



Applicant/Client Complaints Procedure

Medical Detection Dogs' Applicant and Client Complaints Procedure is designed to enable applicants who have a complaint in relation to the application process activity or for clients with one of the charity's assistance dog partnerships to raise the matter and for it to be investigated and dealt with in a timely, fair and equitable manner. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and effective method of resolving grievances within a reasonable time of any issue being raised.

Step One: Informal Discussion

If an applicant or client has a complaint, they should first raise it with their point of contact within the charity in whichever form of communication they feel comfortable with. The only exception to this would be if their point of contact is the person to whom the problem relates and the applicant/client feels unable to raise the grievance with them. In this case, the grievance should be referred to the Client and Partnership Co-ordinator who will discuss the grievance with the applicant/client informally.

The point of contact will discuss the complaint with the applicant/client informally to gain further information and see what actions, if any, need to take place. If the complaint appears to lack sound basis, the point of contact may communicate to the applicant/client that a conclusive outcome is not possible or appropriate and therefore no further action would be taken.

We hope that most concerns will be resolved at this stage. If this is the case, the grievance needs no further action.

If during the discussion, it becomes clear that the issue is more serious, the informal discussion should be stopped to allow for further investigation. The point of contact should ask the applicant/client if there are any witnesses or avenues of investigation they would like him/her to pursue.

Step Two: Formal Grievance

- If the informal discussion does not resolve the issue and the applicant/client indicates that they wish to raise a formal grievance, they should put the grievance in writing.
- The grievance should be summarised in the words of the applicant or client or read back to them and agreed as an accurate outline of their grievance within 5 working days.
- The grievance must be logged onto Medical Detection Dogs' database

Step Three: Investigation

The grievance investigation is confidential. It will be undertaken by the Investigating Manager, who would be the Client and Partnership Co-ordinator or the Assistance Dog Programme Manager.

The Investigating Manager will study the facts surrounding the case, taking fact-based witness statements where required, within 15 working days of the action being logged.

- A date for a meeting should be arranged, at a time and location that is suitable to all parties, as soon as is reasonably possible and in any event within 15 working days of the grievance being logged.
- If the applicant/client wishes, they may bring along a third party for support, such as a family member or friend, not acting in a legal capacity.
- If the applicant/client refuses to come to the meeting, then the grievance will be closed. No appeal is possible in this situation, as the meeting is a basic requirement to resolve the issue

Step Four: Grievance Meeting

A meeting should be arranged between the applicant/client and the individual whom the grievance is against. The Investigating Manager will act as facilitator, to discuss and try to resolve the grievance. The applicant/client will be asked and supported to state their case. If appropriate, an action plan will be discussed by the Investigating Manager and a timescale will be arranged for a review.

Step Five: After grievance meeting

A written summary and ensuing confirmation of the meeting will be supplied to the applicant/client within 10 working days of the date of the meeting with their right to appeal to the specified name of the Appeal Manager.

- If all parties are happy with the outcomes in the meeting, then no further action is required and the grievance will be closed. The Investigating Manager may identify actions to resolve the grievance, and implement an action plan
- At the end of the agreed timescale for the action pan, the Investigating Manager should ensure actions are completed and arrange a phone call, conference call or face-to-face meeting with the applicant/client. If the actions have been completed within the agreed time frame the grievance will be closed.

Appeal

If after the actions from the formal meeting have been reviewed, the matter remains unresolved, the applicant/client should write his/her ongoing grievances indicating a basis for the appeal. This should be sent to the next level of manager within 10 working days after the grievance meeting.

The Appeal Manager will decide if it is reasonable to continue and must investigate all information relating to the appeal statement and respond within 15 working days of receiving the request for appeal. They should provide a written summary of the investigation and their decision on the grievance in the applicant's/client's preferred format, including details of the Final Review stage

Final Review

If the applicant/client is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal and has new information not considered in the Appeal previously that is significant and relevant, they must send this to the CEO or COO within 10 working days of the appeal decision. The CEO or COO may consider liaising with an appropriate Trustee to consider the grievance. The outcome and final decision will be discussed to the applicant/client within 15 days. The decision will be final.