



Huntington's
Disease
Association

Complaints policy

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Complaints policy



Introduction

The Huntington's Disease Association believes that anyone who wishes to make a complaint or register a concern should find it easy to do so. It is the Huntington's Disease Association's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, trustees and volunteers of the Huntington's Disease Association. It outlines the process that should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint about the charity and/or its people.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that people feel confident that their complaints are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

Volunteers are expected to follow the principles and expectations set out in this policy where relevant to their role. Volunteers will not be required to read this policy in full; instead, appropriate guidance and expectations will be communicated through volunteer training, the volunteer handbook, and supporting guidance.

The Volunteering Manager will act as the primary point of contact for volunteers requiring advice or support in relation to this policy.

The purpose of the policy is to establish general standards for health and safety at work and to distribute responsibility for their achievement.

Responsibilities

The Huntington's Disease Association will ensure that:

- people are aware of how to complain, and that the Huntington's Disease Association provides easy to use opportunities for them to raise concerns or make formal complaints.
- a named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- concerns and complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff, volunteers and complainants.

- every formal complaint is acknowledged within five working days of receipt of the complaint.
- investigations into formal complaints are held within 20 working days.
- all formal complaints are responded to in writing by the charity.

Responding to concerns

It is important to establish whether the person contacting the charity is reporting an informal concern that can be suitably resolved or making a formal complaint that requires greater investigation.

If contact is made on behalf of someone by an advocate, it will first be verified that the person has permission to speak for them, especially if confidential information is involved. The person's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the matters with an advocate.

Taking informal concerns seriously from the outset may help to reduce the likelihood of them developing into formal proceedings. All concerns reported will be taken seriously and staff will seek to resolve the problem immediately if possible.

Everyone has a responsibility to act politely, courteously and exercise understanding during any discussions where a concern is expressed. At all times staff will remain calm and respectful and will act in line with their duties of professionalism and confidentiality.

If the staff member cannot solve the problem with the complainant themselves immediately, they will offer for their line manager or relevant Head of Department to speak with them.

If the concern relates to a line manager, department manager or Head of Department, the staff member receiving the concern will raise it with another member of the senior management team.

If the concern relates to the Chief Executive, the staff member will raise with the Vice Chair or another member of the Board of Trustees.

If the concern relates to a member of the Board of Trustees, the staff member will raise with the Chief Executive.

After discussing the concern, the relevant charity contact dealing with the concern will suggest a resolution. If this route is accepted by the person raising the concern, the charity contact will clarify the agreement and gain clear consent to pursue this route.

If the suggested resolution is not accepted by the person raising the concern, then the charity contact will ask them to submit a formal complaint in writing to the Huntington's

Disease Association or offer to escalate the concern as a formal complaint based on the information provided to date. A copy of the charity's complaints policy will be provided.

Concerns will be recorded in writing, and stored securely in the complaints folder and destroyed in line with the charity's retention schedule as outlined within the Information management policy.

Complaints procedure

Making a formal complaint

Complaints should be made using the one of the following contact methods.

Address	Email	Phone
Huntington's Disease Association Liverpool Science Park, IC1, 131 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TF	info@hda.org.uk	0151 331 5444

For employees of the Huntington's Disease Association, the grievance process outlined in the Employee Handbook should be followed or the whistleblowing process as outlined in the Whistleblowing policy, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Investigation

Any formal complaint received, whether verbally or in writing, will be investigated by the relevant person at the charity. For complaints relating to staff, this will be the complainant's line manager; for complaints about a line manager, this will be the relevant Head of Department; for complaints relating to volunteers, this will be the Volunteering Manager; for complaints about the Chief Executive, this will be the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a nominated trustee; for complaints about a trustee, this will be the Chief Executive.

For the purposes of operational oversight and continuity, the Chief Executive will be informed of all formal complaints received.

Immediately on receipt of a formal complaint, the Huntington's Disease Association will launch an investigation. The charity will send an acknowledgment letter or email within five working days to the complainant including an overview of the complaints process inclusive of relevant investigation timescales and appeal information. This delegated person will be the named person who handles the complaint throughout the process.

If necessary for the investigation, further details will be obtained from the complainant. It may be that a meeting is arranged, and if this is the case, the complainant will be advised that they may bring a representative such as a friend, relative or an advocate.

If the complaint is made on behalf of someone, for example, via an advocate, the consent of the person will be obtained, preferably in writing.

If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, it may be necessary to seek advice from a legal advisor to the Huntington's Disease Association via the Chief Executive or Chair as necessary. If legal action is taken at this stage, any investigation by the charity under the complaints procedure detailed within this policy will cease immediately whilst legal investigation is carried out.

A record of the investigation, and any associated meeting minutes will be held securely in the complaints folder and destroyed in line with the charity's retention schedule as outlined within the Information management policy.

Following the investigation, the delegated person will provide a detailed overview of the investigation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned within 20 working days. If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 20 working days, the complainant will be informed.

Any areas for improvement identified as part of the investigation will be addressed by the charity.

Appeal process

If the complainant is unhappy with the investigation outcome as carried out by the nominated person at the charity, they have the right to appeal.

If the original complaint relates to the charity's staff and/or processes, they can appeal to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will review the investigation and respond to the complainant within ten working days.

If the complaint relates to a volunteer, or volunteering activities, they can appeal to the Head of Services who will review the investigation and respond to the complainant within ten working days.

If the complaint relates to the Chief Executive, they can appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a nominated trustee who will review the investigation and respond to the complainant within ten working days.

If the complaint relates to a trustee, they can appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a nominated trustee who will review the investigation and respond to the complainant within ten working days.

If the complainant remains unhappy about the decision of the appeal, they should visit: www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

If the complainant remains unhappy about the decision of any appeal relating to a fundraising complaint, they should take their concerns to the Fundraising Regulator. Further information can be found by visiting their website: www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk