

# **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

## ***How we deal with feedback and complaints***

### **SECTION ONE: POLICY**

#### **1.1 POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy is a shared policy of Amnesty International UK Charitable Trust and Amnesty International UK Section, hereafter collectively described as "AIUK" and "we, us and our".

The policy sets out how Amnesty International (AIUK) responds to feedback and complaints in a manner that supports the values of the AIUK Charitable Trust and the AIUK Section as well as the objects of the Charitable Trust.

AIUK engages with supporters and stakeholders in many ways, including through various fundraising and campaigning activities and communications, which may be delivered through various channels, including social media and local, regional and national media, events, mail and over the telephone.

Members, supporters and stakeholders of AIUK Section can also engage with Amnesty International UK Section through regional and national meetings. Members can engage with Amnesty International UK Section through the AIUK Section Annual General Meeting.

Amnesty International UK's strength is that we are part of a global movement of people, and whether you are happy or unhappy about any aspect of our activity or work, we would like to hear about it. We know that listening to your views will help improve our work as an organisation.

We seek to deal with comments and complaints in a respectful, open, timely and responsible way within the constraints of our resources. This is integral to our commitment to transparency and accountability. In turn AIUK expects people who provide feedback, including making a complaint, to communicate their concerns respectfully and appropriately.

#### **1.2 WHAT DOES THIS POLICY COVER?**

This policy covers feedback and complaints about Amnesty International UK's mission and values, strategies, policies (including global policies), objectives, decisions, activities, governance, performance, use of resources, and the behaviour of our staff, office/bookshop volunteers, activists and governance positions including Board members.

It covers feedback and complaints in relation to both AIUK Section and AIUK

Charitable Trust. Each has its own constitution and Board.

This policy does **not** cover:

- Feedback and complaints from staff, office/shop volunteers, and board members. This is governed by our People Policies and other relevant internal policies.
- Feedback and complaints relating to work carried out by Amnesty's International Secretariat or other non-UK Amnesty sections. Amnesty International UK will refer complaints to the appropriate part of the global movement which will act upon it according to its own policies and procedures.

### **1.3 CONFIDENTIALITY**

We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your personal and sensitive information, and that of any person (staff member or other) who may be the subject of your feedback, in line with our data protection responsibilities. All information gathered through this policy and procedure will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know. Please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

### **1.4 SAFEGUARDING**

If a concern has been raised by, or about, a child or young person under 18 or an adult at risk, or if we identify a potential safeguarding risk as part of communications to us, we take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the individual, in line with our [Safeguarding Policy](#)

### **1.5 ZERO TOLERANCE OF ABUSE AND DEGRADING LANGUAGE**

The wellbeing of AIUK staff is important to us and we will not respond to feedback or complaints that are abusive, offensive or threatening.

Amnesty International UK defines abusive and offensive as anything with degrading, threatening or insulting language. We do not accept abuse in feedback or complaints and will take appropriate action, including making a report to the Police when appropriate.

If there's reasonable belief that a complaint is vexatious or malicious, then it won't be progressed. A complaint is vexatious or malicious if it's possible to demonstrate that it is without basis and that it would tend to or is being made with an intention to cause worry, upset, annoyance or embarrassment or is designed to occupy staff with no intention of a resolution.

### **1.6 THE ROLE OF THE FEEDBACK OVERSIGHT PANEL**

The Feedback Oversight Panel is composed of one Board member from the Section, one Trustee, the Director of Supporter Campaigning and Communications, the Director of Fundraising, the Head of Media and Supporter Communications and the

Supporter Communications Manager. It meets every quarter to discuss feedback received.

It monitors the implementation of this policy and procedure; analyses feedback patterns; fosters wider organisational learning and, where appropriate, recommends organisational change to the Senior Management Team and the Amnesty International UK Section and Charitable Trust Boards.

The panel reports on a quarterly basis to the Amnesty International UK Section Board and to the AIUK Charitable Trust Board.

A member of the panel is required to carry out Stage two of the Complaints Process.

## **SECTION TWO: PROCEDURE**

### **2.1 HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK**

Please address your feedback (comment, suggestion or complaint) initially to our Supporter Communications Team. You can contact us in whichever way is most convenient to you: mail or email.

