



Islamic Relief Worldwide

IRW Complaints Policy

Version management

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Contents

Version management.....	1
Introduction	3
Policy Statement	3
Scope	3
Responsibilities.....	4
Governance Division	4
Head of Governance.....	4
Staff and Volunteers.....	4
Complaint Focal Points (Field Office Based)	4
Defining a complaint	5
Who can make a complaint?.....	6
Who is not covered by this policy?	6
How Complaints should be submitted	6
Filing a Complaint.....	7
Process	8
Confidentiality and data protection	8
Whistleblowing.....	9
What do if you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been handled	9
External Support in resolving complaints	9

Introduction

As part of Islamic Relief Worldwide's (IRW) accountability framework, values and standards such as the [Core Humanitarian Standards](#), we welcome and prioritise addressing complaints. We see the reporting, investigation and determination of complaints as an essential to our legitimacy and giving our beneficiaries, stakeholders, staff and volunteers the confidence to help us to continuously do better in our services. IRW believes in a culture where our staff (at all levels) and volunteers accept the need 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.

Policy Statement

Islamic Relief Worldwide – from Trustees and Board of Directors down - welcomes complaints and feedback from our beneficiaries, stakeholders and staff as a key mechanism to learn and improve. The complaints process is integral to meeting our values of Excellence (Ihsan), Compassion (Rahma), Social Justice (Adl) and Custodianship (Amana). In learning from the complaints and feedback we receive, we also strive to continually develop and learn about the complaints process itself to provide an effective complaints and response mechanism which is safe, confidential, transparent and accessible to those we serve and work in partnership with.

Scope

This Policy outlines IRW's position on complaints handling received directly to Islamic Relief Worldwide's Headquarters directly and those escalated from our Field Office (as per the [Field Office Complaints Policy](#)).

The Field Office Complaints Policy outlines the complaints handling process identified and received by our Field Offices and the escalation of serious complaints to IRW.

IRW seeks to facilitate and encourage complaints at a local level in the first instance, however we also welcome individuals directing their complaint to Islamic Relief Worldwide Headquarters if they wish.

This Policy should be read together with the [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

In respect of a complaint relating to a third-party with whom IRW may or may not have a link, IRW will identify for the Complainant who in that third-party should be contacted to determine their complaint. IRW will also take steps to determine whether the actions of the third-party impacts upon IRW and is a matter that needs reporting to other authorities.

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 in a timely and systemic way.
- 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
- To foster accountability and improvement at all levels of the organisations

Responsibilities

Governance Division

- Processing information about complaints in a confidential manner and in accordance with data protection and information security requirements.
- Acknowledging receipt to the complainant and logging complaints
- Maintaining and updating complaints case files
- Liaising confidentially with Complainants to obtain further information and provide updates
- Liaising with internal /external stakeholders as appropriate
- Escalation of complaints requiring investigation
- Obtaining updates on case progress and ensuring the complaint is being managed in a timely way
- Providing input and information to Investigations lead
- Case closure
- Escalation of complaints to relevant lead's (Safeguarding Lead, Investigation Lead and Fraud Lead)
- Produce management reports on complaints

Head of Governance

- Retain oversight of the complaints management and handling process
- Oversee serious incidents/complaints
- External reporting requirements
- Determining appeals

Staff and Volunteers

- Being open to feedback and complaints
- Co-operating and participating in complaints investigations
- Reporting complaints where dissatisfaction is voiced about the actions and inactions of Islamic Relief Worldwide and supporting complainant in making a complaint through the correct complaint referral mechanism referenced in this policy
- Ensuring any complaints received are notified to IRW Complaints via complaints@irworldwide.org

Complaint Focal Points (Field Office Based)

- Processing information about complaints in a confidential manner and in accordance with data protection and information security requirements.

- Escalation of serious complaints to Headquarters as outlined in the [Field Office Complaints Policy](#)
- Responsibilities as outlined in the Field Office Complaints Policy

Defining a complaint

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 (Complaints will be processed in accordance with dedicated policies: [Safeguarding](#), [Child Protection](#) and [Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation](#) (PSEA))
- 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 or those representing Islamic Relief
- The reporting of fraud or corruption (complaints will be processed in accordance with the [Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy](#))
- Concerns about Modern Slavery

A complaint is not:

- A routine 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, for example, cancelling a donation or updating contact details
- A request to unsubscribe from an IRW service, or change marketing preferences
- A request for support

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

Who can make a complaint?

