

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.