Complaints Policy

Introduction

Whilst we make every effort to meet peoples' expectations, circumstances may arise where an individual has a concern and wishes to bring this to our attention. We will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, in everyone's best interests.

Informal complains

Anyone who has a concern/complaint should attempt to initially raise this with those relevant to the complaint. If there is no clear person to direct the complaint to or the complainant does not wish to contact that person(s), the complaint should be passed to a BHS Trustee.

Those who receive the complaint will seek to resolve the concern and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have, ideally to his or her satisfaction. Where needed and if not already involved, a BHS Trustee can be included in discussions.

The following information will be gathered in order to process the complaint:

- The complainant's name and contact details, unless he/she is unwilling to provide these.
- The nature of his/her concern and anything that he/she wished to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when, where any action that was taken and the details of others who were present/involved.
- For informal complaints, the complaint will be acknowledged, if possible, within 5 working days and, if required, a response provided within a further 10 working days. Ideally, concerns should be resolved swiftly through open discussion.

Formal complaints

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she should be provided with the e-mail address of the BHS Secretary and/or our registered address, as they wish. Correspondence should be marked private and confidential. He or she should be provided with a copy of this policy by post or e mail.

To help resolve the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible, the individual making the complaint should do so as soon as possible and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and e mail.
- If you do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will of course respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is you felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What you believe should be done to address your concern.
- Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 5 working days. The complaint will then be investigated. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, the BHS Secretary will contact the person complaining to request this.

A response will be sent within 14 working days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 14 days advising when we estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain our findings and what action we will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he or she may appeal the decision, by writing to the BHS President, the contact details of whom will be included in our response. Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of our response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days and will be final.

Wider action

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, we will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to the Charity Commission, H&SW Executive, other regulator, or the Police.

Consideration will also be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

Anomalous complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked in to. However, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and his or her contact details. This will also allow us to advise him or her of the outcome.

Potential compensation claims

If a complaint may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal issue, our insurers are to be notified.

Confidentiality

The complaint will be treated as confidential and any communication on this issue, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act and the BHS Privacy and Data Policy.

Availability

This policy is publicly available, upon request.

Change record

Date of change	Change by	Reason for change
January 2026	BHS Main Committee	Adopted