

## **FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS POLICY**

## Contents

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | Introduction.....                                     | 3 |
| 2  | Aims.....   | 3 |
| 3  | Responsibilities .....                                | 3 |
| 4  | Key Definitions .....                                 | 4 |
| 5  | Who can raise a complaint or provide feedback? .....  | 5 |
| 6  | Feedback received for the hospital .....              | 5 |
| 7  | Compliment .....                                      | 6 |
| 8  | Comment/ Enquiry/ Concern .....                       | 6 |
| 9  | The Charity’s three-stage complaints process.....     | 6 |
| 10 | Beyond stage 3.....                                   | 8 |
| 11 | Recording of complaints.....                          | 8 |
| 12 | Vexatious and persistent complaints .....             | 8 |
| 13 | Variation of the feedback and complaints process..... | 9 |

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| <b>Approved by:</b>     | Board of Trustees for Alder Hey Children’s Charity (AHCC) and the Board of Directors for Alder Hey Promotions Ltd. (AHP) |
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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Alder Hey Children's Charity (AHCC) is a registered charity (charity number 1160661 and company number 09389239) which raises money to make Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust (the 'hospital') a truly world-class, patient-friendly hospital. Through providing funds for life-saving medical equipment, pioneering research and world-class facilities for patients and families, we make a crucial difference to the 450,000 patients and families who visit Alder Hey every year.

Alder Hey Promotions Limited (AHP) a registered company in England and Wales (company number 08019977) is a wholly owned subsidiary of AHCC which trades on its behalf selling Alder Hey merchandise. Within the context of this policy 'we' means both the Charity and its subsidiary.

1.2 We seek to build good relationships with our donors, supporters, funders, service users of the hospital and members of the public. We view complaints, concerns, comments and compliments as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

## **2 Aims**

2.1 As part of this policy we aim to:

- provide a fair feedback and complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use;
- publicise the existence of our Feedback and Complaints Policy so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint or make the Charity aware of other feedback;
- respond to the feedback received appropriately, following our complaint, concern, comment or compliment pathway;
- ensure where an investigation is required that it is evidence based, undertaken in line with the Policy, considers all the relevant evidence available and is undertaken by an independent member of the team (where the complaint is specific to a person or area);
- respond to complainants within the timescales set out in this policy or explain where there will be delays;
- provide a detailed response appropriate to the seriousness of the feedback;
- identify the cause of complaints and ensure that lessons learnt are used to drive improvement and prevent reoccurrences; and
- say sorry when we've got something wrong.

## **3 Responsibilities**

3.1 The Charity Trustee Board are responsible for the oversight of the Charity, including meeting its regulatory obligations.

3.2 The Alder Hey Promotions Ltd. (AHP) Board of Directors are responsible for the oversight of the subsidiary company, including meeting its regulatory obligations.

3.3 The Chief Executive Officer has delegated responsibility for overseeing complaints management and providing assurance to the Charity trustees that this is effectively managed.

- 3.4 The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for supporting the Chief Executive Officer in the day to day management and reporting of the complaints process.
- 3.5 The Senior Management Team has responsibility for ensuring processes are undertaken within their area in line with regulatory obligations and teams are encouraged to build good relationships with donors, supporters, funders, service users of the hospital and members of the public.
- 3.6 All staff and volunteers are required to be familiar with this Policy and comply with it and any associated procedures on a day-to-day basis. Staff must report any feedback received within 24 hours of receiving it in line with the below procedures.

## 4 Key definitions

- 4.1 **Comment/ Enquiry:** Where someone gets in touch (either reactively or pro-actively) via telephone, post, email or our website in relation to general fundraising and communication matters. For example, to notify us that their address has changed, to request a donation form or to provide us with ideas for improving our fundraising activities.
- 4.2 **Concern:** Where someone gets in touch (either reactively or pro-actively) via any communication channel and expresses a concern or unease in relation to Alder Hey Children's Charity's fundraising activity. For example, if a supporter tells us that they have made a donation and have not yet received a thank you letter. Upon follow up if the letter has been sent and lost in the post and the person raising the concern is satisfied with the response this would remain as a concern that had been resolved. However, if the letter had not been sent then this would be escalated to a complaint. A concern will usually require follow-up action.
- 4.3 **Complaint:** Where someone gets in touch (either reactively or pro-actively) via any communication channel and expresses negative feedback in relation to Alder Hey Children's Charity's fundraising activity. For example, if a supporter tells us that they are unhappy about the way a concern has been handled or if they want to alert the Charity to any behaviour they find inappropriate. A complaint will usually require follow-up action.
- 4.4 **Compliment:** Where someone gets in touch (either reactively or proactively) via any communication channel which specifically compliments our fundraising services. For example, they respond to a Direct Marketing appeal and say how informative they found it, or they have set-up a tribute on Much Loved and write to tell us how valuable this has been for them.
- 4.5 **Feedback:** This encompasses all of the above (comments, concerns, compliments, complaints). Feedback should help us to improve the service we give to our supporters.
- 4.6 **Complainant:** Refers to the supporter/person who has complained.
- 4.7 **Fundraising Regulator:** This is the independent regulator of charitable fundraising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They work in partnership with other regulators and representative bodies to build public confidence and

