

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

What to do if you want to make a complaint

The Smallwood Trust is committed to providing a good quality service to all we support or work with. We listen and respond to people's views so that we can continue to improve our service. We recognise however, that we sometimes get things wrong or make mistakes. To deal with this we have a complaints procedure.

Process

Stage 1: Contact us

The first step is to contact us. This can be done by email, telephone or social media. We will reply to you using the same medium unless you give us additional contact details.

We will try to resolve the problem on the spot if we can. If we can't do this, for example, because information we need is not to hand, then we will take a record of your concern and arrange the best way and time for getting back to you. This will normally be within five working days or we will make some other arrangement acceptable to you.

We may ask you for further details about your concern before we can look into it.

Complaints or Concerns About a Grantee Organisation

If you are a grantee, partner, or an external individual and wish to raise a concern about an organisation that Smallwood Trust funds, we will follow a proportionate and fair process. We cannot intervene in internal organisational matters, but we will look at whether the concern relates to:

- Safeguarding
- Fraud or financial misuse
- Breaches of grant conditions
- Conduct that may put beneficiaries, staff or the reputation of the charity at risk

How to raise a concern

1. Contact us using the usual channels (email or phone).
2. Tell us which organisation your concern relates to and provide a brief description of the issue.
3. We will acknowledge your concern within seven working days.
4. We will carry out an initial assessment to determine:
 - whether the concern relates to our role as a funder
 - what information we may need from you
 - whether we need to contact the organisation involved
5. We will let you know:
 - what action we can take
 - what falls outside our remit

- expected timescales

If the concern becomes a formal complaint within our responsibility as a funder, it will then follow Stages 2–4 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Taking your complaint further

We hope you will only feel the need to make a formal complaint as a last resort and that you will speak to the person dealing with the matter first to give them a chance to put things right. However, if you are still unhappy, the next step is to put your complaint in writing to the Head of Programmes and Grant Operations, setting out the details, explaining what you think went wrong and what you feel would put things right.

Once the Head of Programmes and Grant Operations receives a written complaint, they will arrange for it to be fully investigated. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receiving it and the letter will say when you can expect a full response. This should normally be within three weeks unless the matter is very complicated, such as where other organisations need to be contacted. Where this is the case, we will still let you know what action is being taken and tell you when we expect to provide you with a full response.

Stage 3: The Next Stage

If you are not satisfied with the Head of Programmes and Grant Operations' investigation you can take your complaint to the Chief Executive. All materials relating to your complaint and to the Operation Manager's investigation will be made available to the Chief Executive. They will let you know within seven working days that your complaint has been received and tell you when to expect a full response from them.

Stage 4: Process Review

If you are not satisfied with the Chief Executive's response, your complaint will be forwarded to the Trustees. They will not re-investigate your complaint but will review the process and the outcome of Stage 3. They will only assess whether your complaint has been handled in a fair way.

The Trustees will let you know within seven working days that your information has been received and tell you when to expect a full response from them.

There is no appeal against the decision of the Trustees as they bear the legal responsibility for the control of the Trust's affairs.