



## **WORLD HABITAT COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out the procedures World Habitat will follow when it receives a complaint from any service user, organisation or member of the public. This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve a dispute between World Habitat and any complainant. It requires staff to resolve the complaint.

#### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of World Habitat.

Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- dissatisfaction with World Habitat's service, such as inadequate work, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service etc.
- disputes between user and the organisation regarding policy, procedures or activities.
- discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of the World Habitat staff.

#### **The World Habitat complaints policy does not cover:**

- Complaints made by staff or volunteers in relation to their employment / volunteering at World Habitat (dealt with through grievance and disciplinary procedures) nor job applicants (recruitment procedure).
- Complaints by members of staff or volunteers about suspected malpractice or serious wrongdoing in the organisation, which are dealt with more appropriately under the World Habitat Whistleblowing Policy.
- Dissatisfaction with our policies or decisions about individual cases or requests for financial support
- Matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure
- Anonymous complaints

### **2. WORLD HABITAT'S STANDARDS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

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We treat all complaints seriously, whether they are made by telephone, by letter, or by email.

- You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. We would hope, too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with World Habitat staff at all times.
- World Habitat will treat your complaint in confidence.
- World Habitat will deal with your complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days and we will send you a full reply within 15

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working days of receipt. If we cannot send a full reply within 15 working days of receipt, we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full.

- World Habitat will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your: sex or marital status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender sexual orientation, colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality, disability, religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation, or other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age.

### **3. PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT**

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When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted. Where the complaint is against the Chief Executive, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Chair of the organisation substituting for the Chief Executive's role at all stages.

**Stage 1**            The complainant should be invited to speak to the Chief Executive or a member of the senior management team to discuss the complaint with them. This can be done by telephone. The person dealing with the complaint should keep a record of the conversation on the complaints monitoring sheet and will endeavour to resolve the matter. If the complainant remains dissatisfied refer to Stage 2 below.

Stage 1 should be completed within five working days of receiving the complaint.

**Stage 2**            The complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive, marked Private and Confidential, providing as much detail of the complaint as possible. The Chief Executive will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. The Chief Executive may delegate any aspect of the investigation to a nominee. If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the Chief Executive should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by presentation to a Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel will comprise three members of the Board of Trustees (including the Chair, if not already involved in the process).

The Chief Executive will ensure that all complainants receive a response in writing within ten working days of the letter/complaint notes being received. This letter will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this letter should be attached to the complaint form.

**Stage 3**            Where the matter is not resolved by Stage 2, the Chief Executive should immediately refer the complaint to the Complaints Panel, sending copies of all written correspondence to Panel Members.

The complainant will be informed immediately that this is being done and that the Panel will also be contacting the staff member(s) against whom the complaint is made as appropriate.

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The Panel will review the decision made at Stage 2 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

The Complaints Panel will notify the complainant of its reasons and decisions within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The Panel's decision will be final. A record should be kept of the meeting and the complaints monitoring form completed.

World Habitat is a registered charity and guidance is available as to how you can make a complaint in the Charity Commission publication *CC47 – Complaints about Charities* <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/cc47text.pdf>

#### **4. RECORDING AND MONITORING COMPLAINTS**

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All complaints will be recorded and kept on file, including those which were resolved without being put in writing. The Complaints Monitoring form shall be used to do this.

A report will be submitted annually to the Board of Trustees on any complaints received in the year.

All personal details will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

#### **5. PUBLICISING THE PROCEDURE**

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The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that information is available to clearly explain the procedure for making the complaint. The complaints procedure is available on the World Habitat website.

#### **6. ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCEDURE**

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All Members of the Board of Trustees will receive a copy of the complaints procedure. Existing and new workers will be introduced to the complaints procedure via induction and training.

#### **7. IF YOU REMAIN DISSATISFIED**

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If having followed the two stages of the World Habitat complaints procedure you still remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed externally by the Charity Commission. Guidance on this process can be found at:

[Complain about a charity - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The policy will be reviewed every three years when amendments should be proposed and agreed by the Board of Trustees.

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