

# Complaints Policy

**Date:** 14/12/2025

**Next Review:** Annually

---

## 1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that **Amelia's Light** handles complaints promptly, fairly, and transparently.
  - Protect the charity's reputation while maintaining public trust and confidence.
  - Provide guidance for staff, volunteers, and trustees on receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints.
  - Support continuous improvement in the charity's services to families of sick children.
- 

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints from:

- Beneficiaries, including children and adults at risk, and their families.
- Donors, volunteers, staff, or the general public.
- All services, activities, and interactions provided by **Amelia's Light**, including:
  - Emergency grants and financial support
  - Wellbeing packs
  - Emotional support and guidance
  - Signposting to specialist services

It does **not** cover staff grievances or disciplinary matters, which are dealt with under separate HR policies.

### 3. Responsibilities

- **Trustees:**
    - Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed regularly.
    - Resolve escalated complaints where necessary.
    - Maintain oversight of complaint trends and ensure actions for improvement are taken.
  - **Founder / Complaints Lead:**
    - Act as the first point of contact for complaints.
    - Ensure complaints are logged, acknowledged, and investigated promptly.
    - Report findings and recommendations to trustees.
  - **Staff and Volunteers:**
    - Listen to complaints respectfully and promptly.
    - Refer complaints to the Complaints Lead.
    - Cooperate fully with investigations and implement any recommended actions.
- 

### 4. Procedures / Steps

#### 4.1 Receiving a Complaint

- Complaints may be made:
  - By phone, email, or letter.
  - In person at a meeting or hospital visit.
- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint **within 3 working days**.

- Provide the complainant with a copy of this policy or explain the complaints procedure.

## 4.2 Investigating a Complaint

- Record the complaint in the **Complaints Log** with:
  - Date, complainant details, and nature of the complaint
  - Staff or volunteers involved
- Investigate thoroughly and impartially, including:
  - Gathering relevant information and documents
  - Interviewing staff, volunteers, or beneficiaries involved
  - Considering any relevant charity policies (e.g., safeguarding, financial controls)

## 4.3 Responding to a Complaint

- Respond in writing within **14 working days**, including:
  - Summary of the investigation
  - Findings and conclusions
  - Any action taken or proposed
- If a full response requires longer, inform the complainant and provide a timescale.
- Offer a right of **appeal** to the trustee board if the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

## 4.4 Escalation and Appeals

- Appeals should be submitted in writing to the **trustee board**.
- Trustees will review the complaint and previous investigation, and provide a **final written decision** within 28 days.
- All decisions made by trustees are final.

## 5. Record-Keeping / Documentation Requirements

- Maintain a secure **Complaints Log** recording:
    - Complainant details (with consent)
    - Date and nature of complaint
    - Investigation process and findings
    - Actions taken and final resolution
    - Correspondence with complainant
  - Keep all records for **at least 6 years** in line with financial and regulatory guidance.
  - Ensure sensitive information is handled in compliance with **GDPR/Data Protection Policy**.
- 

## 6. Review and Update

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** by trustees or sooner if:
  - Legislation or Charity Commission guidance changes.
  - A pattern of complaints indicates a need for procedural improvement.
  - A significant complaint arises that requires policy revision.
- Staff, volunteers, and trustees will be informed of any updates.