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| HACRO CIO LOGO |

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| HACRO 62-72 Victoria StreetSt Albans Herts, AL1 3XHTel. 01727 854727E-mail: office@hacro.org.co.uk |

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**HACRO** External Complaints Policy

Number: 1-8 rev 3

**Introduction**

This policy concerns complaints that may have been received from persons or organisations from outside HACRO.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of HACRO.

A complaint may come from any service user, donor or sponsor, being either an individual or organisation. A complainant may be a member of the general public if something is perceived to be improper.

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing.

This policy does not deal with complaints from employees or volunteers. These are dealt within the HACRO Complaints and Harassment Policy.

**The Policy**

Overall responsibility for dealing with complaints lies with the Board of Trustees.

We take all complaints whether verbal or in writing very seriously and it is our policy to:

* To make sure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely fashion;
* Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to follow; and
* To publish the existence of our complaints procedure on our web site so that people may know how to contact us.

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our performance for the future as well as providing an opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that made the complaint.

All complaints will be subject to confidentiality and the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed beyond the Board of Trustees.

**The Procedure**

**Receiving Complaints**

* Written complaints may be sent to HACRO at its office at 62-72 Victoria Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3XH.
* E-mail complaints may be made at office@hacro.org.uk
* Verbal complaints may be made by telephone to 01727 854727

When receiving verbal complaints the HACRO person will:

* Write down the facts of the complaint;
* Take the complainants name and contact details;
* Note the relationship of the complainant with HACRO, e.g. Service user, donor or sponsor and the individual within HACRO responsible for the issue which is the subject of the complaint;
* Inform the complainant what will happen next, if the complainant has not already stated what is wanted;
* Where appropriate ask the complainant if they wish to send a written account of their complaint in writing; and
* All complaints will be logged in the administrator’s office and reported to the Board of Trustees at the next regular board meeting together with the outcome of each complaint.

**Resolving Complaints**

In the first instance, the complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If this is not possible, or the complainant excludes it, the matter will be delegated to an appropriate person to investigate it.

Complaints should be acknowledged immediately but no later than five days following receipt. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the matter and when the complainant may expect a formal reply.

The formal reply should be given within one month of receipt of the complaint describing the action taken to investigate the complaint and any action taken as a consequence of the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which the complaint has been dealt with, the matter will be referred to the Board of Trustees. The matter will then be further investigated by a Trustee, unconnected with the subject of the complaint, who will review the complaint and its investigation. It will be necessary for the Trustee to engage with the complainant with a view to resolving the matter.

If the Trustee is unable to resolve the matter, it will be necessary to explain to the complainant how they may make a formal complaint to the Charities Commission. The Charities Commission has a procedure for this purpose set out on its web site “Complain about a Charity”

The outcome of the complaint should be recorded in the log book which should be kept in the administrators office and be available for inspection.

**Obligations of the Trustees**

The Trustees are obliged to ensure that all complaints are properly investigated and, if possible, resolved. If it is not resolved, the Trustees will explain how the complainant may take their complaint to the Charities Commission as set out above.

The Trustees may, themselves be obliged to report a serious incident to the Charities Commission. The procedure for submitting such a report is set out on the Charities Commission’s web site.

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to those people who come into contact with HACRO through its work or could bring harm to HACRO’s work or its reputation.

The Trustees may also be obliged to report an incident to another, appropriate, regulator such as the Information Commissioners Office. More information regarding such reports is set out on the Charities Commission’s web site.

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|  **Policy Review Record** |
| **Review Date** | **Reviewed By** | **Comment** |
| 24/04/16 | Andrew Bayram | New Policy |
| 03/02/17 | Andrew Bayram | Trustee approval |
| 02/07/20 | Sean Bolton | No change |