ensure consistent fundraising standards across the UK.

- 4.8 Charity Commission: This is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. Their stated purpose is ‘to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.’

## **5 Who can raise a complaint or provide feedback?**

- 5.1 Anyone can provide feedback or make a complaint to the Charity. Whether you are directly or indirectly affected by the matter that causes concern or you think requires commendation. The feedback may be provided for yourself, a family member, or because you are feeding back on someone else’s behalf.
- 5.2 As part of the feedback process we will ask for contact details where we do not already have these. If the person making the feedback does not wish to supply their contact details we will accept feedback anonymously; however, we are unlikely to be able to respond with any updates in this circumstance and it may impact on our ability to resolve the issue where we are unable to ask any follow up questions for clarification.
- 5.3 Disclosures under this policy will be treated in a confidential and sensitive manner. We encourage you to raise concerns openly, and if you prefer to do so in confidence, we will do all that we can to ensure your identity remains hidden. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required. In such circumstances the individual will be offered advice and support.
- 5.4 Feedback can be received in person, via telephone, email post or in some cases by social media.
- 5.5 Whilst we monitor our social media platforms, posts made solely on social media will not be handled as a complaint raised unless they are followed up by the individual, as these do not provide sufficient detail to allow us to undertake our investigation process. Where a comment is of a serious nature, we will endeavour to get in touch with the person that has made the comment on social media, where we feel that this is appropriate.
- 5.6 If an enquiry is received as to how a complaint can be made the enquirer will be directed to this Feedback and Complaints Policy available on the Charity’s website.
- 5.7 This policy does not cover complaints from staff who should refer to Alder Hey Children’s Charity’s internal policy on such matters.

## **6 How to provide feedback**

- 6.1 Feedback can be provided by emailing [info@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:info@alderhey.nhs.uk) email address, calling our office Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, or by writing to:  
Feedback  
Alder Hey Children’s Charity  
Eaton Road

## **7 Feedback received for the hospital**

- 7.1 Sometimes the feedback we receive as a Charity is meant for the hospital. Where this happens, we will log the information on our system and either request that the feedback is made directly to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) within the hospital or pass the feedback to them ourselves, depending on the circumstances. The PALS team will respond in accordance with the hospital's feedback policy.
- 7.2 If part of the feedback received relates to the Charity, we will follow the Charity's feedback process.

## **8 Compliment**

- 8.1 It is wonderful for staff to receive compliments on areas that the Charity are doing well in. This brightens our team's day and also helps us to learn where we are getting this right, so we continue to operate well within these areas. We will endeavour to thank anyone who provides us with positive feedback and are very grateful whenever someone takes the time to provide this.

## **9 Comment/ Enquiry/ Concern**

- 9.1 We aim to respond to all comments, enquiries and concerns within 72 hours of receiving them. Our team is human and sometimes makes mistakes or our email system can at times block in-coming messages, so if you have not received a response please get back in touch and let us know. All our staff work really hard to ensure all comments and enquiries are responded to satisfactorily, so we appreciate where people recognize this and provide a friendly nudge on the rare occasion something is missed.
- 9.2 Action will be taken to resolve all enquiries and concerns. If a member of staff believes that the matter requires it, they may escalate the feedback to our three stage complaints process.
- 9.3 As a Charity our desire is to be open and transparent at all times and we categorise feedback received to enable the most appropriate and proportional response. Whilst we endeavour to categorise feedback appropriately, if you believe that the matter you are raising is more serious in nature than can adequately be responded to through our enquiries and concerns process, please inform us that you wish the matter to be handled as a formal complaint.

## **10 The Charity's three-stage complaints process**

### **10.1 Stage 1: Initial response to a complaint**

- The member of the team who receives the complaint will log this item on our CRM system on the day the complaint is received.
- If a complaint can be dealt with immediately then it will be done so by the

member of staff who received the complaint.

