

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love”

Ephesians 4v2

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Ephesian Fund (“the Charity”) is committed to providing excellent service as it fulfils its charitable purposes. The trustees recognise that sometimes issues may arise, and the trustees are dedicated to resolving them promptly and effectively. This policy outlines the Charity’s approach to handling complaints in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner.
- 1.2. The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the trustees of the Charity.
- 1.3. The trustees of the Charity are aware of The Charity Governance Code, principle 7, (as amended from time to time) and aims for openness and accountability in communicating and consulting effectively to help build trust and confidence with the stakeholders of the Charity.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all trustees, employees, and any other parties representing the Charity who may receive or handle complaints.

3. Definition of a Complaint

- 3.1. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about our products, standards of service, processes, actions or lack of action or the conduct of the Charity, our trustees, employees or representatives, which requires a response.
- 3.2. As recorded in clause 6.1 of the Charity’s Grant Making policy [*dated*], the decision on which grants the trustees award is final and under clause 6.2, the trustees are not obliged to provide an explanation to unsuccessful applicants. An unsuccessful applicant requesting feedback from their grant application is not considered a complaint to be handled under the terms of this policy.

4. Receipt of Complaints

- 4.1. Complainants should be able to make a complaint as easily as possible. Complaints may be received through various channels, including but not limited to in person, by phone, via email, and by post.
- 4.2. All complaints must be logged in the Charity’s designated complaints register upon receipt, including the date, time, nature of the complaint, contact details of the complainant, and any other relevant information.

5. Acknowledgment of Complaints

- 5.1. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Charity will acknowledge it within 7 days via the same channel through which it was received. The acknowledgment will include a reference number for tracking purposes and an estimated timeframe for resolution.
- 5.2. Complainants will be informed of the existence of this policy and provided with a copy of this policy, if requested.

6. Investigation and Resolution

- 6.1. **Assigned Officer:** A designated complaints officer who is a trustee of the Charity will be responsible for investigating and resolving the complaint. The officer will gather all necessary information, including contacting the complainant if required, and work towards a satisfactory resolution.
- 6.2. **Timely Resolution:** We aim to resolve complaints as promptly as possible. Complex complaints may require more time for investigation, but we commit to providing regular updates to the complainant regarding the progress and expected resolution timeframe.
- 6.3. **Resolution:** Depending on the nature of the complaint, the complainant will be notified of:
 - 6.3.1. the steps the Charity has taken to investigate the complaint;
 - 6.3.2. the conclusions drawn from the investigation; and
 - 6.3.3. any actions taken as a result of the investigation.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1. All complaints will be handled confidentially. Where appropriate, the relevant information may be shared with other trustees.
- 7.2. If the complaint relates to a specific person, the trustees may choose to inform that person as to the nature of the complaint in the course of their investigation and seek a response from them. The specific details of the complainant and other sensitive information will not be shared with the subject of the complaint.
- 7.3. The trustees will review the complaints register periodically.

8. Communication

- 8.1. Throughout the complaints handling process, clear and transparent communication with the complainant is essential. The Charity will use its best endeavours to keep the complainant informed of the progress, any delays, and the final outcome of the investigation.

9. Closure and Follow-Up

9.1. Once the complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, we will formally close the matter and record the outcome in the complaints register. We may also conduct follow-up checks to ensure that the resolution remains effective and that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.

10. Appeals

10.1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they should inform the trustees of the Charity in writing within 3 months of receiving the response from the Charity.

10.2. Wherever possible, a different trustee to the designated complaints officer will investigate the appeal.

10.3. The appeal investigation will provide a definitive response to the complainant within 2 months. The conclusion of this investigation will be considered final, there are no further internal processes.

10.4. At any time, the complainant may complain directly to the Charity's regulator, The Charity Commission, please see their website for the types of complaint it can investigate.

11. Continuous Improvement

11.1. The trustees are committed to continually reviewing and improving the Charity's complaints handling process to ensure they can fulfil the Charity's charitable purposes effectively and prevent future complaints. Feedback received through the complaints handling process will be analysed, and any necessary adjustments to policies, procedures, or employee training will be implemented.

12. Contact Information

12.1 Complaints should be sent to/ be logged with Simon Byrne simonbyrne@ceec.info

12.2 Designated complaints officer – Piyush Jani (Trustee).

This version of the policy was adopted by the Charity trustees on 8 May 2024

Next review date May 2025