



Learning Review

Prepared for:

Board of Trustees - Chartered Institute of Fundraising

11th March 2021

Executive Summary

In December 2020 the Chartered Institute of Fundraising's Board of Trustees decided to commission a Learning Review of its complaints process at the end of an investigation into a complaint against a member. Tell Jane, a HR consultancy specialising in preventing workplace harassment and conducting independent investigations was commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising to undertake a detailed review of the case as well as considering the policies of other organisations.

As a result of the review Tell Jane has made a number of suggestions for improvement detailed in the report which would reduce the amount of time taken to complete any investigation, improve the handling of complaints and streamline the Chartered Institute's processes.

They are summarised as follows:

1. The Institute of Fundraising revised the **Complaints & Disciplinary Regulations** in June 2019. It is suggested this is revised further to ensure that:

- the person or person(s) conducting an investigation has no involvement or decision making ability in any subsequent disciplinary process
- the Chief Executive does not act as the investigating officer nor make initial enquiries and delegates this to either a trained person or person(s) within the organisation or to an external HR consultancy. The Chief Executive may still retain the ability to suspend a member pending an investigation. This also has the benefit of ensuring that the person or person(s) conducting the investigation has no involvement in any suspension
- where suspension is necessary, the reasons should be kept confidential. The Institute of Fundraising should control the communication about a member's suspension. It is also suggested that there is a point of contact given to the suspended member who can also answer any enquiries from other members and/or parties
- a disciplinary panel conducts disciplinary hearings, and makes disciplinary decisions. No disciplinary sanctions or warnings should be issued prior to a disciplinary hearing being held

Consider including criteria for publicising complaints resulting in disciplinary sanctions and how they are publicised.

2. **The Complaints Policy** provides details of the Tell Jane Hotline, which has been in place since 2019, where members can access support and advice of how a complaint will be handled. It is suggested that the wording is revised so that members understand that they can report complaints of sexual harassment anonymously and confidentially via the Tell Jane hotline in the first instance. Make it clear in the policy to whom within the Institute of Fundraising members can raise complaints and/or concerns about sexual harassment.

- Allow complaints to be initially submitted verbally and informally, a record of which can then be made during any subsequent investigation process, or acknowledged in writing, should the member wish to withdraw the complaint at a later date
- Change any wording to make it explicit that any allegations of sexual harassment will be fully investigated before any disciplinary action is taken
- Consider detailing a separate process for complaints about sexual harassment
- Offer anonymity only if requested and there is a good reason. Members are still able to raise anonymous complaints via the Tell Jane hotline

3. Consider adding to **The Code of Conduct** a requirement by all members *to promote an inclusive environment that is free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.*

4. Similar to a Safeguarding Officer role, it is suggested that the organisation appoints a designated person or person(s) to whom disclosures are made/reported. As a disclosure may be made to another member, it is important that all members know who to go to if a disclosure has been made to them and they are not in a position to deal with the complaint.

- Provide education and training on initial steps to take upon a disclosure of sexual harassment

5. Review any historic complaints that were not investigated as complainants did not wish to make a formal complaint, or put it in writing, to assess whether there is any further action required.

6. Provide training to any person or person(s) conducting investigations or appoint Tell Jane to conduct investigations. Tell Jane can also provide HR consultancy to help manage initial complaints at any part of the process.

7. Consider introducing a member assistance programme to support members mental health during the investigation process.