



# Fundraising Complaints Procedure

## 1. Introduction

This procedure<sup>1</sup> is designed to ensure that the organisation provides proper and consistent attention to concerns and Fundraising complaints of donors, supporters and members of the public. The policy applies to voluntary fundraising activity and supporter care. The procedure outlined below will be followed when any member of staff receives a fundraising complaint.

This procedure has also been written to comply with the requirements of the following: Data Protection Act 2018

- The General Data Protection Regulations
- Privacy of Electronic Communications Regulations
- The Fundraising Code of Practice

This procedure should also be read in conjunction with Young Epilepsy and St Piers's Fundraising complaints policy and Young Epilepsy and St Piers's privacy notice.

## 2. Definitions

### Informal Fundraising Concern

An informal fundraising concern is defined as any comment, feedback or expression of dissatisfaction made by a donor, funder or supporter regarding a fundraising activity, supporter communication or a donation, that can be resolved immediately and swiftly to the satisfaction of the complainant, without the need for escalation, formal recording or reporting.

### Formal Fundraising Complaint

A formal fundraising complaint is defined either by the complainant, who may wish the complaint to be made formal, or by Young Epilepsy and St Piers if it is a written or verbal expression of significant dissatisfaction, or a perceived grievance or injustice by a donor, funder, supporter or member of the public regarding a fundraising activity, supporter communication or a donation. A formal complaint cannot be swiftly resolved at the time, usually because it is more complex and/or more serious in nature, and will be escalated to the appropriate manager, recorded and documented as a formal complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> This procedure and associated policy is separate from the Young Epilepsy and St Piers/St Piers Compliments, Concerns and Fundraising Fundraising complaints procedure and the annual Fundraising complaints report to Trustees.

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### 3. Complaint Handling Guidance

A complaint can be raised in several ways:

1. Via any Young Epilepsy and St Piers staff member in writing or verbally.
  2. Sending an email to [complaints@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:complaints@youngepilepsy.org.uk)
  3. A complaint raised via social media
  4. An email sent to [Supportercare@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:Supportercare@youngepilepsy.org.uk)
  5. An email sent to [fundraising@youngepilepsy.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@youngepilepsy.org.uk)
  6. Via post to the offices in Lingfield or London.
- The requirement to have a Fundraising complaints procedure does not undermine efforts to resolve a concern informally by the relevant manager.
  - At first it may be unclear as to whether the individual is raising a question or expressing an opinion rather than making a complaint. An initial discussion about the issue may help to clarify and decide what may need to happen next.
  - Staff need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.
  - If the issue remains unresolved after an informal process of clarifying and attempting to resolve the issue, the initial stage of the formal Fundraising complaints procedure would follow.
  - At each stage in the Fundraising complaints procedure Young Epilepsy and St Piers will endeavour to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity.
  - Responses to concerns and Fundraising complaints are based on openness, candour and integrity and Young Epilepsy and St Piers will apologise when responsibility is acknowledged for any failures.
  - Once a complaint has been made it can be withdrawn at any time by the Complainant.
  - Consent and confidentiality must not be compromised during the Fundraising complaints process unless there are professional or statutory obligations that make this necessary, such as safeguarding.
  - The Fundraising Director is responsible for overseeing the management of Fundraising complaints in Young Epilepsy and St Piers, working alongside the Compliance Team.
  - The Fundraising Director takes responsibility for overseeing the Fundraising complaints records, the progress of each complaint, the final outcome and the monitoring of actions.
  - A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. A Complainant doesn't have to state that they are 'making a complaint' for their concern to be treated as such.
  - The Fundraising complaints procedure must be reviewed every two years by the Young Epilepsy Trustee Board.

Procedure

#### **Informal Fundraising Concerns Resolution**

1.1 Where possible and appropriate, staff should try to resolve concerns raised informally and swiftly to find a satisfactory outcome for all parties.

1.2 Staff may be able to resolve concerns immediately without speaking to a manager, however a manager should be informed that the concern was raised to ensure a satisfactory resolution is achieved.

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1.3 No record of concerns or their response is required.

1.4 If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved informally, the formal Fundraising complaints procedure should be initiated. The person raising the concern must always be asked whether they are satisfied with the outcome of an informal resolution process.

### **Formal Fundraising complaints Resolution**

When a complaint is received, it is necessary that the staff member receiving the complaint, records this in writing and passes it over immediately to the relevant fundraising manager/Head of, who will record the complaint in the dedicated 'Fundraising Complaints' folder held on SharePoint.