Amnesty International UK  
The Human Rights Action Centre Supporter  
Communications Team 17-25 New Inn Yard London  
EC2A 3EA

Email: [feedback@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:feedback@amnesty.org.uk)

Please remember to give us your name, address and contact telephone number.

### **2.2 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SUBMIT MY FEEDBACK?**

Your feedback will be logged, and either answered directly by the Supporter Communications Team or passed to the relevant department as appropriate. If you have requested a response we will aim to acknowledge your feedback within two working days.

All feedback will be reported to staff, the Feedback Oversight Panel and the Boards of both Amnesty International United Kingdom Section and the AIUK Trust, so that staff and AIUK's governing bodies can see any comments received and learn from them in order to improve the way we work.

Because of the constraints upon our resources there are limits to the amount of time we can dedicated to answering queries.

This particularly refers to comments about our policy and strategy, all of the conflict

areas in which we work around the world and the difficult issues which we address.

We will provide information on these issues, but we will not enter into on-going debate or answer repeated questions on these issues, where we do not consider that it will be possible to reach a reasonable resolution.

Where we consider this to be the case, we will respond, clearly indicating this to you, and you should not then expect any subsequent response from our staff.

## **2.3 COMPLAINTS**

We define a complaint as being when the person sending feedback:

- Refers to their own feedback as a complaint
- Uses strong language to express dissatisfaction with our work
- Cancels their membership or direct debit as part of their feedback to us.
- Resigns from a role within AIUK as part of their feedback to us

We have a three-stage complaints process.

The stages are consecutive, and all prior stages must be completed before any progression to the next stage.

The outcome of any stage will be shared with the complainant, except when doing so would breach data protection law, employment law, or present a safeguarding issue.

### **Stage one:**

In the first instance, complaints will be passed to an appropriate member of staff who will share with relevant staff, activists or the relevant (Section or Trust) Board Members as appropriate. Receipt of complaints will be acknowledged within two working days.

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, usually within 10 working days. In responding we will set out our understanding of the precise complaint. We will clarify if the complaint refers to any legal obligation or compliance to expected standards and respond accordingly.

Sometimes, we may need to investigate the circumstances surrounding your complaint to ensure we take any appropriate action. We will contact you to explain that we are doing this. When the investigation is complete we will contact you.

If the complaint relates to the conduct of a member of staff or a office-based or bookshop-based volunteer, we will refer the complaint to the People and Culture team who will advise on whether Amnesty International UK's internal policies are applicable. We cannot provide feedback on the specific outcomes of internal procedures.

If the complaint relates to the conduct of an activist we will follow the Activist Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.

The AIUK Activist Code of Conduct defines an activist as "...anyone who carries out unpaid activity on behalf of Amnesty International UK, including fundraising, campaigning, training or providing support to other activists."

If the complaint refers to the conduct of a specific Board member we will follow the Board procedures that are applicable.

We will do our best to ensure that any person making a complaint is satisfied with the way we handle it. However, if you are not happy with our response, then please initiate stage two of the process.

### **Stage two:**

Please get back in touch with us by writing to Amnesty International UK's Complaints Coordinator.

Complaints Coordinator  
Amnesty International UK  
The Human Rights Action Centre Feedback Oversight Panel  
17-25 New Inn Yard London EC2A 3EA  
Email: [feedbackpanel@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:feedbackpanel@amnesty.org.uk)

Your complaint will be reviewed by a member of the Feedback Oversight Panel who may also call on advice from others as appropriate. Amnesty International UK will aim to respond in writing within 20 working days.

In our response, we will set out clearly the substantive issues of your complaint. If there is any issue preventing us from replying within 20 working days, we will let you know and provide an alternative timeframe.

If for any reason you feel your complaint is still unresolved then please initiate stage three of the process.

### **Stage three:**

Please forward your complaint to the Amnesty International UK Chief Executive Officer (contact details below).

Chief Executive Officer  
Amnesty International UK  
The Human Rights Action Centre Feedback Oversight Panel  
17-25 New Inn Yard London EC2A 3EA

A panel will then be convened to hear the appeal, which will usually include the CEO and at least one member of the Board of AIUK Section or the Board of AIUK Charitable Trust depending on the nature of the complaint.

For the avoidance of doubt, if the complaint concerns the conduct of any member of

staff, including the CEO, those individuals will not be members of the panel.

