

Australian Relief and Mercy Services

Complaints Policy

Version 20.02

Note this document is under regular review – please ensure you utilise text from the latest version.



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Purpose

To provide access to the fair and efficient resolution of complaints, grievances or problems that address breaches of personnel guidelines, instances of unfair treatment, unethical or criminal behaviour.

Scope

This Policy is intended to apply to any complaint, regardless of who makes it. Complaints may relate to our staff, our volunteers, our partners, our contracted service providers or anyone else acting on our behalf. Complaints may also relate to our services and projects, whether provided directly by Australian Mercy or in partnership with another organisation.

A complaint may be made by a person to whom we deliver services or goods or who is affected by our services or goods, a partner, a local organisation with which we work, our staff, volunteers, donors or a member of the public. All staff and volunteers are oriented to this policy as part of induction and provided with a copy. This policy is also made available to our staff and to the general public through our website. We require all those who may be involved in any way with a complaint to formally signify their commitment to this policy. Project Management Groups ensure that projects in Australia or internationally have local processes for dealing with complaints that articulate with those detailed in this policy, and that these processes:

- Are available in local languages
- Are provided in accessible formats (e.g. a photograph of the person to raise a complaint with)
- Detail appropriate contact information for all levels of complaints (including contact information for the PMG and for Australian Mercy.
- Advise a complainant of the ability to make a complaint regarding an alleged breach of policy to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee.

Policy Statement

Australian Mercy recognises the importance and value of listening and responding to concerns and complaints. We believe that it is right and proper that within an organisation that holds a high importance on issues of social justice, that people working with that organisation and the general public have a clear complaints pathway through which they can seek resolution of complaints, grievances or problems associated through their contact with Australian Mercy and its staff or representatives. This applies especially to delivery of services, donations and fundraising, and accountability to stakeholders generally.

Definitions

- Complaint: means an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products or services, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- Complainant: means a person, organisation or its representative, making a complaint.
- Inquiry: means a request for information or an explanation.
- Feedback: means opinions, comments, suggestions and expressions of interest in the products or the complaint handling process.
- Stakeholder or interested party: means a person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the organization.
- A whistleblower is someone with inside knowledge of an organisation who reports misconduct or dishonest or illegal activity that may have occurred within that organisation.

Principles

Australian Mercy is committed to the following principles in relation to complaints handling:

- Accessibility: Our complaints processes will be visible and accessible to everyone who may need them. It does not cost anything to make a complaint. It is our responsibility to ensure that complaints are recorded and followed up; therefore, a complaint does not need to be made in writing.
- Timeliness: We will act as quickly and as thoroughly as possible to resolve complaints and grievances.
- Local resolution: Australian Mercy will support a local resolution of problems wherever possible, believing that issues need to be dealt with in the place that they occur - for example, if a complaint arises about an international project, the local management of that project will oversee the handling of the complaint in the first instance. Project Management Groups are required to set up a local complaints handling system that articulates with this policy, and that is flexible, fair, focused on resolution, and accessible to all persons. PMGs

must also report on complaints raised within or about their projects to the Australian Mercy Board in their regular reporting (6 monthly).

- Equity: We will address all complaints in an equitable, fair and unbiased manner using evidence submitted by both the complainant and our personnel through the complaint handling process.
- Confidentiality: We will keep complaints strictly confidential. All complaints will be recorded and filed in a central, confidential file. Anonymous complaints can be made, but our ability to investigate them may be limited because of this.
- Continuous learning: We use complaints as a means of learning and improving our organisation. The Australian Mercy Board considers a review of all complaints at least annually, in order to identify trends and consider the implications of these.

Review

This policy will undergo a review at least every 3 years. Compliance with this policy will be assessed annually:

- Last review date Feb 2020
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