

Complaints Policy Hartlepool Stage Society

Date Approved:	30/06/2026	Review Date:	30/06/2029
Approved by:	Exec Committee		
Relevant to:	✓ Hartlepool Stage Society	✓ Hartlepool Junior Stage Society	
Signed:	Peter Rowlands	Date:	30/06/2026
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1. Why do we have a complaints policy?

1.1 We welcome feedback on any aspect of our work, including complaints, comments, compliments and suggestions. This policy covers complaints only.

1.2 Hartlepool Stage Society tries to have high standards for everything we do but we recognise that this is not always possible. We take complaints seriously, and when we make a mistake, we want to know about it and do our best to put it right.

1.4 If you are thinking about making a complaint, but aren't sure if you want to, talk to any committee member. They can tell you more about how complaints are dealt with.

1.5 Hartlepool Stage Society is positive about receiving complaints, and views them as an opportunity for us to get things right. We are committed to learning and continuous improvement.

1.6 This Policy does not cover complaints from members who are complaining about another member in this case they should refer to our Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

2. Who Can Complain using this policy

2.1 Complaints may come from any individual or organisation that has contacted us or participated in Society activities. They may be received verbally, by phone, by email, or in writing [or via social media].

2.2 If you don't want to make a complaint yourself, you can ask someone, such as a parent or friend, to make a complaint on your behalf. First we will need to be sure you have asked them to raise your concern (we will need this in writing from you).

3. What can you complain about

- 3.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the work of Hartlepool Stage Society.
- 3.2 This policy sets out Hartlepool Stage Societies process for responding to complaints. The process is intended to be as clear, fair, consistent and timely as possible.
- 3.3 If you are a child or member and have concerns about your own or others safety or protection (safeguarding concerns), please tell a committee member immediately.

4. What constitutes a serious complaint?

The Charity Commission for England and Wales defines a 'serious' complaint as one concerning an action that could cause 'serious risk of harm to the charity or the people it was set up to help'. They provide the following list of such actions -

- a charity not following the law, with damaging consequences to its reputation and public trust in charities generally.
- serious harm to the people the charity helps or other people who come into contact with the charity through its work.
- a person or organisation unlawfully receiving significant financial benefit from a charity.
- criminal, illegal or terrorist activity.
- a charity set up for illegal or improper purposes.
- a charity losing significant amounts of money.
- a charity losing significant assets, for example land or buildings

5. What is not covered in this policy?

- 5.1 This Policy does not cover complaints from members who are complaining about another member in this case they should refer to our Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.
- 5.2 Safeguarding concerns should be raised using the safeguarding policy

6. Key principles of this policy

- 6.1 We will Provide a fair, clear and easy to use complaints procedure if you wish to make a complaint or report a concern;
- 6.2 We will ensure our policy and procedures about complaints are clear, open and honest to ensure everyone knows what to expect when they contact us
- 6.3 We will ensure that everyone at the Society knows what to do if we receive a complaint;
- 6.4 We will Investigate complaints fairly and promptly, ensuring they are addressed wherever possible
- 6.5 We will record complaints in a Complaints Log and monitor them to help us improve what we do.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 Complaints will be treated confidentially. Information will be handled sensitively following the Data Protection Act 2018. Only those directly involved in the complaint process who need to access the information will have access to relevant confidential information.

8 Responsibility

- 8.1 Overall responsibility for this Policy and its implementation lies with our Committee [or trustees], who will review it regularly and update it as required.

9. How to Complain

- 9.1 In many cases, a problem is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. They may resolve it quickly and should do so if possible and appropriate. If you feel able, you may raise your concern informally with a committee member who will try to resolve your issue informally where possible within 10 working days
- 9.2 If you are not satisfied or wish to raise a formal complaint, please put it in writing via email or using the society website using the contact form see appendix A for details. This will be forwarded to the society Secretary.
- 9.3 When you make a formal complaint please tell us:
- Clearly what happened and include the date, time and location, if it concerns an incident;
 - Why you are making the complaint;
 - What you would like us to do;
 - Your full name, email address and contact phone number and how you would like us to contact you; and
 - If appropriate, please send us any documents that support your complaint.
- 9.4 What will we do once we receive complaint or concern?
- You will get an acknowledgement of your complaint within 7 days and we may ask you for further information to help us to resolve the matter.
 - We will carefully consider and record your complaint.
 - We will respond to your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it and let you know how it will be handled by us. If this is not possible we will let you know why.
 - We will investigate appropriately and thoroughly.
 - If we can resolve the issue, we will take action and tell you what that action is.
 - The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the [Committee] decides it is appropriate to obtain assistance from Trustees or external bodies to resolve the issue (Stage 3)
 - Lastly, we will take steps to avoid a repeat occurrence and/or to improve our activities.

- At all times, we will treat you with understanding, patience and respect. All we ask is that you do the same in return.
- Please note that we cannot guarantee that complaints made on social media channels will be seen or responded to within the above timescales as we do not have sufficient resources to monitor these.

10 Anonymous complaints

- 10.1 Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked into. But, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our activities, 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.
- 10.2 Anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and their contact details.

Appendix A: Complaints process flowchart