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

- Users or beneficiaries of our services
- 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?

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

- By email to: complaints@irworldwide.org
- Via the website through the contacts function – [Complaints and Concerns](#) tab
- In writing to: Complaints, Governance 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 Governance Officer via telephone where a time and date can be arranged with an appointed person to take down the details of the complaint

Complainants contacting IRW by phone should be informed of the IRW 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.

Complaints may also be received indirectly via other mediums such as social media or in the course of dealing with other matters, individuals may voice dissatisfaction. Our staff have a responsibility to identify complaints and support the complainant in exercising their right to complain.

Any complaints identified or received directly by individuals or internal departments must be forwarded to complaints@irworldwide.org

Filing a Complaint

Any complaint received is referred to the Governance Department who process complaints

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 Safeguarding cases

Valid complaints have to be related to:

- IR activities, even if they were sub-contracted to another organisation or company;
- IR staff members/volunteers, including those who may 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.

Process

- Once a complaint is received, IRW will acknowledge receipt of the complaint with an automated response
- Within 3 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. We will attempt contact on 3 separate occasions. If no response is received within one month of the initial request, the complaint will be closed.
- A majority of complaints can be dealt with swiftly, and a final response is usually received within 30 working days. If a complaint requires a formal investigation process this may take longer. If we are unable to resolve the matter within 30 working days, we will keep the complainant updated, explain the reason for the delay and provide an indication of when we expect to be able to provide the complainant with a final response wherever possible.

Confidentiality and Data protection

All complaints will be treated confidentially and handled as such throughout all stages of the complaints handling system. This means that information relating to the complaint will be stored in a secure manner for as long as required in accordance with the data retention policy, and will only be disclosed to other IRW staff if *strictly* required to effect a resolution to the complaint.

There are some circumstances where it may be necessary to disclose information to a third party. For example, we may have a legal obligation to share information with a relevant body if the matter involves the commission of a criminal offense, safeguarding concern of acts of terrorism.

We will only share information containing personal data to a third party if we have legal basis to do so as defined by the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). In some cases this will mean that we will have to obtain the informed consent of the complainant before sharing their personal data with a third party.

For further guidance please refer to the [Data Protection Policy](#).

Whistleblowing

In addition to our complaints policy we also have a [Whistleblowing Policy](#). This aim of this policy is to set out the arrangements to enable whistleblowers to make disclosures in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Act gives legal protection to workers who disclose certain serious concerns which qualify as being in the public interest giving rise to a genuine concern about the wellbeing and safety of at least one individual. The organisation has put in place this Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that all staff feel able to raise concerns confidentially and even anonymously if they are a matter of public interest.

What do if you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been handled

IRW's complaints procedures have in-built oversight and assurance mechanisms to ensure each complaint is properly managed and investigated. In each case, the determination of the complaint is overseen by IRW's Complaints Team who are not responsible for the investigation or decision determining the complaint.

If after receiving the outcome of your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled and believe IRW has not followed its process set out in this Policy, you can appeal to IRW's Head of Governance explaining why you are appealing the original decision.

In doing so it is important to provide additional or new grounds for why you think the matter has NOT met our standards.

In each case, the Head of Governance of IRW will assess the grounds for appeal and take appropriate action:

- Accept the appeal on the grounds stated and implement a new or additional investigation with a new investigation team; or
- Uphold the original decision if the grounds for appeal are not accepted.

If you are still not satisfied we have identified our external regulators (below) who provide guidance and support in respect of overseeing the way we work.

External Support in resolving complaints

Wherever possible Islamic Relief Worldwide welcomes the opportunity to resolve complaints internally in the first instance through the process referenced. However, if you are unhappy with how we have dealt with your request, please note the support provided by the following external bodies:

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 [Fundraising Code](#)

<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>

The CHS Alliance accepts complaints against its member organisations who fail to apply their own commitments and/or the principles and commitments of the [Core Humanitarian Standard](#).

complaints@chsalliance.org

Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

The ICO is a UK based independent authority that regulates various legislation governing information rights including the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR). If you have concerns about an organisation's information rights practices, the ICO can help.

<https://ico.org.uk>

For any other serious concerns please contact the Charity Commission

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