

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1. Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF) knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to learn and improve what we do.

### 2. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from funding applicants, grantees, suppliers and contractors. A complaint is encouraged to be received in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use EFF's Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Policy.

### 3. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### 4. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Chief Operating Officer.

### 5. Procedure

Complaints should be encouraged to be sent in writing to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation at 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 210 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9JY or by e-mail at [info@esmeefairbairn.org.uk](mailto:info@esmeefairbairn.org.uk)

### 6. Receiving Complaints

Complaints received by telephone or in person will be encouraged where possible to send in their complaint in writing. We require a full name and contact details, unless complainants wish to retain anonymity for their own safety.

The person who receives a complaint via a phone or in person should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to EFF
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take

- Where possible / appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

## **7. Resolving Complaints**

### Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chief Operating Officer within one week.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a two weeks. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within six weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

## **8. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Reviewed: April 2024