

## Complaints policy

### Policy statement

Receiving feedback and responding to – and learning from – complaints is an important part of improving our accountability. Enabling our stakeholders to hold us to account will improve the quality of our work in all areas. This policy applies to Windle Trust International (WTI) and is organisation wide.

### Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by WTI or its staff and anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work (such as consultants, volunteers or contracted partner organisations and their personnel). It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery or the mis-use of assets, such as vehicles.
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach
- Concern about the behaviour of WTI staff or any associated personnel or consultants acting on our behalf

A complaint has to be about some action for which WTI is responsible or is within our sphere of influence to remedy or change.

A complaint is not or does not apply to:

- A general query about our work or request for information
- A contractual issue or dispute
- Universities and institutions attended by individuals supported through WTI scholarships and programmes, or scholarship schemes that our candidates apply to (The complaints procedures of the relevant organisation should be followed)
- The outcome of individual selection or placement decisions by WTI for scholarship or other education programmes managed through its UK, Sudan or South Sudan offices, unless the complaint concerns an alleged breach of procedure
- A request to change records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation or unsubscribe from a service such as a newsletter

Queries and complaints about the use of personal data are dealt with under our privacy policy.

### Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by any supporter, organisation, community or individual with whom we work, or any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity.

### Who is not covered by this policy?

Complaints by anyone working for WTI, including employees, consultants, volunteers, interns, trustees or other contracted parties. These are governed by WTI's relevant policies and procedures for dealing with issues in the workplace. These include policies for dealing with grievances about

employment, 'Whistleblowing' for the confidential reporting of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act according policy guidelines, and for serious incidents such as fraud and corruption or safeguarding concerns.

### **Procedures for making a complaint**

WTI hopes that most complaints or concerns about our work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff. However, we recognise that not all issues can be resolved in this way and if something is not resolved to your satisfaction you have the right to make a complaint and to receive a formal response.

The procedure is set out below but in all cases we will do our best to ensure your complaint will be:

- dealt with as quickly as possible
- handled fairly and politely
- investigated fully

### **How to make a complaint**

Our complaints procedure has three stages:

#### **STAGE 1: Informal complaint**

In the first instance you should make your concerns known to the relevant WTI manager in the office closest to you, or about which your complaint relates to, preferably in writing. S/he will try to resolve the matter quickly and informally, but if this is not possible, you can choose to make a formal complaint.

Individuals directly supported on our programmes, such as scholarships, should raise concerns with the programme manager responsible for their programme in the first instance.

#### **STAGE 2: Making a formal complaint**

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you will need to put your complaint in writing. This should be addressed to the:

- Country Director in Khartoum if you are in Sudan;
- the Country Director in Juba if you are in South Sudan;
- the Executive Director if you are in the UK;
- If your complaint involves one of our Country Directors, your complaint should go straight to the Executive Director;
- If your complaint involves the Executive Director, you should contact the Chair of the Trustees.

Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing or by phone within 5 working days and we will aim to resolve the complaint within 15 working days. If this target of 15 days cannot be met, we will explain why and specify the new target for responding.

Following consideration of the complaint and full evidence the following decision will be made and course of action agreed:

(i) that the complaint has no basis and should be rejected

(ii) that the complaint should be upheld, and any action to be taken as a result advised

(iii) in exceptional circumstances that the complaint should be further considered by a committee convened specifically for the purpose (and an expected timescale for the outcome advised)

At each stage of the process, WTI reserves the right to inform any party against whom a complaint is directed, of the nature of the complaint for the purpose of obtaining information necessary to reaching a decision.

#### STAGE 3: My complaint has been investigated, but I am not satisfied

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of the process, s/he may appeal the decision in writing. This appeal should be submitted to the Executive Director (or Chair of the Board if the complaint concerns the Executive Director), who will carry out an investigation and respond within 28 working days. This decision will be final.

Each year the Executive Director will report to the Board of Trustees the number and type of formal complaints made, together with the outcome. The identity of the person making the complaint, and (unless the complaint has been upheld) the subject of the complaint, will be kept confidential as far as may be practical. Where appropriate, changes in policy or practice resulting from any complaint will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting concerned.

#### **Contact details to make a formal complaint**

The contact details of our offices in South Sudan and Sudan for the respective Country Directors and the UK office for the Executive Director and Chair of the Board are on the contacts page of our website (<https://windle.org.uk/contact-windle> ). Please ensure that your correspondence is marked for the attention of the relevant person i.e. Country Director, Executive Director or Chair of the Board.