# Annex A

# CIHT Complaints Policy & Procedure

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| **Version number** | 2026/ V3 |
| **Created by** | Director of Corporate & Business Services |
| **Date last reviewed** | Audit Committee on 22nd September 2026 |
| **Document status** | Approved |
| **Approved by** | Board of Trustees on 4th Nov 2026 |
| **Review Frequency** | Annual Review by Audit Committee |

**1. Introduction**

CIHT views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To ensure CIHT staff know what to do if a complaint is received.
- To ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved.
- To gather information that helps us to improve what we do.

**1A. Related Policies and Procedures**

Certain concerns may be more appropriately addressed through other CIHT policies and procedures. These include:

- Safeguarding at Events Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Professional Conduct Panel Procedures
- Professional Registration Appeals Procedure
- Data Protection and Privacy Procedures

Where a matter falls within one of these procedures, CIHT may redirect it to the most appropriate process.

**2. Definition**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of CIHT's services.

Complaints may come from any person or organisation with a legitimate interest in CIHT or who receives a service from CIHT. Examples of what a complaint may include are;

- Complaints about the professional conduct of a member or volunteer
- Complaints about the professional registration process
- Complaints about the conduct of a member of staff
- Concerns relating to participant welfare, wellbeing or safety at CIHT events or activities
- Complaint about marketing activities
- Complaints about operational products or services
- Complaint about fees
- Complaints about a decision or actions of the CIHT

**3. CIHT Complaints Procedure - How to make a complaint**

Before a complaint is formally raised

- CIHT believes a complaint can, in many cases, be resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint is received by that person, they should attempt to resolve it swiftly if possible and appropriate.
- Complainants considering making a complaint can phone +44 (0)207 336 1555 or speak in person to any of CIHT's staff at 119 Britannia Walk, London N1 7JE, or at any CIHT events or activities.

Raising a formal complaint – selecting the correct procedure

All complaints should be raised in line with our standard process which depends on the nature of the complaint;

- **Complaints about the professional conduct of a CIHT member** should be raised using the following procedure. Any allegation that a member is in breach of the member code of conduct will be investigated by the Professional Conduct Panel and action taken under CIHT's disciplinary procedure.
- **Complaints about the outcome of a professional registration assessment** should be raised using the following appeal procedure
- **Any serious concerns about suspected wrongdoing** should be raised under our whistleblowing procedure – this encompasses any serious concern about a fraud, crime, danger or serious risk which could threaten members, the public, staff or the institution's reputation. The concern must relate to something that is in the public interest, and not solely be in a person's own interest to raise.
- **Concerns regarding the welfare, safety or wellbeing of participants attending CIHT events, training, meetings or activities** should be raised and managed in accordance with the CIHT Safeguarding at Events Policy. CIHT may investigate matters under both the safeguarding and complaints processes where appropriate.
- **All other complaints**, regardless of their initial format (in person, by phone, email, or letter), must be documented and submitted in writing to CIHT if not resolved

immediately using the standard **CIHT Complaint Form.** Your completed CIHT Complaints Forms should thereafter be sent to CIHT at 119 Britannia Walk, London N1 7JE, or submitted by email to **governance@ciht.org.uk.**

**4. Responding to general complaints**

Stage One

- Upon receiving the written complaint, the Director of Corporate and Business Services will record it in the complaints log and assign it to an appropriate person for investigation and action.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days, stating who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure will be included.
- Complainants should expect to receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. If this is not possible, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- The reply will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result.

Where a complaint concerns the conduct of a member of staff, CIHT may investigate the matter under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure where appropriate. Whilst complainants will be informed that the matter has been considered, details of any disciplinary process or outcome will remain confidential.

CIHT reserves the right to escalate serious matters immediately to the Chief Executive, Chair of the Board of Trustees, legal advisers, insurers or relevant authorities where circumstances warrant urgent action.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- safeguarding concerns;
- allegations of fraud;
- serious misconduct;
- significant health and safety concerns; or
- matters presenting substantial reputational risk.

Stage Two

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request a higher-level review. This request should be made within 10 working days of the Stage One response. The complainant should state why they feel a further stage 2 review is necessary.
- At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive.
- The request for higher-level review will be acknowledged within five working days, stating who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

- The Chief Executive may investigate the case themselves or delegate it to a suitably senior person not previously involved with the case. This may include reviewing the case paperwork and speaking with the person who handled the complaint at the Initial Stage.
- The specific person related to the complaint will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- The complainant should receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. If this is not possible, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- The reply will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result.
- The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chief Executive decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

- The complainant can escalate the complaint to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the types of complaints the Commission can handle can be found on the **Charity Commission website.**

**5. Variation to the Complaints Procedure**

CIHT may vary the procedure for good reason, such as to avoid a conflict of interest or to comply with legal or regulatory requirements. Any variations will be documented, and the complainant will be informed of the changes.

In the event that the complaint is directed at the CEO or any member of the Senior Leadership Team, it will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees for follow-up. In the instance that the complaint is directed against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the complaint will be passed to the President to follow up.

**6. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints will be kept under regular review to identify any trends that may indicate a need to take further action. An annual report on complaints, concerns and any related safeguarding matters will be presented to the Audit Committee, encompassing anonymised summaries where appropriate.

The report will include themes, lessons learned and any recommended improvements to policies, procedures or controls.

The review of complaints and concerns may also inform wider governance improvements across the Institution.