



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 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 employees.

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.

For internal complaints, 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.

## 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 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.

## Concern or complaint

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. 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.
- If the staff member cannot solve the problem immediately, they will offer to get their line manager or relevant head of department to liaise with the person. If the concern relates to a line 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.
- All contact will be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff will remain calm and respectful
- Staff must not make excuses or blame other staff
- If the 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 the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, the relevant manager or member of staff dealing with the concern will suggest a resolution. If this is acceptable then the member of staff will clarify the agreement with the person.
- If the suggested resolution is not acceptable to the person then the member of staff or relevant manager will ask them to either put their complaint in writing to the Huntington's Disease Association or offer to escalate the concern for formal investigation based on the information provided to date. A copy of the charity's complaints policy will be provided.
- Concerns will be recorded, and stored securely in the complaints folder for twelve months after conclusion after which they should be destroyed.

The following procedure will be followed for all formal complaints.

## Complaints procedure

### Formal complaints

- Any formal complaint received, whether verbally or in writing, will be investigated by the relevant Head of department. If the complaint relates to the Chief Executive, the Vice Chair of the Executive Council, or a nominated trustee, will investigate.

- They will send an acknowledgment letter or email within five working days. The relevant manager or delegated person will be the named person who deals with the complaint throughout the process.
- The Chief Executive will be informed of all formal complaints received.
- If necessary, further details will be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made directly, but on behalf of someone (for example, an advocate), the consent of the person will be obtained, preferably in writing.
- The Huntington's Disease Association's complaints policy will be provided to the complainant.
- 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.
- Immediately on receipt of the complaint, the Huntington's Disease Association will launch an investigation. The charity will provide a full explanation 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.
- If a meeting is arranged, the complainant will be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a representative such as a friend, relative or an advocate.
- A detailed written explanation of the results of the investigation will be given. A meeting may take place if appropriate.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the minutes of any meeting that takes place will be recorded and held securely.
- Any areas for improvement identified as part of the investigation will be addressed by the charity.
- If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, they can appeal to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will review the investigation and respond to the complainant within ten working days.
- Any complaints received concerning the Chief Executive will instead be investigated and overseen by the Vice Chair or a nominated trustee, according to the process outlined above and reviewed by the Chair of the Executive Council in cases of appeal.
- If the complainant remains unhappy about the decision of the appeal, they should visit:  
[www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)
- If the complaint 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](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

### Who to complain to

Address	Email	Phone
Huntington's Disease Association Suite 24, Liverpool Science Park, ICI, 131 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TF	info@hda.org.uk	0151 331 5444