



Supporting Humanity Complaints Policy

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This policy was adopted by: SUPPORTING HUMANITY	Date: 17 April 2021
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Our Aim

Supporting Humanity is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect to all stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our clients and stakeholders, and by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- Making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible
- We welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service
- which calls for an immediate response
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology
- where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually
- our complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- Resolve informal concerns quickly
- Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.
- Ensure all complaints/compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant service manager to provide feedback to the member of staff or service.

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

What is a Complaint?

We are committed to provide the best service we can but there may be times when the need to complain may arise.

A complaint is an expression of any dissatisfaction, about the standard of service, the

actions, or lack of action of the charity, including staff or volunteers, towards an individual or a group. A complaint should normally be made where all other reasonable or informal methods of resolving the dissatisfaction have been tried and failed.

A complaint may be about:

- Someone who used the service and is not happy with the quality or course of
- action taken within a specific case
- The lack of service or being refused a service
- The attitudes or behaviour of staff/volunteers
- Decisions made by staff/volunteers
- Delays in dealing with problems or in providing a service

Complaints or allegations of mistreatment or **Significant Harm** by staff must be dealt with by way of the Child Protection Referral Procedures, not as Complaints. See **Safeguarding (children) policy or Safeguarding (adult) policy**, which contains procedures on referring suspicions or allegations of Significant Harm.

We will make sure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) you have a number of rights with regard to how we process your personal data. A copy the privacy notice on how we deal with your data in line with Data Protection legislation can be provided upon request.

Who May Make a Complaint?

The following persons have a right to use the complaints procedure:

- A young person/children
- A parent of a young person
- A person acting on behalf of a young person, including staff
- Staff or volunteers expressing dissatisfaction about any wrongdoing, non-compliance with the SH's policies and procedures.

Trustees and Auditors can raise complaints to the SH Complaints Officer or for serious issues directly to the Charity Commission:

- report serious concerns to the Charity Commission if you're a trustee
- report a concern if you're an auditor

Informing you about the Complaints Procedure

Complainants will be informed about the Complaints Procedures in a variety of ways, including provision of a copy of this policy. Where the complaint is a child/young person, this must be in a format that the young person can understand.

The child/young person's carers/parents (if applicable) must be given a copy of the complaints procedure. If they request it or it appears appropriate, they should be given information on additional advocacy or support networks which may help them use the procedures effectively.

Receiving Complaints

The Complaints Officer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that complainants including staff feel comfortable with the making of complaints and are free from reprisals if they choose to do so.

Upon notification or indication that a person wishes to make a complaint, the person receiving it should escalate to the relevant workstream lead and do what they reasonably can to ensure that all other resolutions available have been explored, rather than resorting to the making of a complaint in the first instance.

Where complainant insists that they wish to make a complaint, staff, workstream leads or team managers should still deal with the matter, if appropriate. If a complaint is made about the workstream lead, team manager or another senior member of staff, it should be passed to a manager outside of the immediate Management Structure and/or the CEO of the charity where appropriate.

If an individual wish to do so, complainants may direct their complaints to others outside such as the trustees.

Complaints should preferably be put in writing, by way of letter or by using a Complaints Form but other methods may be used, including the use of audio tapes or verbal feedback. We aim to acknowledge complaints within 3 working days from receipt.

Complainants should be given any reasonable assistance they require or request, including being introduced to people or groups independent of the organisation that may assist them, such as Advocacy Groups.

If assistance is provided to complainants in recording or writing their complaints, the record/letter should indicate the name, status and contact details of the person providing the assistance. Brief details of the receipt of all complaints must be recorded in the Complaints Log at the location they pertain to.

Local Resolution (Stage 1):

Timescale: Any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay and a complaint will be fully responded to within a maximum of 28 days

If possible, the person receiving the complaint, or their supervisor/team manager should resolve the matter as soon as reasonably practical and in any event within 28 days. This may be extended for a further 14 days with the agreement of the complainant.

