



Complaints Policy

INTERIM views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint

Our policy is:

To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint

To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint

To make sure everyone at INTERIM knows what to do if a complaint is received

To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way

To make sure complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and relationships repaired

To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint:

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of INTERIM's business

Where Complaints come from:

Complaints may come from any person or organisation, beneficiaries, donors, funders or the general public

A complaint can be received verbally, by telephone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff and volunteers (including Trustees) who should use INTERIM's Discipline and Grievance policies

Confidentiality:

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Trustees

Review:

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required

Monitoring and Assessment of the Policy and Procedures:

INTERIM maintains a Complaints Log of all cases brought under the Complaints Policy. An annual report is produced and presented to Trustees by the Chief Executive detailing (a) the number, type and origin of the complaints, (b) the conduct of the procedures followed, (c) the outcomes of the procedures, and (d) any recommendations for amendment to the policy and procedures.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints:

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

The annual number of complaints about the effectiveness of the complaints policy will be used as a measure of the policy's success

Resolving Complaints:

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees within one week

On receiving the complaint, it will be recorded in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, an appropriate person will be delegated to investigate it and to take appropriate action

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given fair opportunity to respond

Complaints will be acknowledged at this stage by the person handling the complaint within 7 days

The acknowledgement must state clearly who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure must be attached

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint

Stage Two

If the complainant feels the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request the complaint is reviewed. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to Stage Two complaints and returned to the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees.

The request for review should be acknowledged within 7 days of receiving it. The acknowledgement must say who will deal with it and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork to date and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they must be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One must also be kept informed of what is happening

Again ideally the complainant/s must receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Lastly, whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant must describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

A complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure:

Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

