



COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURE

Policy	Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure
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COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Holt & District Dementia Support is committed to working in partnership with the clients living with dementia and their carers who benefit from its services and at all times to value and respect those volunteers who freely give of their time and talents to enable these services to be provided.
- 1.2 The organisation recognises that there may be occasions when difficulties occur between individuals who volunteer within the organisation or those in receipt of services. It is also acknowledged that potentially members of the public or other organisations may wish to raise a matter of concern.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure sets out how the organisation will address complaints and concerns from whatever source and will endeavour at all times to achieve conciliation and a satisfactory outcome for the parties concerned.
- 1.4 Holt & District Dementia Support recognises that complaints can be a valuable tool for learning and improving the organisation and will approach any complaint in an open and honest manner that will aim to address the complaint and ensure that efforts are made to prevent a recurrence of the issue in the future.
- 1.5 The Charity Commission as an independent regulator of charities works closely with charities to ensure that they are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations in order to promote public trust and confidence. It will not investigate disagreements between individuals but will investigate if a volunteer has concerns related to the organisation's wider work or the fulfilment of its charitable aims. <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - 2.1.1 Provide Trustees, Committee Members, Volunteers and users of the service with information on how to make a complaint should the need arise and how that complaint will be addressed to try and achieve a satisfactory outcome for those involved.
 - 2.1.2 Set out the duties and responsibilities to be exercised by Trustees, Committee members and Volunteers working on behalf of Holt & District Dementia Support in relation to handling a complaint.
 - 2.1.3 Provide a clear procedure that will be implemented when a complaint arises.

3 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Complaint

- 3.1.1 A complaint is a matter of concern that is raised about the organisation, its members or its actions. It may be raised directly with an individual, formally in writing or by telephone or email.

4 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Trustees

- 4.1.1 Trustees have a duty to put in place the policies and processes to ensure that Holt & District Dementia Support is able to investigate and respond to complaints and matters of concern in an open manner and has in place clearly understood processes to follow so that individuals will have confidence that their concern will be addressed appropriately and honestly.
- 4.1.2 The Trustees have a duty as part of this process to act impartially and to the best of their ability to deal with issues of concern if and when they arise.
- 4.1.3 Trustees have a duty to raise concerns with the Charity Commission should there be well founded concerns related to the organisation meeting its obligations associated with its status as a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

4.2 The Chair (or Vice Chair)

- 4.2.1 The Chair is the final arbiter when matters arise that are not successfully dealt with at an earlier stage of the process and has the duty to deal with complaints arising in relation to other Trustees. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will assume that responsibility.

4.3 Working Committee

- 4.3.1 The Working Committee has a duty to support the Trustees in putting in place the correct policy and processes to ensure that the organisation is able to handle complaints in a fair and open manner and in conjunction with the Trustees, to monitor the implementation of those processes in practice.

4.4 Coordinator

- 4.4.1 Co-ordinators have a responsibility to act as the first point of contact should a complaint arise and where possible, to address that complaint at that level. The co-ordinator is required to inform the Trustees when a complaint has arisen, even when it has been successfully addressed, so that the organisation can understand and learn from the issues that have arisen and maintain a record of all complaints received.
- 4.4.2 Co-ordinators are required to inform any complainant that is in receipt of services that their use of services will not be prejudiced by raising a complaint or concern or if a volunteer, that their role can continue unless information arises from the investigation that suggest the volunteer has not met the requirements of their volunteering role.

4.5 All Volunteer Members

- 4.5.1 All volunteer members working on behalf of the organisation have a duty to inform a co-ordinator should a complaint or concern be raised with them and to reassure the person concerned that their complaint will be dealt with fairly.
- 4.5.2 Volunteers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and procedure.

5 PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN RESPONSE TO RECEIVING A COMPLAINT OR CONCERN

- 5.1 When a complaint or concern is raised it must be taken seriously and the complainant reassured that the matter will be dealt with fairly and appropriately. If the complainant is a service user they should be advised that this will not affect their access to the service. If the complainant is a volunteer, the person should be reassured that this will not affect their role as a volunteer unless issues arise as part of the investigation that suggest the volunteer has not met the requirements of their volunteering role.
- 5.2 A complaint will be dealt with initially by the co-ordinator for the service concerned and the matter communicated to the Trustees for information.
- 5.3 If the complaint is received formally in writing this must be investigated and discussed with a Trustee before a response in writing is issued.
- 5.4 Any complaints received about the work of the organisation, its use of funds or whether it is meeting its obligations as a charity should be immediately forwarded to a Trustee for follow up and action.
- 5.5 If a complaint or concern cannot be satisfactorily resolved by a coordinator the complaint will be forwarded to the Trustees for discussion, investigation and a response.
- 5.6 All complaints will be responded to within 21 days of receipt.
- 5.7 A complaint about the action of a Trustee will be investigated by the Chair or Vice-Chair.
- 5.8 If the complaint is about the Chair, the matter will be investigated by the other Trustees in unison without the Chair being present.
- 5.9 The final arbiter in any appeal will be the Chair or Trustee committee should the complaint concern the Chair.
- 5.10 All complaints will be discussed at the following Trustees' committee meeting and considered as to whether the complaint is an opportunity for learning and improving the working of the organisation.

6 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 Complaints and concerns will be dealt with confidentially and will not be discussed with the membership outside those directly involved.

7 REFERENCES

- 7.1 Charity Commission
<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>
- 7.2 National Council for Voluntary Organisations
<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/operations/policies-and-procedures>

8 **Flow Chart for Handling Complaints:**