- Where a complaint cannot be immediately resolved, a member of our Operations Team will get in touch with the complainant **within five working days** of the complaint being received in order to acknowledge their complaint and issue a response or inform a complainant of next steps.
- If a complaint cannot be resolved within this time, then the initial response will inform the complainant that a further investigation is to be undertaken and a response will be provided **within 28 days**. At this stage an Investigating Officer will be assigned and will take responsibility for ensuring that an evidence based investigation is undertaken. If the complaint is specific to a person or area, then this role will be undertaken by an independent member of the team.
- The Investigating Officer will aim to provide a response to the complainant that is appropriate to the seriousness of the feedback, including any lessons learnt that will be taken forward.

10.2 If the subject of a complaint pertains to any breach of charity law or good practice, this type of complaint must immediately move to **Stage 2**.

### 10.3 Stage 2: Complaint escalated to Senior Management

- If the Investigating Officer feels that this pertains to a breach of charity law or good practice, or if they feel the seriousness of the complaint requires it, the complaint will be escalated to the Senior Management Team and a Senior Manager will be assigned as the new Investigating Officer.
- Or if a complainant is unsatisfied with the initial response to their complaint, the complainant should request escalation of the matter to the Senior Management Team via the [info@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:info@alderhey.nhs.uk) email address or by writing to:

FAO: Chief Operating Officer  
Alder Hey Children's Charity  
Eaton Road  
Liverpool  
L12 2AP

- In either of these instances, a member of the Senior Management Team will be assigned as the Investigating Officer and will take responsibility for ensuring that an evidence based investigation is undertaken. If the complaint is specific to a person or area, then this role will be undertaken by an independent member of the team. They will write to the complainant with 5 working days of receiving the stage 2 escalation to let them know that they will be investigating and when the complainant can expect to receive a response.
- The Investigating Officer will aim to provide a response to the complainant that is appropriate to the seriousness of the feedback, including any lessons learnt that will be taken forward.

### 10.4 Stage 3: Complaint referred to the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Trustees or AHP Board of Directors

- If the Investigating Officer feels that the seriousness of the complaint requires it, or if the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating

Officer or a trustee of the Board, the complaint will be escalated to the Board of Trustees or AHP Board of Directors as appropriate.

- Or if a complainant is still unsatisfied after the steps taken in Stage 2, a member of the Senior Management Team will be required to escalate the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Following this, if a complainant is still unsatisfied, the Chief Executive Officer will be required to escalate the complaint to Board level where the Chair of the Board will coordinate a response.

## **11 Beyond stage 3**

11.1 If a complainant remains unsatisfied with the above steps taken, or at any time in the process, then the complainant can take up their complaint with one of the external regulatory bodies listed below.

- The Fundraising Regulator<sup>1</sup>;
- The Charity Commission (England and Wales) for breaches of charity law and best practice; or
- Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for breaches of Data Protection.

## **12 Recording of complaints**

12.1 We will maintain accurate records of all feedback received. Such records are managed in line with the [Privacy Policy](#).

## **13 Vexatious and persistent complaints**

13.1 All feedback will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy. However, where a complaint is felt to be vexatious or persistent then we reserve the right to not respond to a complaint. Vexatious complaints are defined as those that have been made to cause embarrassment or upset to a member of the Charity's staff. Persistent complaints are defined as complaints whose frequency or nature interfere with the running of the Charity and our ability to interact with and on behalf of other donors. This may be from one individual, family or connected group. This does not apply when a series of complaints occurs relating to a similar issue, but only where these complaints are made with the intention of disrupting the Charity Team's ability to undertake work on the charitable aims.

13.2 The Senior Management Team will decide whether a complaint or complaints are considered to be vexatious or persistent. On the rare occasion where this is the case, the Board of Trustees for the Charity of Board of Directors for AHP will be informed of the nature of the complaint(s) and the decision taken.

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<sup>1</sup>

Any Complaint referred to the Fundraising Regulator must be done so within two months of Alder Hey Children's Charity's first response to the Complainant.

They will review the complaint and report their conclusion within 60 days. The Board has the discretion to specify that either no further action is appropriate, or to censure the charity and prescribe one or more sanctions. The Regulator may also ask us to apologise to the complainant or prescribe some other form of reprimand. In very serious circumstances, the Regulator can take a decision to remove Alder Hey Children's Charity from the register.

## **14 Variation of the feedback and complaints process**

- 14.1 We reserve the right to vary our feedback and complaints process as a response unfolds. For example, a complaint about the Chair of Trustees would not go to the Chair to coordinate a response but would be handled by the Vice Chair.