

International Lawyers Project (ILP) External Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

1. ILP views external complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint. Our policy is:
 - a. To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
 - b. To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
 - c. To make sure everyone at ILP knows what to do if a complaint is received;
 - d. To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
 - e. To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired; and
 - f. To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

2. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an appropriate aspect of ILP's operations or activities.

Complaints under the scope of this policy

3. External Complaints may come from volunteers, partners, donors or other third parties with a legitimate interest in ILP.
4. A complaint can be received verbally, by email or in writing. Where a complaint is received verbally, the complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing.
5. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should instead use ILP's **Grievance Policy** if the complaint concerns their employment or personal circumstances or ILP's **Whistleblowing Policy** if the complaint concerns a relevant matter regarding the operations or activities of ILP.

Procedure

6. The complaints procedure is set out in the Annex to this policy.
7. The Executive Director and/or the Board may from time to time vary the procedure as appropriate, such as to amend timescales or to avoid conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality

8. All complaint information will be handled sensitively and dealt with only by those members of ILP personnel required to resolve the complaint. Complainant information shall be held in accordance with ILP's **Data Protection & Privacy Policy** and in compliance with relevant data protection regulations.

Responsibility

9. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

10. Complaints will be reviewed annually to identify any trends and the Executive Director may take such action as they think fit to avoid future such complaints.

Review

11. This policy and procedure will be reviewed every 3 years.

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Annex: External Complaints Procedure of International Lawyers Project (ILP)

Contact Details for Complaints

1. Complaints should be made in writing and sent to ILP at First Floor, Exchange House, 12 Primrose Street, London EC2A 2EG or by e-mail at operations@internationallawyersproject.org.

Receiving Complaints

2. Decisions on complaints will be made by the Executive Director subject to paragraph 4 below, unless this would in all the circumstances be inappropriate, in which case it should be referred to the Board of Trustees.
3. Complaints will be acknowledged within one week, in writing, either by email where such contact details are provided, or otherwise by post. A copy of this External Complaints Procedure will be attached unless already provided.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

4. On receiving the complaint, the Operations Manager will record it in the External Complaints Log and inform the Executive Director. Having reviewed a complaint, the Executive Director may decide to delegate the management of the complaint handling or other appropriate action to an appropriate person.
5. If the complaint involves a member of staff, they will be informed if appropriate and given a fair opportunity to respond.
6. Complainants should receive a response to their complaint within four weeks. If this is not possible for some reason - for example, because an investigation has not been fully completed - a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full response will be given.
7. The response to the complainant should set out if it is accepted either in whole or in part and describe any action taken as a result of the complaint.
8. The complaint response and any action to be taken shall be recorded in the External Complaints Log.

Stage Two

9. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint be reviewed by the Executive Director. Where the Executive Director decided the complaint at Stage One, the matter shall be referred to the Board Chair.
10. The Executive Director shall consider the complaint, any investigation and the response. The Executive Director may carry out or direct additional investigations including discussions with the complainant.
11. The Executive Director shall make a decision regarding the complaint and that decision will be final.
12. The Executive Director shall communicate the decision to the complainant as soon as possible and within 2 weeks of the Stage Two request. If this is not possible for some reason - for example because an investigation has not been fully completed - a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full response will be given.

Complaints about the Executive Director

Stage One

13. Where the complaint relates to the Executive Director, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board.
14. The Chair should acknowledge the complaint within a fortnight of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
15. The Chair of the Board may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate another trustee to do so.
16. The Executive Director and any other specific person to whom the complaint relates should if appropriate be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
17. The complainant should receive a definitive response 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 response will be given.
18. The response to the complainant should set out if it is accepted either in whole or in part and describe any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

19. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint be reviewed by the full Board.
20. The full Board shall consider the complaint, any investigation and the response. The Board may carry out or direct additional investigation including discussions with the complainant, the Executive Director and any other staff.
21. The Board shall make a decision regarding the complaint and that decision will be final. The decision will be communicated to the complainant within 2 weeks of the Stage Two request. If this is not possible for some reason, for example, because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full response will be given.

External Stage

22. Information on making complaints about a charity to external bodies including the Charity Commission can be found on the Government Website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

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