



# Complaints Policy and Procedure

October 2025

Policy	<b>Complaints Policy v1.2</b>
Author	<b>Mark McGeachie, Charity Director</b>
Approval	<b>Board of Trustees, October 2025</b>
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Date of next review	<b>October 2028</b>
Record of Changes	<b>September 2025</b> Updated section 3. Scope to explicitly cover application to Fundraising in line with new UK Fundraising Code of Practice (effective 1 November 2025)

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Fife Health Charity aims to deliver the highest standards of service and experience for those who engage with our charity. However we recognise that there may be times when we fall short of these standards. The value of a complaints process is that it allows our charity to put right any errors that may have occurred and learn from these so that we can prevent this from happening in the future.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide details on how we will manage complaints that arise when these standards are not met. The policy details:
  - How a complaint can be made the charity
  - How we will respond to the complaint
  - What happens if a person is unhappy with the outcome of the process
- 1.3 The policy covers all aspects of the charity's work and demonstrates our commitment to the 'Good Fundraising Guarantee' and requirements of charities from the Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice.
- 1.4 Any complaints which relate to the responsibilities of NHS Fife will not be handled under this policy or by the charity. NHS Fife has a clear process in place for anyone who wishes to provide feedback and further details can be found at [Providing feedback | NHS Fife](#).

## 2. Definition

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy, we consider a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction whether justified or not'<sup>1</sup>. Complaints can take the form of written (post or e-mail) or verbal (in-person or phone).

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy will apply to complaints directly relating to the charity, its activities including fundraising and those acting on the charity's behalf. This includes NHS Fife staff in their capacity as accepting donations on behalf of the charity.
- 3.2 The policy will apply to charity staff and Trustees who may receive, initially respond to, investigate and/or resolve a complaint, and ensure that learnings are acted upon, and procedures revised and implemented to avoid further complaints in future.
- 3.3 The following is outwith the scope of this policy:
  - Any complaints relating to matters of employment

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<sup>1</sup> British Standard (BS8543)

- Any verbal complaint which is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction no later than the next working day
- Requests to remove or amend information from the charity's database / records
- Comments or remarks made where no response is expected or required.

## 4. Types of complaint

- 4.1 **Informal complaint.** An informal complaint is one which is made verbally, to bring a matter or issue to the charity's attention, but where the complainant does not wish to raise this formally. In these circumstances, we will respond within ten working days by meeting with the complainant face-to-face (online or in person) or via the telephone. No written response will be provided although we will record the issues for our records. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they will be asked to raise the matter formally.
- 4.2 **Formal complaint.** Where an issue cannot be resolved through an informal process or the complaint is more appropriately addressed through a formal mechanism then the formal complaints process should be followed. This is detailed in Section 5 below.
- 4.3 All complaints should be registered within one month of the event leading to the complaint or of you becoming aware of a cause for complaint. However, we recognise that each case needs to be judged individually, and for complaints that fall outside of the time limits, we will exercise our discretion to apply the complaints procedure.
- 4.4 **Advocacy.** We are happy to accept complaints made on another individual's behalf by an advocate or representative. Where a complaint is written by an advocate or representative, we would ask that wherever possible the complainant should sign the correspondence to confirm that the details provided are accurate and true.
- 4.5 **Vexatious / Malicious complaints.** The Charity will not tolerate vexatious or malicious complaints which can be defined as a complaint made without foundation whereupon the complainant knows this to be the case, or it is considered that a reasonable person would know the complaint is without foundation, and it is pursued regardless. All complaints will be received by the charity in good faith. However, the charity will apply its discretion to consider whether a complaint is vexatious or malicious and under such circumstances this may impact the timescale for our response and outcome.

## 5. Complaints process

- 5.1 Complaints can be received in any of the following ways:

- Telephone
- Mail
- Email
- In person

In the event of a complaint made via the charity's social media channels, the complainant will be asked to contact us directly via one of the means noted above. The charity will log all complaints received, with details of:

- the name and contact details of the complainant;
- the complainant's involvement with the charity (i.e. donor, event participant etc.)
- the nature of the complaint including dates and timings

- 5.2 The individual making a complaint will receive an acknowledgement of their complaint within three working days and will be advised of the complaints process and timescales that will be followed.
- 5.2 **Stage 1.** In the first stage, the Charity Director will be responsible for reviewing and investigating the circumstances that have given rise to the complaint. A written response will be provided within 10 working days from the date the complaint was received. In the event that a final response is not possible within this timeframe, a written update will be provided on progress and an approximate period for concluding the investigation.
- 5.3 **Stage 2.** In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, the complainant can escalate the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair will review the matter and issue a response within 10 working days with a decision on upholding or not the Stage 1 response.
- 5.4 In the event that the Chair of the Trustees is unavailable, the matter will be considered by the Vice Chair(s).
- 5.5 In the event that the complaint is in relation to the actions of the Charity Director then the Stage 1 process will be carried out by one of the Charity Vice Chairs. In all cases, the completion of the Stage 2 process will be the final response of the charity.
- 5.6 **External advice.** In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the conclusion of the charity's complaints process they may wish to seek advice from the [Scottish Charity Regulator](#) (OSCR); or the [Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel](#) if the matter relates to fundraising/donations.
- 5.7 All complaints received by the charity will be recorded and reported to the charity Trustees at the next available meeting of the Board of Trustees. This will ensure that

all opportunities for learning and improvement in the charity's processes and ways of working are identified and acted upon.

## 6. How to complain

6.1 To make a complaint to the charity, please contact us by:

- Telephoning us on 07929 714 678 or 07815 028 707
- Emailing us at [fife.healthcharity@nhs.scot](mailto:fife.healthcharity@nhs.scot)
- Writing to us at 'Fife Health Charity, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, KY12 8SU'

6.2 Please make sure you clearly mark your email or letter as a complaint.