



THIRD PARTY COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

Hostage International (“HI” “we” “us” “our”) recognises its responsibilities to individuals affected by its operations and the actions of its staff, trustees and volunteers and we are committed to the importance of providing a channel for third parties to feed back.

This document sets out HI’s policy and procedure for handling third party complaints or concerns, describes how third parties can raise a complaint or concern with us and outlines how third parties can expect such a complaint or concern to be dealt with by us. This policy also applies to public interest disclosures (known as whistleblowing disclosures) under UK law.

HI recognises that comments, compliments and complaints are an important part of feedback and help us ensure that we can deliver high quality services. Through the effective management of comments, compliments and complaints we can identify learning to achieve high quality work and continuous improvement as an organisation.

In particular, HI gives its assurance that all complaints or concerns will be:

- a) handled in a transparent and fair manner
- b) handled in a manner that fully respects the confidentiality of the complainant, unless otherwise required by applicable law
- c) treated in a manner that protects against retaliation by HI (to the extent applicable)
- d) reported to appropriate external authorities, including the Charity Commission where it meets the threshold of a serious incident, where the nature or severity of the matter complained of requires such a report and HI will provide full co-operation with any such external authority
- e) used to improve learning around HI’s work and drive forward a culture of continuous improvement.

2. DEFINITION

The term “Third Parties” in the context of this Policy does not refer to those that have a contractual relationship with, or are employed by, HI. Rather, this policy refers to individuals who may be adversely affected by HI’s actions including:

- Beneficiaries of HI
- Family members of HI
- Clients of HI
- Suppliers or service providers to HI
- Members of the public

3. POLICY

In the event of an issue arising from a third-party complaint, HI will (itself, through its trustees or a third-party advisor):

- Conduct an initial assessment of the complaint or concern and investigate as needed;
- Ensure that senior management or a trustee (if more appropriate) considers the findings from such investigations in a prompt and diligent manner;
- Advise complainants of the outcome of an investigation and any remedial action recommended or taken, including if the matter proceeded to disciplinary action (bearing in mind HI’s privacy and confidentiality obligations to all of those concerned); and
- Instigate training and/or procedural changes as warranted with a view to minimising the likelihood of future similar complaints or concerns.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Registering a complaint: Any individual(s) wishing to register a complaint or concern should send an email to info@hostageinternational.org setting out in detail the actions or behaviours that are the subject of the complaint or concern. Alternatively, a complaint or concern can be sent by post, addressed to the address listed on our website.

4.2 Investigation: On receipt of a complaint HI will nominate either a trustee board member or a member of its management team to act as the ‘complaint coordinator’ (‘CC’). The CC will outline to the complainant the stages in the resolution process, establish liaison mechanisms, provide progress reports and report on the outcome of the investigation. Should the outcome of the investigation suggest that a serious disciplinary and/or criminal offence has been committed, the CC will immediately seek appropriate external legal advice.

5. INDEPENDENT REDRESS

In any case where third parties remain dissatisfied with the manner of the investigation made into the complaint or concern lodged, they may inform HI and we will endeavour to resolve the remaining concerns and/or they may raise a concern with the Charity Commission or another external body (as appropriate).

Charity Commission

If you are dissatisfied with HI's complaints process, you can contact the Charity Commission. For further information visit the Charity Commission website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

Fundraising Regulator

If you are dissatisfied with HI's response to your fundraising complaint you can contact the Fundraising Regulator <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk> to access their independent complaints procedure.