Fundraising complaints will be handled during office hours, Monday to Friday. If a complaint is received outside of office hours, it will be picked up on the next working day and responded to within the 2 working days. The 'Head of' will liaise with the relevant manager and Fundraising Director to establish at what level the complaint will be managed. The stages of a complaint are:

Stage 1 Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The complaint is about a specific donation or fundraising activity</li><li>• This complaint is a standalone issue and not part of a repeat pattern of complaints.</li><li>• No implications regarding the reputation of the organisation or widespread significant impact</li></ul>
Stage 2 Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from stage 1.</li><li>• The reputation of the organisation is at risk</li><li>• The Code of Fundraising Practice or other legal standard has been breached</li><li>• The concerns are widespread in the organisation or will have a significant impact on income/supporters/future fundraising activity</li></ul>
Stage 3 Complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from stage 2</li><li>• The complaint is about the Executive Team or an individual Governor or Trustee</li></ul>

### **Stage 1 Fundraising Complaint Resolution Procedure**

2.1 The 'Head of' will pass a Stage 1 complaint to the appropriate Fundraising manager and copy in the Director of Fundraising.

2.2 The complaint will be acknowledged to the Complainant by the 'Head of', within two working days of receipt of the complaint.

2.3 The relevant fundraising manager will investigate the complaint and inform the 'Head of'.

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2.4 Notes will be kept of all meetings, conversations and of the receipt of any documentation

2.5 The outcome of the complaint investigation will be passed to the 'Head of' who commissioned the investigation.

2.6 The 'Head of' will write the response to the Complainant but this will be approved by the Fundraising Director. Once the letter is agreed, this will be sent to the Complainant and recorded in the dedicated 'Fundraising Complaints' folder held on SharePoint.

The 'Head of' may offer to meet with/call the Complainant to discuss the outcome and ensure a resolution is achieved.

2.7 If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they can formally request for their complaint to be escalated for Stage 2 resolution. This must be submitted in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the final response, to the 'Head of' outlining why and/or which parts of the process they remain dissatisfied with. (See 'Escalation Process' section below)

### **Stage 2 – Fundraising complaints Formal Resolution**

3.1 The 'Head of' will pass the Stage 2 complaint to the Director of Fundraising, or in their absence, another member of the Executive Team.

3.2 The complaint will be acknowledged to the Complainant by the 'Head of', within two working days of receipt of the complaint.

3.3 The member of the Executive Team will refer the complaint to an appropriate manager or Director to investigate and inform the 'Head of' who they have identified.

3.4 Notes will be kept of all meetings, conversations and of the receipt of any documentation

3.5 The outcome of the complaint investigation will be passed to the member of the Executive Team who commissioned the investigation.

3.6 The member of the Executive Team will inform the Complainant and the 'Head of' of the outcome of the complaint investigation in writing. The member of the Executive Team may offer to meet with/call the Complainant to discuss the outcome and ensure a resolution is achieved.

3.7 If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they can formally request for their complaint to be passed for Stage 3 resolution. This must be submitted in writing, within 10 working days of the receipt of the final response letter, to the Executive Director, outlining why and/or which parts of the process they remain dissatisfied with. (See 'Escalation Process' section below)

### **Stage 3- Fundraising complaints Formal Resolution**

4.1 The Executive will pass the Stage 3 complaint to the Chief Executive and the Chair of Trustees (unless this has already been received directly).

4.2 The Chief Executive and the Chair of Trustees will then appoint a Trustee to investigate the complaint and the Executive will pass the complaint to the identified Trustee.

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4.3 The complaint will be acknowledged to the Complainant by the Executive, within two working days of receipt of the complaint.

4.4 Notes will be kept of all meetings, conversations and of the receipt of any documentation

4.5 The Trustee will inform the Chief Executive of the outcome of the investigation.

4.6 The Chief Executive will inform the Complainant and the Executive and the Chair of Trustees about the outcome of the complaint investigation in writing.

4.7 There is no right of appeal against a Stage 3 decision.

4.8 If the Complainant remains dissatisfied the Complainant will be advised of their right to refer their complaint to the Fundraising Regulator or Charities Commission.

N.B. Where any fundraising complainant feels the relevant Head is directly implicated, they can send their complaints in the first instance to the Director of Fundraising. Similarly, if the Director of Fundraising is directly implicated, the complainant should send their concerns directly to the Chief Executive's Office.