This assumes that the person receiving the complaint has the delegated authority to resolve the matter satisfactorily. If not, that the person can immediately pass the matter to a supervisor or Team Manager with an appropriate level of authority to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

If it is possible to resolve a complaint within 28 days, the person resolving it should do the following:

- Note the fact that a complaint was made and resolved in the Complaints Log, record a summary of the complaint and the manner in which it was resolved in the Complaints Log and in the Daily Record of any relevant young person. The Line or Team Manager must confirm in writing to the complainant the agreed resolution.
- If the Line/Team Manager was not involved in resolving the matter, notify the Line/Team Manager as soon as practicable.

The manager should then consult the complainant to ensure they are satisfied with the outcome, brief their Line/Team Manager if applicable, and sign off the Complaints Log.

Formal Consideration (Stage 2)

Timescale: 28 Days

Where the person receiving the complaint cannot resolve it within 28 days, or a further 14 days if agreed by the complainant, it should be referred, for Formal Consideration, to the Designated Complaints Officer.

Before undertaking the Formal Consideration, Complaints Officer should clarify the substance of it with the complainant, put it into writing and give a copy to the complainant.

The designated Complaints Officer should attempt to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible but within 28 days of the request for the Formal Consideration. This may be extended with the agreement of the complainant.

The complainant should be notified of the outcome of the complaint, as soon as possible,

preferably verbally, but always in writing. If the complaint was justified, the complainant should be told what, if any, remedial action will be taken, and an apology offered. The complainant will be notified that they have 28 days to register a written appeal against the decision.

After an appeal, a complaints panel will be arranged, at which time the complainant would have the opportunity to present their complaint. At a hearing the complainant will have the right to have a representative with them. A child/young person may wish to have someone represent them at a hearing.

Following the presentation of a complaint, and associated evidence, the complaints panel has to respond within 48 hours and arrive at a decision or recommendation.

Details of the outcome must be recorded in the Complaints Log, which must be countersigned by the Operations Manager (MHS Ops Responsible).

Copies of all records and correspondence relating to the complaint should kept confidentially:

- In the relevant case file or if staff/volunteers related, in the secure Complaints area in the online storage system.
- In the Complaints File held by the team lead/manager
- Any complaint related to discriminatory behaviour, language or attitude requires escalation/notification to the SH Equal Opportunities Named Coordinator (ENCO).

Stage 3 Review Panel

Timescale: 28 Days

If dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 2 Formal Investigation, complainants may request a Stage 3: Review Panel to consider their complaint.

To instigate a Stage 3 Review Panel, the complainant should notify the Complaints Officer either orally or in writing, the notification will be confirmed in writing explaining the process and timescales for undertaking a Stage 3 Review Panel.

The Complaints Officer will ensure that:

1. Senior managers and relevant team leads/line managers are notified and briefed as necessary until the matter is resolved.
2. The complainant is clear about the process and timescales.
 - a. The complainant has access to an independent advocate or representative.

b. A Review Panel is established to consider the matter, the Review Panel will consist of 3 people that are independent of the matter being considered, 1 of the Panel members will be asked to Chair the Panel and report to the Complaints Officer on the recommendations that are made.

c. Necessary arrangements are made for the Panel to be convened and conducted in a fair manner.

Escalation to The Charity Commission - Complaints classified as 'serious issues' such as charity not following the law, serious harm, illegal activity, misappropriation of assets etc which have not been appropriately addressed by Supporting Humanity can be escalated to The Charity Commission using this link. The Charity Commission regulates registered charities in England and Wales and they ensure that charities are accountable, well-run and meet their legal obligations. The Charity Commission also provides regulatory advice and guidance and will intervene in matters where there is serious risk of significant harm to, or abuse of, charities, their beneficiaries or assets.

Protection from unfair treatment at work – employees only not volunteers

If you're a charity worker and report certain types of wrongdoing, this is known as 'whistleblowing'. Your employer must not treat you unfairly at work because you blow the whistle. If the information you report, and how you report it meets specific requirements the law will protect you, more information on whistleblowing is available here.

You must:

- be a worker, not a volunteer
- reveal the information in the public interest
- reveal certain types of wrongdoing
- tell the right person or organisation

This policy was written in line with guidance from the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

[Complaints procedure - The Charity Commission - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complaints-procedure-the-charity-commission)