the matter be referred for adjudication to the religious authorities recognised by the Gateshead Hebrew Congregation. Their decision will be binding on all parties.
- 16 All complaints received by Hatzola (i.e. those made under 2i) and 2ii) above) will be acknowledged verbally within two working days.
- 17 Informal complaints will be investigated and a verbal response (if deemed adequate) provided within seven working days. If a written response is deemed necessary or is requested by the complainant, this will be provided within 14 working days.
- 18 Written complaints will be investigated and a written response provided within 14 working days.
- 19 If it appears that it is necessary to extend this timescale in order to adequately investigate the complaint, the complainant will be informed before the expiry of the time period and an appropriate extension agreed.
- 20 A copy of this policy will be provided to members of the public who wish to make a complaint. It will be available on request from the Co-ordinator and will be posted on Hatzola's website where this exists.
- 21 REVIEW This policy will be reviewed by the trustees on a three yearly basis.
- 22 OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
  - Disciplinary Procedure
  - Grievance Policy
  - Whistle-blowing Policy
  - Duty of Candour Policy



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