The panel will review the complaint and respond within 20 working days. If there is any issue preventing us from replying within 20 working days we will let you know and provide an alternative timeframe.

The panel will provide a summary of the complaint and response to the Feedback Oversight Panel and to the Boards of the AIUK Section Board and/or to the AIUK Charitable Trust Board as appropriate.

**This is our final appeal process.**

## **2.4 CAN I GIVE FEEDBACK OR MAKE A COMPLAINT CONFIDENTIALLY?**

Yes, we work with an independent external whistleblowing reporting service, SafeCall

To contact Safecall, you can

Phone them: 0800 915 1571

Report online at: [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report)

Email: [amnestyuk@safecall.co.uk](mailto:amnestyuk@safecall.co.uk)

## **2.5 WHAT IF I THINK MY COMPLAINT ABOUT FUNDRAISING HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED?**

If your complaint is about our fundraising activity and you are not satisfied with the outcome of our internal procedure, you may contact the Fundraising Regulator within two months of receiving our response:

[www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/makeacomplaint](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/makeacomplaint)

Eagle House, 167 City Road, London EC1V 1AW

The Fundraising Regulator's remit 'covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and fundraising in Scotland where it is carried out by charities registered primarily with the Charity Commission for England and Wales or the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland' This applies to Amnesty International UK Section Charitable Trust.

The FR is an independent non-statutory body, responsible for setting and maintaining the standards for charitable fundraising in the UK and will adjudicate on issues that may arise between members of the public and fundraising organisations.

Complaints about fundraising carried out by the Section (which includes membership, Amnesty bookshops and some other activity) may not be referred to the FR Regulator. Our SCT can advise if the fundraising activity you are complaining about relates to AIUK Section or Trust.

## **2.6 WHAT IF I THINK AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK HAS NOT COMPLIED WITH STANDARDS OR ACTED ILLEGALLY AND MY COMPLAINT HAS NOT BEEN RESOLVED THROUGH THE APPEAL PROCESS?**

For unresolved complaints regarding Amnesty International UK compliance with the law or other relevant standards please contact the relevant authority.

The activities of Amnesty International UK Section Charitable Trust are regulated by the Charity Commission, which acts as an independent regulator. If you are dissatisfied with the final appeal outcome and believe the decision constitutes a breach of the law by the Charitable Trust, you can complain to the Commission by visiting <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk> or [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity), or emailing [whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk)

Please note that the Charity Commission does not have any jurisdiction over Amnesty International United Kingdom Section (which is not a charity). If you believe that Amnesty International United Kingdom Section has broken the law, your complaint should be directed to one of the following agencies:

If you believe that Amnesty International United Kingdom Section or its directors have committed fraud or serious misconduct you should direct your complaint to the Insolvency Service, Companies House or the Serious Fraud Office. Guidance is available as to which agency is most appropriate for various types of claims here: <https://www.gov.uk/complainabout-a-limited-company>

If you believe that Amnesty International United Kingdom Section or its Directors have failed to comply with the law in some other respect, you should direct your complaint to the Police: <https://online.met.police.uk/>

## **2.7 HOW DOES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK LEARN FROM MY FEEDBACK AND/OR COMPLAINT?**

The Feedback Oversight Panel monitors the implementation of this policy and procedure; analyses feedback patterns; fosters wider organisational learning and, where appropriate, recommends organisational change to the Senior Management Team and the Amnesty International United Kingdom Section and Trust Boards.

The panel reports on a quarterly basis to the Amnesty International UK Section Board and to the AIUK Charitable Trust Board.

## 2.8 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PROCEDURE?

Amnesty International UK's Chief Executive Officer is ultimately responsible for compliance with this policy, with the support of Amnesty International UK's Senior Management Team.

<b>Author/policy contact:</b>	<i>Director of Supporter Campaigns and Communications</i>
<b>Sign off:</b>	<i>AIUK Section Board and AIUK Charitable Trust Board</i>
<b>Approved by/approval level:</b>	
<b>Date effective:</b>	<i>June 2023</i>
<b>Last reviewed or updated:</b>	<i>May 2023</i>
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	<i>Every two years</i>
<b>Supersedes:</b>	<b>AIUK Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure</b>