



## Complaints Policy

### Introduction

Peeps views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint. We want to address any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### Scope

This policy is relevant to anyone who comes into contact with Peeps (volunteers, service users/beneficiaries, members of the public), whether in person or through our online and social media presence. This policy does not cover concerns or complaints from employees, who should refer to the Peeps' Grievance Procedures.

### Peeps policy is:

- to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- to publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- to make sure everyone at Peeps knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- to make sure that complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are maintained / repaired.
- to gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

### Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Peeps – administration, a staff member, process, or service for example – resulting from Peeps' failure to meet the individual's or organisation's expectations.

### Confidentiality

Any complaint will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### Complaints Handling Procedure

We want to make it easy for you to contact us and to provide feedback or make a complaint. These are the ways you can get in touch with us:

1. Face to face: if you are dealing with a member of staff, volunteer or trustee, and you wish to complain, then please speak to them directly. It may be possible to resolve the issue immediately. However, if that is not possible, then he/she will record the details of your complaint and will send it through to the Charity Manager.

2. You can call us 07838 197 945 and your complaint will be documented.
3. You can email us on info@peeps-hie.org.
4. You can write to us at our head office.

In all instances where a complaint is made using the above means, we will contact you within 2 working days of receiving the complaint. If you provide us with a telephone number and/or email address, we will contact you by either of those means to discuss the matter further and to officially record all necessary details. Hopefully, we can resolve the matter immediately. However, if the issue is more complex and an investigation is required, we will do the following:

The person who receives a complaint will:

- Record full details of your complaint.
- Record the complaint in our Complaints Register.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Peeps e.g., donor, sponsor, beneficiary, service user.
- Take all necessary steps to investigate the matter.
- Contact you again within 15 working days of receiving the complaint to advise you of our findings or to give you an update on progress.
- Continue to keep you informed until the matter is resolved to your satisfaction or until all appropriate steps (as far as are reasonably practicable) to resolve the matter have been taken.

The Charity Manager will handle all complaints and if necessary, will escalate these to the Board of Trustees depending on the complexity or seriousness of the issue.

Should the complaint be about the Charity Manager, then this should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

## **Resolving complaints**

Our commitment to you is to address each complaint in a sensitive, fair, transparent, equitable, professional, and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process.

We will always operate from the premise that any person is entitled to express their views on our services and that those views should be taken seriously where this is warranted. We will not, however, tolerate any abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour towards any of our staff, and may decline to investigate a complaint further in such circumstances.

### **Stage 1**

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 may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Charity Manager within five working days.

On receiving the complaint, if not already resolved, the Charity Manager will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 15 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an

investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and (subject to the terms of Peeps' Privacy Policy) any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## **Stage 2**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Board of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken because of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

## **External Stage**

As Peeps is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>.

## **Review of this Policy and Complaints Received**

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every 12 months and all complaints received (and compliments) will be brought before the Board for review at our regular Board meetings. Through this process of regular review, we aim to improve our services to you and to ensure that any lessons learned are implemented within the organisation.

## **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage 2 review.

Dated: October 2024

Signed: 

Sarah Land, Charity Manager

Review Date: October 2025

Original: June 2021