

The Whithorn Trust – Complaints Procedure (External)

Company No. SC109966; Charity Registration No. SC012178

Reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees on 6 October 2025

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure explains how external individuals can make a complaint about the services, conduct, or decisions of The Whithorn Trust. It applies to complaints not resolved informally and operates in line with OSCR expectations and principles of Natural Justice.

2. Principles of Handling

Decisions are based on fairness, both sides of the story, relevant regulation, and law. We respond respectfully, acknowledge experiences, and take responsibility for our actions.

3. Who Processes Complaints

All complaints are logged by the Development Manager. Normally, the Chair oversees the investigation. If the complaint concerns the Chair, the Vice Chair appoints two independent Trustees. If the complaint concerns the Board collectively, an independent external investigator is appointed. Final outcomes are approved by the Board and recorded in the complaints log.

4. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted in writing or via email to enquiries@whithorn.com, using the complaint form provided. Please include a short description, persons involved, dates, effects, and desired outcomes.

5. Timescales

Acknowledgement within 5 working days; response within 20 working days. Appeals to the Vice Chair within 10 working days of the outcome.

6. Investigation Standards

Investigations will be fair, evidence-based, and in accordance with ACAS principles. Staff-related matters follow the Trust's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

7. Decisions and Remedies

Clear, evidence-based reasons will be provided. Where errors occur, we will apologise, take corrective action, and explain lessons learned.

8. Unreasonable Behaviour

Violence, aggression, or abusive language will not be tolerated. Contact may be restricted or ceased where behaviour is unreasonable.

9. Learning from Complaints

Complaints are treated as opportunities for improvement. The Board reviews complaint trends and outcomes annually.

10. Escalation

Serious criminal activity should be reported to Police Scotland (101). Financial or governance concerns may be reported to OSCR or Companies House.

Appendix A – Complaint Form

1. Your full name

2. Organisation (if applicable)

3. Postal address

4. Email address

5. Telephone number

6. Date(s) of incident(s)

7. Names/roles involved

8. Summary of complaint

9. How did this affect you?

10. Desired outcome

11. Evidence attached

12. Accessibility needs

13. Signature and date
