

## FUNDRAISING COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Key Points

- **Accessible and timely complaint handling:** Fundraising complaints should be easy to make, acknowledged promptly and responded to within clear published timescales.
- **Fair, objective and proportionate investigation:** Complaints will be assessed and investigated impartially, with relevant evidence considered and the complainant kept informed where more time is needed.
- **Legal, open, honest and respectful fundraising:** All fundraising activity should reflect the standards expected under the Code of Fundraising Practice and be carried out with transparency, integrity and respect.
- **Protection, confidentiality and appropriate escalation:** Complaints will be handled sensitively, with personal data protected and safeguarding, fraud, data protection or serious regulatory concerns escalated through the appropriate route.
- **Learning and continuous improvement:** Complaints will be recorded, reviewed and used to identify trends, improve fundraising practice and strengthen supporter care.

### Introduction

Encephalitis International is committed to fundraising in a legal, open, honest and respectful way. This policy explains how we handle any expression of dissatisfaction about our fundraising activity, including concerns about how donations are sought or handled, the conduct of staff, volunteers, trustees, fundraising partners or third-party fundraisers acting on our behalf, and how we respond to fundraising concerns. It applies to all fundraising activity, including appeals, events, community fundraising, corporate partnerships, digital fundraising, direct marketing and legacy fundraising, and is intended to ensure complaints are easy to raise, investigated fairly and used to support learning and improvement.

### What this policy covers

- Concerns about the behaviour of our staff, volunteers, trustees, fundraising partners or third-party fundraisers.
- Concerns about the accuracy, tone, frequency or content of fundraising communications.
- Concerns about pressure, fairness, respect, vulnerability, consent or supporter preferences.
- Concerns about the administration, processing, acknowledgement or use of donations.
- Concerns that our fundraising may not meet the standards expected by the Fundraising Regulator or the Code of Fundraising Practice.

### What this policy does not cover

This policy does not cover employment matters, volunteer grievances, safeguarding concerns, whistleblowing, complaints about services or activities unrelated to fundraising, or allegations of fraud, criminal activity or serious wrongdoing. These matters will be handled under the appropriate policy or referred to the relevant authority. Where a complaint raises safeguarding, data protection, fraud or serious incident concerns, we will escalate it promptly in line with our internal procedures and legal obligations.

### How to make a fundraising complaint

Complaints can be made by email, telephone, post, through our website, or in person to a member of staff. Complaints should be sent to: [comms@encephalitis.info](mailto:comms@encephalitis.info), +44 (0)1653 692583, or 32 Castlegate, Malton, North Yorkshire, England, UK, YO17 7DT. The Director of Fundraising and Partnerships is the nominated complaints lead for fundraising complaints. If a complaint is received by a volunteer, trustee, fundraiser or third-party partner, it must be passed to the nominated complaints lead as soon as possible and no later than two working days after receipt.

To help us investigate, complainants should provide as much relevant information as possible, including what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, any supporting information, and what outcome they are seeking. However, we will not refuse to consider a complaint simply because all details are not available.

### How we will handle complaints

1. **Acknowledgement:** We will acknowledge receipt within five working days, wherever possible.
2. **Assessment:** We will decide whether the matter falls within this policy and whether it needs to be referred to another internal process or external body.
3. **Investigation:** We will investigate fairly, objectively and proportionately. This may include reviewing records, speaking to relevant staff, volunteers or partners, and considering applicable fundraising standards.
4. **Response:** We aim to provide a full written response within 20 working days of acknowledgement. If we need more time, we will explain why and provide a revised expected response date.
5. **Outcome:** Where a complaint is upheld or partly upheld, we will explain what went wrong and what action we will take. This may include an apology, correction of records, change to supporter preferences, refund or return of a donation where appropriate, staff or volunteer learning, or changes to our fundraising practice.
6. **Learning and continuous improvement:** The Chief Executive will be notified by the Director of Partnerships and Fundraising of all complaints.

### If a complainant is not satisfied

If a complainant is not satisfied with our response, they may request an internal review within 20 working days of receiving our outcome. The review will be carried out by a member of the Leadership Team (LT) who has not been directly involved in the original investigation, wherever possible. We aim to complete the review within 20 working days. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after our internal process has concluded, they may refer the matter to the Fundraising Regulator, provided the complaint falls within its remit and timescales.

### External referral

The Fundraising Regulator can consider complaints about fundraising where they have not been resolved by the organisation concerned. The Fundraising Regulator will normally expect complainants to have completed our complaints process first. Its contact details are: Fundraising Regulator, 2nd Floor, CAN Mezzanine, 49–51 East Road, London, N1 6AH; telephone 0300 999 3407; website: [www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk).

### Confidentiality, data protection and records

We will handle complaints sensitively and confidentially, sharing information only with those who need it to investigate, respond, manage risk or meet legal and regulatory obligations. Personal data will be processed in line with our data protection policies and privacy notices. We will keep a record of fundraising complaints, actions taken, outcomes and learning points for an appropriate period in line with our retention schedule.

### Accessibility and support

We will make reasonable adjustments to support people to make a complaint, including accepting complaints in different formats where practicable. We will communicate in a clear and respectful way and will take particular care where a complainant may be in vulnerable circumstances or may need additional support.

### Roles and responsibilities

- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring fundraising complaints are handled appropriately.
- The Director of Fundraising and Partnerships, as the nominated complaints lead, is responsible for coordinating complaint handling, maintaining records and ensuring responses are issued within agreed timescales.
- Staff, volunteers, trustees and fundraising partners must recognise complaints, treat complainants with respect, and escalate complaints promptly.

- Managers responsible for fundraising must review complaint themes and ensure lessons learned are used to improve fundraising practice.

### Learning, monitoring and reporting

We will review fundraising complaints to identify trends, risks and opportunities for improvement. Significant or repeated issues will be reported to senior leadership and, where appropriate, to trustees. Where a complaint identifies a breach or potential breach of fundraising standards, safeguarding duties, data protection requirements or other legal or regulatory obligations, we will take prompt action and consider whether external reporting is required.

### Related Policies

Ethical Fundraising Policy

Fundraising Consent Policy

Complaints Policy

Vexatious Complaints Policy

### Approval

This document was approved by the Chief Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

Before approving ensure version number is V1 or above.

### Document Change Control

| Version | Date      | Review Date | Changes by | Summary of changes |
|---------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------------|
| V1      | July 2026 | July 2028   | P Chapman  | New Document       |
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