



the  
fundraising  
partnership

## Complaints Procedure

A guide to our ethos and handling of complaints

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# **The importance of complaints**

We take any complaint with the utmost of seriousness. We understand the damage that can be caused to the reputation of our charity partners by poor practice on the part of our fundraisers.

## **Complaints Avoidance - training, testing, inspection & re-training**

A key element of our training programme is to ensure that fundraisers are taken through the Code of Professional Conduct, the Sensitivity & Vulnerable Persons policy and their legal obligations thoroughly. Illustrative scenarios are used to show how to deal with practical situations in the field. The complaints procedure is circulated and explained in detail. All fundraisers undertake a test made up of a multiple-choice quiz and a face-to-face interview.

All Fundraisers undertake an observation inspection on a bi-annual basis as a minimum. Annual refreshers courses are delivered and/or when there is a need to retrain an individual or the entire fundraiser team. These are recorded within their Record of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Periodically, on request of the fundraiser, or the charity or for general support a variety of staff, but especially our Field Development Coaches, spend time working alongside fundraisers in the field. A part of this activity is to detect and correct any significant or minor deviation from acceptable practice. These are recorded via a Field Visit Form and are discussed within the management team.

## **Complaints Avoidance – incident reporting**

Fundraisers are instructed to report any issues, however trivial, to their manager as soon as they take place. This enables the manager to make an informed decision and, if appropriate, pre-empt any potential complaint.

# Complaints Management

Complaints need to be investigated thoroughly & honestly with good communication throughout with the fundraiser and the charity and usually via the charity, the complainant.

Records need to be kept for a variety of reasons including trend analysis to inform the training programme for individuals and the fundraiser team collectively.

## Complaint investigation process

### Complaint submission

1. Complaints should be communicated by the charity by email to **administration@thefundraisingpartnership.co.uk**.
2. An acknowledgement will be sent as soon as possible
3. The subsequent stages will be completed within 72 hours
4. If longer is required, the charity will be informed with an explanation

### Risk Assessment

1. An initial risk assessment will be made to determine whether immediate suspension is warranted to protect the charity's reputation, the fundraisers safety or well-being or the public.

### Complaint preliminary investigation

1. The Investigating officer shall conduct the preliminary investigation by compiling the following:
2. written statement(s) from the fundraiser –
3. note these may be phone conversations converted into emails with confirmation –
4. the original complaint and any additional material from them
5. these will usually be obtained via the charity rather than directly

6. Any relevant supporting documentation such as, notes from vetting calls if relevant, extracts from policies, previous complaints, CPD file etc

### **Complaint secondary investigation**

1. The field Manager will be asked to add comments or conduct a field interview or visit e.g., inspect a property with a no-cold calling sign. These will be added to the Investigation report.

### **Complaint adjudication**

1. The CEO or Managing Director, will review the file and determine the adjudication and additional actions, usually one of the following
  - a. Complaint against fundraiser upheld
    - i. The fundraiser has acted in breach of the spirit or specifics of one or more policies and procedures.
  - b. Complaint against company upheld
    - i. The Company has failed to implement its policies effectively or has policies which are deficient
  - c. Complaint against fundraiser noted
    - i. The fundraiser has acted in accordance with company policies and procedures and no wrongdoing is involved but the fundraiser should review their practice in the light of this complaint in order to improve.
  - d. Complaint against company noted
    - i. The Company has implemented its policies effectively, but the company should review its policies and practices in the light of this complaint in order to improve.
  - e. Complaint not upheld

- i. The fundraiser has acted in accordance with company policies and procedures and no wrongdoing is involved. They have acted professionally and taken all reasonable steps to prevent a complaint.
  - ii. The Company policies and practices are appropriate and effective and have been executed efficiently
- f. Complaint dismissed
  - i. There is insufficient evidence to support a complaint
  - ii. or the complaint relates to decisions beyond the company's jurisdiction e.g., legal framework for door-to-door fundraising.
  - iii. or the complaint appears prejudicial or vexatious

### **Adjudication reporting**

1. The fundraising partnership will email the charity, the fundraiser, and their manager with their decision.

### **Action Plan**

1. This will specify and Additional actions required if any. They may include any or some of the following or other actions
  - a. Re-training of the fundraiser
  - b. Re-training of all fundraisers or a sub-section if for example a charity specific issue
  - c. Disciplinary investigation against the fundraiser
  - d. Disciplinary investigation of some other person such as the manager of the fundraiser

## **Reporting a complaint**

On the rare occasion that a complaint is made against one of our staff we implement a robust management process that has been stress tested in the field over a number of years. At each stage of this process, we will be completely open with the charity and share any information that they require.

### **Stage 1**

The charity reports the incident to the fundraising partnership as soon as they become aware.

### **Stage 2**

The charity will provide the fundraising partnership with a written statement of the complaint sent via email to [administration@thefundraisingpartnership.co.uk](mailto:administration@thefundraisingpartnership.co.uk).

### **Stage 3**

A telephone interview will be conducted with the fundraiser against whom the complaint has been made. This will be undertaken by a senior member of management. At this time, the senior manager will make the decision whether or not to suspend the fundraiser. If the fundraiser is suspended, we move to Stage 4.

All minor complaints are resolved verbally within 4 hours followed by an email response giving complainant statement, fundraiser statement and any other statements that were part of the investigation. It also incorporates a conclusion and action plan. This is supplied within 24 hours.

### **Stage 4**

This will be followed by a written statement from the fundraiser, where applicable, to the fundraising partnership clarifying their side of the incident. This needs to be completed within 24 hours.

### **Stage 5**

The fundraising partnership will complete their investigation. Sometimes we may need to contact the complainant.

It is open for and often preferable for the charity to manage this correspondence themselves. The complainant is only ever contacted if the issue is serious or if clarification is needed.

### **Stage 6**

When the investigation is completed, we will contact the charity with a verbal response. This will be followed by a written response in email form.