



# Islamic Relief Worldwide

## Complaints Policy

## Version management

Title:	HQ Complaints Policy
Category:	Governance
URN:	IRW/GOV/005(E)
Policy Type:	Operational
Version Control:	V1.00
Date of Creation:	September 2008
Last Modified:	March 2018
Review Date:	August 2018
Approving Body:	Board of Directors
Date of Approval:	August 2016
Document author(s)/ Key:	Atallah FitzGibbon, Javed Bostan
Contributors including:	Sarah Curtis
Department:	Strategy, Policy & Processes
Policy Owner:	Head of Internal Audit
For public access or staff access	Public

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# Introduction

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Complaints mechanisms make up one of the five pillars of IRW's Accountability Framework (IRW Handbook) and are essential for giving our users, stakeholders and staff the right to highlight inadequacies in our service or conduct of our staff, thus enabling us to improve and address any injustice or inefficiency in our work.

It is important to differentiate between the IRW Complaints policy and the Grievance Policy and Procedure for staff, which explains the process for staff with concerns about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that they wish to raise with management.

This policy's objectives are:

- To create a standardised, trusted, reliable, traceable and comprehensive system to raise a complaint
- To register, investigate, take remedial action and provide feedback on complaints;
- To ensure internal and external transparency of the complaints handling procedures
- To develop and improve organisational management of complaints, policy and procedures.
- To gain a better understanding of the nature and variety of complaints to ensure our policies and procedures adequately reflect the needs of those whom we serve

## Defining a complaint

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For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or unhappiness about the standards or quality of service, actions or inaction, by Islamic Relief Worldwide or its staff and volunteers.

Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from a user or beneficiary of our service, stakeholder or staff member about the quality of services we have provided
- Safeguarding concerns such as child protection matters and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Concerns relating to modern slavery
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign action
- Concern about the conduct and behaviour of staff or volunteers

- The reporting of fraud or corruption

A complaint to IRW has to be about some action or inaction for which Islamic Relief Worldwide is responsible for or is within our organisational control and jurisdiction

A complaint is not:

- A request for information
- A general query about the work of Islamic Relief Worldwide
- A request for mediation
- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation
- A request to unsubscribe from an IRW service

## Who can make a complaint?

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IRW HQ accepts complaints from anywhere in the world and in particular from:

- Users or beneficiaries of our service
- Partner organisations
- Local communities or individuals with whom we work
- Donors
- Member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in the UK or around the world.
- Staff members: Staff wishing to complain should first refer to the IRW Grievance Policy and Procedure which encourages staff in the first instance to try and resolve matters informally in consultation with their line manager (where appropriate). This details the process for submitting complaints within the workplace. Local IRW Office/Field staff will need to refer to their local Grievance Policies/Procedures.

## Who is not covered by this policy?

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It must be noted here that IRW cannot accept legal responsibility or promise remedial action for failures within those of its partner offices that are separate legal entities, nor can we guarantee resolution of disputes or contractual disagreements for the same reason.

# How Complaints should be submitted

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- By email to: [complaints@irworldwide.org](mailto:complaints@irworldwide.org)
- Via the website through the complaints function
- In writing to: Complaints, Internal Audit Department, Islamic Relief Worldwide, 19 Rea Street South, Digbeth B5 6LB
- In person: (To arrange please call 0121 605 5555)

Complainants wishing to make a complaint in person should contact the Internal Audit Department via telephone where a time and date can be arranged with an appointed person to take down the details of the complaint

Complainants contacting IR by phone should be informed of the IR Complaints Policy and requested to submit their complaint in one of the above ways or in person through a staff member. The complainant should also be provided with a copy of the complaints policy.

All complaints should be sent directly to the above email address and not to any other IRW individuals including the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Trustee and Board of Directors.

Only if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation regarding their complaint then they may contact the CEO (Please refer to point 13)

## Filing a Complaint

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Any complaint received is referred to the Internal Audit complaints officer.

The information required should ideally include:

- Complainants name, address, telephone number and email address
- Preferred method of contact
- Relationship of the complainant to Islamic Relief; for example beneficiary, stakeholder.
- The facts of the complaint to include dates, times and location(s), where possible ,using the complainants own words

- Referral form for Child Protection

Valid complaints have to be related to:

- IR activities, even if they were sub-contracted to another organisation or company;
- IR staff members, including those staff members no longer working for IR.

Complaints about IR staff members are only accepted if the complaints concern these staff members in their capacity as staff members. IR will not be liable in any way for conduct or behaviour by its staff committed outside of their working duties and responsibilities including during the course of their private lives or otherwise. Staff on overseas missions may be considered to be representing IR outside of normal working hours.

All complaints must be treated as confidential. Confidentiality is integral to all stages of communication within the complaints handling system. In the event that the complainant provides documentation in support of their complaint, it should be logged, and recorded using appropriate means. All original documents must be returned to the complainant unless required. All data will be stored in accordance with the data Protection Act 1988.

## Process

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- Once a complaint is received, IRW will acknowledge receipt of the complaint with an automated response
- Within 15 working days, we will provide a formal written response providing the details and contact information of the person or department who is going to be handling the complaint.
- Further evidence may be requested from the complainant. If no response is received within one month of the request, the complaint will be closed.
- We will aim to provide complainants with a final response within 30 working days, or explain why we are unable to provide the complainant with a final response, giving reasons for the delay and an indication of when we expect to be able to provide the complainant with a final response.

# Appeals

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- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the process, the complainant has a 30-day right to appeal to the CEO.
- The CEO or a member of his office will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 14 days
- The decision will be reviewed and a written response will be sent to the complainant within 30 days. The decision of the CEO office is final.

If the complaint is against the CEO,

- The complaint will be submitted to the Chair of the Audit Committee (who are an independent subcommittee of the Board of Trustees).
- The chair will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 14 days.
- The decision will be reviewed and a written response sent to the complainant within 30 days. The Audit Committee's decision is final.

# Confidentiality

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All complaints will be handled on a confidential basis if requested by the complainant. In some cases it may be necessary to disclose information to third parties. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and with the agreement of the complainant. Exceptions to this will be if the matter involves the commission of a criminal offence, safeguarding concerns or acts of terrorism. In these instances we will involve the relevant authority.

# External Support in making complaints

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Wherever possible Islamic Relief Worldwide welcomes the opportunity to resolve complaints in the first instance to ensure we do all we can to continually improve the service we provide. If you are unhappy about the way your complaint has been dealt with please see below for external bodies who can help:

If you have a complaint about fundraising, the Fundraising Regulator can help. As the regulatory body of fundraising in the UK, they can investigate potential breaches of the standards outlined in the Code of Fundraising Practice.

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/>

If you have a complaint about advertising the Advertising Standards Authority can help. As the regulatory body for fundraising they can investigate advertising campaigns that you may feel are inaccurate, offensive or deceptive or the way that the charity communicates with you.

<http://www.asa.org.uk>

For any other serious concerns please contact the Charity Commission

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>