



## **The Shire Horse Society**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **Policy Statement**

- I. The Shire Horse Society will review and improve their services where necessary on a regular basis, which involves giving positive messages to volunteers, beneficiaries, members, partners and others about expressing their views. We will ensure that we:
  - Listen to people's views and concerns;
  - Act consistently on receipt of comments and complaints.
  - Review our actions, building on positive outcomes;
  - Learn from identified shortcomings; and,
  - Consistently improve.
- II. The chairman, trustees, directors, members and volunteers of the Charity, should actively encourage persons to comment on their services. This will enable improvements in delivery of their services and cultivates trust, openness, and accountability.
- III. Our success criteria for dealing with complaints will ensure that:
  - We operate a clear and accountable procedure with guidance on how to complain;
  - We accept complaints verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing;
  - We will promote a positive culture about complaints.
  - We aim to resolve matters speedily to the satisfaction of the complainant; and,
  - We will monitor complaints to inform the development of policy and best practice.

#### **4. Procedure for informal and formal comments and complaints**

##### **I. Informal Stage:**

- The majority of minor complaints or concerns should be dealt with at the time to the satisfaction of the complainant. Staff or Trustees receiving a minor concern or complaint which they have not been able to resolve to the complainant's satisfaction, should be reported to the Charity chairman and trustees who will deal with it as an informal complaint.
- The Charity will respond to informal complaints that have not been resolved locally and therefore have been escalated, within 10 working days.

##### **II. Formal Stage:**

- The complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing;

- If the complaint is about service delivery, the Chairman will respond and will consult any other staff necessary, taking statements, if necessary, before doing so;
- If the complaint specifically involves work by one or more members of staff, the person(s) complained about should be given a copy of the complaint and invited to reply unless to do so would place someone at risk;
- The Chairman will investigate the complaint and should take statements from anyone involved or who can help. The Chairman should decide whether to uphold the complaint fully, or in part, or whether to dismiss it whilst cataloguing the reason for doing so;
- Every effort should be made to respond to the complainant within 10 working days by the Chairman. A written reply, if so desired by the complainant, should be sent within 28 calendar days;
- Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response, then they have the right to appeal within 14 calendar days against the Chairman's decision to the Board of Trustees for review. The Board will appoint two trustees to form a Complaints Panel and a chairman will be elected. The chairman shall have a casting vote;
- The complainant may be invited to attend and present their complaint with assistance or help as they deem necessary. The complainants aid may:
  - address the hearing but not answer questions on behalf of the complainant;
  - confer with the complainant during the hearing;
  - ask questions of the trustee panel members;
  - confer with the complainant during the hearing, in private if requested.
- The Panel should clarify any issues necessary;
- The Panel will reach a decision which may be unanimous or a majority verdict;
- The Panel will respond to the complainant within 10 working days of the Panel concluding, informing them whether the complaint has been upheld fully, or in part, or whether it has been dismissed. The Panel's decision will be final with regards to the charity; but in the event that the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, then they have the right to refer the matter to the Charity Commission.

## **5. Complaints Log**

- I. The Shie Horse Society will hold a Complaints Log, whereby formal complaints are logged, to include the findings, actions taken and outcomes.
- II. The Complaints Log will be reviewed annually by the chairman and board of trustees.