

## Complaints Procedure

Here at **The US Charitable Trust** we take complaints very seriously. **If you have a complaint about our organisation we want to hear about it and we will do our best to put it right.**

### **Our Complaints Procedure has the following goals:**

- To deal with complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively;
- To ensure that all complaints are handled in a consistent manner throughout;
- To increase supporter satisfaction;
- To use complaints constructively in the planning and improvement of all services.

### **What is a complaint?**

It may be a criticism that expects a reply and requires action or changes to be made. It can also be an expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of **The US Charitable Trust**, which is under the control of the Charity, its staff or volunteers.

### **How to make a complain if you are an employee or volunteer?**

**The US Charitable Trust** would like to sort out any complaint as soon as possible. Many complaints can be resolved informally. In the first instance contact **The US Charitable Trust** and, if you feel able, speak to the member of staff who is working with you or ask to speak to their manager, who will try to sort the matter out.

If you make contact in person or by phone, make a note of the name of the person you speak to. If a solution is offered at this point, make a note of this as well.

If you are not satisfied or do not wish an informal solution, you may pursue a formal complaint.

### **Email your complaint or a written letter and send it to:**

#### **The US Charitable Trust**

NCC 145 Harlesden Road

London

NW10 3RN

[info@uscharitabletrust.org](mailto:info@uscharitabletrust.org)

## **Complaints made by a young person**

The US charitable trust and schools in which the young person attends takes complaints made by young people very seriously. The complaint from the young person is monitored throughout all complaints. In accordance to the safeguarding regulations, the young person will follow the complaint procedure of their school. As the young person's data and information is with the school and with this manner of organised complaints, the school will also have a copy and parents will be informed. Of course following the steps taken by the school, the US charitable trust will aid in offering to assign a member of our senior management team to invest the matter. Working closely with the safeguarding lead within the school, the complaint will be investigated from both sides. The young person should therefore contact the safeguarding lead within school at first, and if related, the US charitable trust safeguarding lead will also be informed.

## **What will we do on receiving your complaint?**

- We will listen and record your complaint and advise you how it will be handled.
- We will investigate.
- We will take action to resolve the problem and tell you what the action is.
- We will take steps to avoid a repeat occurrence.

At all times, we will treat you with understanding and respect. All we ask is that you do the same for our staff.

Confidential information in relation to your complaint will be handled sensitively.

We are unable to respond to anonymous complaints or matters for which the charity is not directly responsible.

## **Confidentiality**

The employee acknowledges that, in any position the employee may hold, in and as a result of the employee's employment by the employer, the employee will, or may, be making use of, acquiring or adding to information which is confidential to the employer (the "Confidential Information") and the Confidential Information is the exclusive property of the employer.

Confidential Information will include all data and information relating to the business and management of the employer, including but not limited to, proprietary and trade secret technology and accounting records to which access is obtained by the employee, including work product, computer software, other proprietary data, business operations, marketing and

development operations, and customer information. The Confidential Information will also include any information that has been disclosed by a third party to the Employer and is governed by the Data Protection Act or by a non-disclosure agreement entered into between that third party and the Employer.

Please refer back to the employee's contract for more information.

### **How long will it take to respond?**

We endeavour to respond full and conclusively to all complaints within 10 working days.

You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 5 working days of receipt. You will be contacted to make sure that we have understood your complaint properly. You may be interviewed by the person investigating the complaint.

Whenever possible we will deal with it more quickly, if we think it will take longer we will let you know.

If an in-depth investigation is required we aim to provide a response within 20 working days.

### **Disciplinary and grievance procedure**

The US charitable trust disciplinary procedure, as amended from time-to-time, applies to the Employee. The US charitable trust's disciplinary procedure will be provided to the employee or made available to the employee on request. This agreement and the charities disciplinary procedure will be read and interpreted so as to avoid conflict, as far as reasonably possible, between this agreement and the employer's disciplinary and grievance procedure. If there is a true conflict between this agreement and the employer's disciplinary and grievance procedure, this agreement will prevail.

Please find more information in the disciplinary and grievance procedure documentation.

### **Can you take your complaint elsewhere?**

Yes. If your complaint relates to fundraising and we are unable to resolve it to your satisfaction, you can refer it to the **Fundraising Regulator** at the following address:

2<sup>nd</sup> floor, CAN Mezzanine Building, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH. T: 0300 999 3407 or E: enquiries@fundraisingregulator.org.uk

Or if your complaint is related to another area of our work and you do not feel satisfied you can contact **The Charity Commission** at the address below.

The Charity Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG.  
0845 3000 218, www.charity-commission.gov.uk

## **To withdraw or stop a complaint**

At any stage of the procedure you can withdraw and stop a complaint and you do not need to tell us why. However, please bear in mind that if you do want to pick up the complaint again records will be stored for one year. If you stop your complaint then the US charitable trust safeguarding lead may still consider that it is important to investigate the issues that you have raised, so that we can continue to learn and improve, but we will not contact you unless you would like us to.

## **Suspending a complaint**

Your complaint may be suspended if there are concurrent proceedings underway, this may include, court proceedings, criminal investigations or safeguarding concerns. Once these other procedures have been concluded, you can contact the US charitable trust safeguarding lead to ask that your complaint is reconsidered.

## **Confidentiality/ data protection and consent**

All complaints are treated confidentially and only the safeguarding lead and the founder should know that it has been received. If for any reason it is necessary for us to inform another department or organisation about your complaint, we will discuss this with you first.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else or you are raising an issue which directly involves a volunteer, employee or young person, ensure:

- they agree to a complaint being made
- they are happy for the relevant safeguarding leads, whether that be US charity or the school, to correspond with you on their behalf
- If you are making a complaint on behalf of a young person then when appropriate we may need to discuss this with them, to ensure that they agree to the complaint being made and when necessary they are happy for their information to be discussed.

All aspects of the feedback meets the requirements of the legislation regarding Data Protection, Freedom of Information and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any personal information obtained in relation to a complaint is only to be used for that purpose.

### **Complaint outline**

(please follow the outline of the complaint and either write an email or send a written letter across to [info@uscharitabletrust.org](mailto:info@uscharitabletrust.org) or the above US charitable trust address on page 1. In relation to speaking for a young person, please make sure you provide details of school name and we will inform the safeguarding lead within the relevant school).

### **Within your email complaint, please include:**

- Your email and also a possible contact number.
- Your complaint email message
- First name and last name
- Subject of your complaint

Please give your honest opinion of what you think.

### **Anti-bullying and harassment**

The US charitable trust has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. Our aim is to provide an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and can work without fear of bullying or harassment. It aims to ensure that individuals we employ feel confident to bring complaints, or to challenge behaviour, without fear of ridicule or reprisal.

Please refer to the staff and volunteer handbook for more information.