Complaints Policy
(July 2022)

Introduction

As a charity, we are committed to providing a quality service and achieving the highest standards in supporting people affected by genetic haemochromatosis. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our beneficiaries, members, clinicians and general members of the public.

Many complaints arise from misunderstandings. The need for complaints can often be avoided if there is good, ongoing communication between our stakeholders. We encourage open and thoughtful dialogue between parties in the first instance – misunderstandings are easily made and a formal complaint may be unnecessary following discussion.

Complaints Policy

This policy is designed to provide a positive response to complaints and ensure that Haemochromatosis UK is open about the improvements that we have made as a result of feedback.

This policy compliments the provisions in the charity's employees' contract of employment and does not supersede them.

The Chief Executive Officer will monitor the implementation of this policy, collect information about required improvements, and will report all complaints and outcomes to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis.

As a charity, we aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward and transparent as possible.
- That we deal with complaints appropriately and within an appropriate, agreed time frame.
- We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation or an apology where we have got things wrong and with relevant and appropriate information on any action taken.
- We will exercise the right to refuse to accept a complaint where the complaint is clearly vexatious, malicious or motivated by racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory attitudes, or where the complaint threatens or abuses Haemochromatosis UK staff/volunteers. The decision as to whether a complaint is vexatious will be taken by Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees where necessary.

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- When a complaint identifies that something has gone wrong or has fallen below standards it is seen as an opportunity to improve and avoid a recurrence. We are a listening organisation and complaints can allow for systems, policies, practices or procedures to be amended or put in place as appropriate.

Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers complaints about the services that our organisation provides to the public, and complaints about the staff and volunteers involved in delivering those services.

How do you make a complaint?

Wherever possible we will try to respond and resolve the situation informally. The matter will go no further unless the injured party is still dissatisfied, at which point the formal process will then begin.

Formal complaints should be made to us :

- By post to Complaints, Haemochromatosis UK, The Flaxmill, Flaxmill Lane, Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire PE11 3YP

Complaints regarding individuals, or where a formal follow-up is requested, must:

- be in writing
- be from an identified complainant
- include the complainant's name and contact details

We cannot consider complaints made anonymously or on behalf of someone else, unless that person is aged under 18 years old or is a vulnerable adult or the matter relates to a safeguarding matter related to our Safeguarding Policy.

If a complaint is in relation to the Chief Executive, then it should be marked for the attention of the Chair of the Board. Complaints in relation to the Chair may be made to any Trustee.

What happens following a formal complaint?

We aim to address all complaints fairly and promptly. When investigating complaints we will ensure that :

- we fully understand the complaint – this may require us to meet with or talk to the complainant
- we fully understand the response of our staff or volunteers to the complaint – this may involve discussing the matter with them and/or reviewing any written information

When discussing complaints with staff or volunteers, they will be offered the opportunity to bring someone with them.

As a result of a complaint, our subsequent actions may include :

- making specific improvements to our services or how we deliver them
- bringing together parties to mediate the dispute
- recommending improvements to staff or volunteer training
- recommending improvements to the governance or constitution of our organisation
- a rejection of the complaint, if it is vexatious or not well-founded
- a rejection of the complaint if – after investigation – there are no grounds for it to be upheld

In most cases we aim to provide a full response within 14 days. However, if this is not possible because, for example, a detailed investigation is required, we will provide an interim reply explaining what is being done to deal with the complaint and providing a revised timetable. A full response will be then sent in writing within 28 days. We may correspond with a complainant by post or email.

Can I appeal a decision?

In cases where the complainant is dissatisfied with a response that they have received, they are entitled to appeal the decision within seven days of receiving the final response. The appeal should be made in writing to our Chair of Trustees at the address above. Appeals will be responded to within 14 working days, in writing.

What are the time limits on making a complaint?

Complaints should be made promptly and within one month of the event or within one month of the complainant becoming aware of cause to complain. Complaints made outside these timescales may be rejected summarily, without investigation.

Is my data protected when I complain?

Yes. All complaints will be kept confidential to the parties concerned and any personal information provided will be handled in accordance with our Data Protection & Privacy Policy. However, where the issues raised are of a particularly serious nature, the details of the complaint will normally be made known to the CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will discuss the matter with the Board of Trustees where necessary. Serious complaints may also be relayed to our regulators or other statutory authorities for further investigation.

How do you monitor complaints as a charity?

All formal complaints received will be logged and retained for up to 7 years, if they are upheld. A quarterly report on all complaints received (both formal and informal), along with the outcomes, will be submitted to the Board of Trustees by the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer will review all complaints, and how they are handled, on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

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