

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

Elifar Foundation Ltd (EFL) Complaints Policy applies to all beneficiaries or beneficiaries' applicants.

EFL prides itself on the quality of the service provided to all applicants. We welcome suggestions and comments from beneficiaries or beneficiaries' applicants and we take seriously all complaints and concerns which they may raise. However if the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant does have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by EFL with care in accordance with this policy.

EFL makes its complaints procedure available to all prospective or successful beneficiaries or beneficiaries' applicants on EFL's website, and EFL will ensure that anyone who requests it is made aware that this document is published on the website.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about EFL as a whole or regarding a specific application. A complaint is likely to arise if a beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant believes that EFL has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

The beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: EFL's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days.

Following resolution of a complaint, EFL will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant have a complaint, they should normally contact the charity. This can be by letter, telephone or email. This will be passed to the relevant trustee and in many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means. If the matter cannot be resolved in this informal way then it may be necessary to consult the board of trustees.
- The relevant trustee will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the relevant trustee and the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this policy.
- If, however, the complaint is against a trustee, the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant should make their complaint directly to the board of trustees.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant should put their complaint in writing to the board of trustees. The board of trustees will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the board of trustees will speak to the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If it is not possible to meet this time frame then an initial telephone conversation will be arranged.
- It may be necessary for the board of trustees to carry out further investigations.
- The board of trustees will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the board of trustees is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant will be informed of this decision in writing within 10 working days. The board of trustees will give reasons for their decision.
- If the complaint is against a particular trustee, the remaining board of trustees will call for a full report and for all the relevant documents. The board of trustees may also call for a briefing from employees, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant to discuss the matter further. Once the board of trustees are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant will be informed of the decision in writing within 10 working days. The board of trustees will give reasons for their decision.
- If the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they must put their complaint in writing to the board of trustees.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management of the running of EFL. Panel names to be given on request.
- The trustees, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable & normally within fourteen working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than three days prior to the hearing.
- The beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicants complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 28 working days of the hearing. The decision of the panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the beneficiary or beneficiary's applicant, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the board of trustees.

Complaints Procedure Table