## **Escalation process**

### **Stage 1-2**

4.9 On receipt of a response from a complainant advising dissatisfaction with a complaint outcome, the 'Head of' will advise the Director of Fundraising, or in their absence another member of the executive team, that a complaint has escalated to Stage 2.

4.10 After reading the rationale for the remaining dissatisfaction, the member of the Executive Team will commission a review which will be undertaken by an appropriate manager or Director as assigned by them.

4.11 The member of the Executive Team will inform the 'Head of' who they have identified and an acknowledgement of this and the time frame for completion will be sent to the complainant within two working days.

4.12 The conclusions of the review should be sent to the complainant within 10 working days.

### **Stage 2-3**

4.13 On receipt of a response from a complainant advising dissatisfaction with the conclusions of the review, the Executive will advise the Chief Executive that a complaint has escalated to Stage 3. The Chief Executive will inform the Chair of the Trustees.

4.14 After reading the rationale for the remaining dissatisfaction, the Chief Executive will commission a review which will be undertaken by a Trustee or appropriate Executive Member.

4.15 The Chief Executive will inform the Executive who they have identified and an acknowledgement of this and the time frame for completion will be sent to the complainant within two working days.

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4.16 The conclusion of the review should be sent to the complainant within 10 working days.

## 5. Response Times

The vast majority of Fundraising complaints should be resolved and final responses sent within 20 working days of receipt, covering 52 weeks a year. If it is anticipated that the resolution and final response will not be possible within that timescale, then this will be discussed with the Complainant and a holding letter will be prepared and sent by the commissioner of the investigation, indicating the expected timescale for final response and the reasons for the delay.

## 6. Investigation Process

In investigating and resolving complaints, we will:

- Discuss with the Complainant to clarify the precise nature of the complaint and the Complainant's desired resolution;
- Obtain relevant reports/statements from staff responsible for the area of activity about which the complaint has been made;
- Obtain any relevant records to assist in the investigation.

Responses to Fundraising complaints will be prompt and honest. If the complaint is justified, the response should acknowledge that fact and offer an apology. Defensive or vague responses tend to inflame the situation. It is important to state in the reply whether the complaint has been upheld or not and details of the action taken should be provided.

Similarly, if a complaint is found to be unjustified the response should make that finding and the basis for it clear. In whatever way a complaint is resolved, care must be taken to ensure that the Complainant is treated with respect and consideration and relationships are not damaged in any way as the result of a complaint having been lodged. Details of the procedure for redress will be explained within the letter of response.

A complaint should not be investigated by someone who is implicated in the complaint.

Those who investigate complaints, must have completed the necessary internal training to ensure that the quality of investigation and subsequent report is to the required high standard.

During the course of the complaint relevant legal and insurance advice will be sought as appropriate by Young Epilepsy and St Piers.

## 7. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

As soon as a complaint is received by the Fundraising team, this will be recorded in the dedicated 'Fundraising Complaints' folder held on SharePoint.

This allows Young Epilepsy and St Piers to ensure that all Fundraising complaints are recorded consistently and that the investigation and actions resulting in a complaint being raised are monitored and transparent.

Once a complaint investigation is concluded, there are likely to be actions and recommendations generated, to ensure that Young Epilepsy and St Piers continues to fundraise in a fair and legal manner. The SharePoint file will be updated by the 'Head of' to ensure that all actions and recommendations are

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recorded and then monitored. If the complainant is on our Beacon system, the complaint may also be added to their timeline.


A report of Fundraising complaints will be presented by the Head of Individual Giving every 2 months, to the Director of Fundraising.

The Fundraising and Engagement committee will be responsible for sampling Fundraising complaints held on the SharePoint folder at least annually, as well as monitoring trends and areas of risk, to ensure that the Fundraising complaints process is effective and that appropriate actions and recommendations are being implemented as a result of complaints.

When the 'Heads of Fundraising' are unavailable, the management of Fundraising complaints will be delegated to their managers who will fulfil the role in any interim period.

## 8. Referral to the Fundraising Regulator

If, at any stage of the procedure the Complainant is unhappy with the process of the investigation or in its resolution, they may refer the matter to the Fundraising Regulator [here](#)

This procedure is agreed by the Fundraising and Engagement Committee and will be implemented by all Departments.	
Signed: 	Date: 08/08/23
Name: Sally Brighton Title: Director of Fundraising	
	Date of next review: August 2025





## Version table

Date of creation:

Approved by:

Version no.	Date of changes	Reasons for change	Changes made by
1	08/08/2023	New procedure to meet Auditor's requirements for publishing on our websites	Sally Brighton







