

Complaints policy template

Policy statement

Receiving feedback and responding to complaints is an important part of improving [NGO]'s accountability. Ensuring our stakeholders can hold us to account will improve the quality of our work in all areas.

Scope

This policy applies to [NGO] and is global in its application. A complaint can be made by any supporter, partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work, or any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity, in the UK for anywhere else in the world.

Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by [NGO] or its staff and associated personnel¹. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign action
- Concern about the behaviour of staff or associated personnel

A complaint has to be about some action for which [NGO] is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is **not**:

- A general inquiry about [NGO]'s work
- A request for information
- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation
- A request to unsubscribe from an [NGO] service e.g. a campaign newsletter or email

The complaints procedures do not apply to complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities in the countries in which we operate. Such issues will be dealt with by the relevant regulatory body.

¹ Contractors, suppliers, volunteers etc.

Procedures for making a complaint

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about [NGO]'s work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff or volunteers at a local level. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal complaints mechanism is required for those occasions when an individual or organisation wishes to make their complaint a matter of record and to receive a formal response.

How to make a complaint

All formal complaints should be made in writing either directly from the individual or organisation making the complaint or via someone acting on their behalf. See below for details about to whom to address a complaint.

Who can make a complaint?

This policy is global in application. A complaint can be made by:

- Any supporter
- Partner organisation
- Community or individual with whom we work
- Any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in the UK or around the world.

Who is not covered by this policy?

Complaints by staff are governed by [NGO]'s procedures for dealing with problems in the workplace, and Anti Bullying and Harassment policy. Complaints relating to serious incidents such as fraud and corruption or safeguarding concerns will be dealt with through the relevant policy and procedures.

Accessibility, Safety & Anonymity

No detriment to people raising concerns/making complaints: We work to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Anonymous concerns/complaints: We accept anonymous complaints and will carry out an investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

Accessibility: We will ensure that information about how and where concerns or complaints may be raised to or about us is well publicised. We will ensure that our systems to manage this information are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance. If a person prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their concerns/complaint, we will communicate with them through their representative if this is their wish.

No charge: Complaining to us or raising concerns is free.

Confidentiality: information related to a complaint is only shared on a need-to-know basis among those directly handling or overseeing the complaint. As a general rule, names or personal details of those individuals involved will not be shared. If it is necessary to disclose information to 3rd parties this is decided on a case-by-case basis and, as far as possible, with the agreement of the person who has raised the complaint, except in cases of criminal activity.

Referrals

Involving multiple agencies: Where a concern or complaint involves multiple organisations, we will work with the other organisation/s where possible, to ensure that communication with the person raising the concerns or complaint and/or their representative is clear and coordinated bearing in mind confidentiality considerations and timeliness.

About partner organisations: We expect our partners to have an accessible and comprehensive system for managing concerns and complaints. If we receive a concern or complaint about a partner organisation, we will refer it to them, if it is safe to do so.

Suggest criminal activity: Concerns or complaints that suggest criminal activity should be reported in line with local legislation, but only if it is safe to do so. The procedures do not apply to concerns or complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities in the [Insert Country] or other countries in which we operate. Such issues will be dealt with by the relevant regulatory body.

Safeguarding [if there is no expertise within your organisation]: For concerns or complaints that suggest a safeguarding issue has occurred, we will work with [insert who] to ensure specialist advice and support is available to the individual(s) and our organisation as required

Outline Policy

[A policy is not a procedure. Policies communicate guiding points whereas a procedure is a series of steps to be followed. Your organisation may consider developing a procedure to accompany its policy to provide step by step guidance on how to manage feedback/concerns/complaints.]

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about [Insert organisation] 's work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff or volunteers. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal process is required on some occasions. Where this is the case [outline next steps for acknowledgement of complaint, investigations, management of complaint, ongoing communication]

How to make a complaint

[Insert contact details here: phone hotline, e-mail address, staff contact person etc.]

Accountability and Learning

We are committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will regularly review the complaints management system and adapt or revise practices in light of analysis of complaints received. Any data used will be anonymised and kept securely

Related documents

[List here all related policy documents, and any procedures being used for implementation e.g. Code of Behaviour; Grievance Policy; Safeguarding policy]