Standard Operating Procedure Appeal Process- Grant Application

Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to provide a fair, transparent and proportionate process for reviewing funding decisions where an applicant believes that a procedural error, omission, use of incorrect information, or conflict of interest may have affected the outcome of their application. The appeals process ensures accountability in charitable fund management whilst maintaining the integrity of the Charity's decision-making framework.

Scope

Appeals will only be considered for applications with a value equal to or exceeding £5,000 and where one or more of the defined grounds for appeal can be evidenced.

Aim

The appeals process allows applicants to request a review of a funding decision.

Responsibilities

- All applicants and relevant Charity team members must ensure they have read and understood the SOP before submitting and reviewing a request to appeal a decision.
- The charity senior team are responsible for ensuring the content of the SOP is kept up to date. If a process has changed/requires updating team members must report this to the SOP owner.
- It is the responsibility of all the relevant team members and applicants to ensure they are using the most current version of this SOP.

General

Grounds against which an appeal can be made

For the purposes of this SOP, a procedural error is defined as a failure to follow the Charity's approved funding procedures, Scheme of Delegation, delegated authorities or published grant assessment process.

Applicants may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

- Appeals will only be considered for applications with a value equal to or exceeding £5,000 and where one or more of the defined grounds for appeal can be evidenced.
- **A procedural error** for the purposes of this SOP, a procedural error is defined as a failure to follow the Charity's approved funding procedures, Scheme of Delegation, delegated authorities, or published grant assessment process.
- **Relevant evidence** submitted before the decision was not considered
- **Incorrect information** was used to make the decision
- **Bias or conflict of interest** may have influenced the outcome

Appeals cannot be made simply because the applicant disagrees with the decision or wishes to submit new information after the decision has been made.

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How to Submit an Appeal

The applicant must submit the appeal **in writing** via email to *uhdb.charitablefundingenquiry@nhs.net*. within **56 days** of receiving the decision.

The ground for appeal must clearly state:

- The decision being appealed
- The grounds for appeal
- Any supporting evidence (must have been available at the time of the original application)

The charity must acknowledge receipt within **10 working days** unless in exceptional circumstances.

Appeal Review Process

Once an appeal is received via the charitable funding enquiries inbox, it must be forwarded to the Charity Head of Governance & Assurance (HofG&A) who will undertake the initial screening.

Stage 1 — Initial Screening

Initial screening should normally be completed within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

The charity HofG&A undertakes an eligibility check and validates whether there are grounds for appeal.

- **If not valid:** The applicant is informed in writing of the reasons why the appeal does not meet the criteria set out in this SOP and will not progress further.
- **If valid** the appeal progresses to Stage 2, the applicant is informed via email.

The Head of Grant Giving informs the Grant Determination Group (GDG) of the request to appeal and updates the application progress spreadsheet and the beacon application file.

Stage 2 — Independent Review Panel

The HofG&A is responsible for ensuring that panel members are independent of the original decision-making process and appropriately authorised to undertake the review.

All members of the Independent Review Panel must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest before reviewing an appeal. Any individual involved in the original funding decision will be excluded from the appeal review process. A panel of at least **two senior charity leaders** (e.g. SLT members) will:

- Re-examine the application
- Review the decision-making process
- Consider the appeal grounds and evidence
- Ensure governance and delegated authority were correctly applied

The panel will **not** consider new information that was not part of the original submission.

The panel will be selected by the HofG&A on a case-by-case basis.

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The Head of Governance & Assurance may seek advice from the Charity Chief Executive, Finance Performance and Income Generation Committee (FPIGC), or Board of Trustees, where appropriate and in accordance with the Charity's Scheme of Delegation and reserved powers.

Step 3 Decision outcomes

- Uphold the original decision and reject the appeal.
- Overturn the original decision and approve the application.
- Request clarification from the original reviewers before reaching a final determination.
- Return the application for reconsideration through the appropriate decision-making route where a procedural error is identified.

The applicant receives a written outcome within 56 working days of the appeal being accepted. Where this is not possible due to exceptional circumstances, the applicant will be informed of the reasons for the delay and provided with a revised timescale.

Final Decision

The Head of Governance & Assurance is responsible for ensuring the applicant is notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal and that all relevant records are updated.

The decision of the Independent Review Panel is final. No further appeals in relation to the same application or decision will be considered.

Recording & Governance

- **Grant determination group (GDG) is informed by the HofG&A,** the application progress spreadsheet is updated by the grant giving team.
- All appeals and decisions are logged in the Beacon timeline in the appropriate application file.
- All appeals and their outcomes will be reported to the Charity Senior Leadership Team through the SLT Business Meeting. Significant, high-value, high-risk or complex appeals may also be reported to FPIGC and/or the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Charity's governance framework and Scheme of Delegation.
- Lessons learned from appeals will be reviewed periodically by the Charity Senior Leadership Team to identify opportunities to strengthen guidance, improve processes and reduce recurring procedural issues.
- All appeal documentation, correspondence, review notes and decisions must be retained in accordance with the Charity's records management and retention requirements.

Initiating SOP Update

This SOP will be updated every two years unless changes in practice require an update earlier

Final Document Release (by SOP owner)

- Present draft SOP at SLT for approval
- If approved remove ‘Draft’ from document, load onto SoP Folder

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Grant Application Appeal Process Map

START

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Funding Application Declined

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Appeal Eligibility Check (Value ≥ £5,000 and valid grounds for appeal)

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Appeal Submitted (within 56 days)

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Acknowledgement Sent (within 10 working days)

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Stage 1: Initial Screening (Head of Governance & Assurance)

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Valid Grounds for Appeal?

- NO → Applicant Notified → Appeal Closed → END
- YES → Stage 2: Independent Review Panel

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Review Application, Process and Evidence

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Panel Decision

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- Uphold Decision
- Overturn Decision
- Request Clarification
- Return for Reconsideration

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Written Outcome Issued
(within 56 working days)

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Records Updated
(Beacon, GDG and Progress Tracker)

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Governance Reporting
(SLT / FPIGC / Board of Trustees as appropriate)

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Appeal Closed

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END

HofG&A informs GDG group of the appeal submission and the grant giving team makes a record on the application file and updates the progress tracker

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