Thread Ahead Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

Date last reviewed: 9th April 2026

1. Purpose

Thread Ahead is committed to delivering high-quality services and creating a positive experience for everyone we work with. We welcome comments, compliments and complaints as valuable feedback that helps us learn, improve and remain accountable.

This policy outlines how individuals can share feedback and how Thread Ahead will respond.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Visitors and service users
- Partner organisations
- Members of the public
- Staff
- Volunteers

It covers:

- External feedback (comments, compliments and complaints)
- Internal concerns raised by staff and volunteers (grievances)

3. Definitions

- Comment: General feedback or suggestions for improvement
- Compliment: Positive feedback about our work, services or staff/volunteers

- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about a service, action, or lack of action by Thread Ahead
- Grievance: A concern, problem or complaint raised by a staff member or volunteer relating to their role, working conditions, treatment, or relationships at work

Examples of grievances may include:

- Concerns about treatment by colleagues, managers or volunteers
- Working conditions or expectations
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Health and safety concerns

Safeguarding concerns or serious incidents are not managed under this policy and will be addressed in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

4. Principles

Our approach is guided by the following principles:

- Feedback is welcomed and valued
- Processes are fair, transparent and easy to use
- The procedure is accessible to all (see below for more information on accessibility and support)
- Individuals raising concerns will not suffer disadvantage or retaliation
- Matters are handled respectfully and confidentially
- Issues are addressed promptly within clear timeframes
- Learning from feedback supports continuous improvement

5. Accessibility and Support

We aim to ensure all individuals feel able to raise concerns.

We can provide:

- Support in submitting a complaint or grievance
- Alternative communication methods
- Reasonable adjustments where needed

Staff and volunteers may:

- Be accompanied by a colleague, friend or representative at formal meetings

Anonymous concerns will be considered where possible, though this may limit investigation.

6. How to Provide Feedback

- Visitor feedback: Online feedback form
- Comments or compliments: Via our website contact form or email
- Complaints or grievances: Follow the relevant process below

Part A: Comments Compliments and Complaints (External)

7. Complaints Process

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

1. Raise the issue with the relevant staff member or their manager
2. Acknowledgement of your complaint will be made within 5 working days
3. We will aim to resolve the issue promptly

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 through your contact at Stage 1.

- Request escalation to a formal investigation
- Acknowledgement of your formal complaint will be made within 5 working days
- An investigation will be carried out by an assigned manager
- You will receive a written response within 20 working days

Stage 3 - Final Review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your formal complaint, you can request a final review. This is the final internal stage of our complaints process.

- Request a final review if dissatisfied
- Your complaint will be reviewed by a member of the Board of Trustees
- You will receive a final response within 20 working days

8. Escalation and External Bodies

If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Charity Commission for England and Wales for guidance. They do not usually resolve individual complaints but may act in cases of serious concern.

Part B: Staff & Volunteer Grievances (Internal)

9. Grievance Process

Thread Ahead encourages concerns to be raised early and informally where possible.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- Raise the issue with your line manager or supervisor
- If this is not appropriate, contact another manager or the CEO
- We will aim to resolve concerns quickly and sensitively

Stage 2 - Formal Grievance

If the issue cannot be resolved informally:

- Submit a formal grievance in writing
- You will receive acknowledgement of your grievance within 5 working days
- An appropriate manager (not involved in the issue) will investigate

- A meeting will be arranged where you can explain your grievance; you may be accompanied by a colleague or representative
- A written outcome will be provided within 20 working days

Stage 3 - Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome:

- You may appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome
- The appeal will be heard by a senior manager or Trustee not previously involved
- A final decision will be provided within 20 working days

10. Serious Concerns

Grievances involving safeguarding or whistleblowing may be escalated outside this process and handled under relevant policies.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All feedback, complaints and grievances will be handled in line with data protection legislation and our Data Protection Policy. Information will be shared only where necessary and records will be stored securely. Data will be retained in accordance with our Data Retention Policy.

12. Recording and Monitoring

All formal complaints and grievances will be recorded and a central log will track outcomes and actions. Trends will be reviewed regularly. Summary reports will be shared with the Board of Trustees.

13. Learning and Improvement

We will use feedback to:

- Improve services and internal practices
- Inform training and development
- Address recurring issues

Compliments will be shared to recognise and reinforce good practice.

14. Non-Retaliation

Thread Ahead is committed to ensuring that no individual suffers disadvantage or retaliation for raising a concern in good faith.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or sooner if required.