

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date of Policy	MARCH 2022
Date Policy due for review	MARCH 2027
Policy Owner	OPERATIONS MANAGER

1. Introduction

Respond strives for high standards and we are committed to respecting the views of our beneficiaries, volunteers, donors, and external stakeholders. Feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our work.

This policy relates only to complaints received by Respond from external stakeholders or beneficiaries. Staff complaints will be dealt with in accordance with Respond's Grievance Policy.

All staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the complaints policy is to ensure that:

- External stakeholders know how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled.
- Complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear and acceptable timeframes.
- Individuals have an effective way to comment on Respond's work and services.
- Complaints are monitored and used to improve our services.

3. Definition

Complaint - A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an external stakeholder.

Complaints are taken seriously and will be responded to in a timely, fair and consistent manner. They enable Respond to identify when the services provided are unsatisfactory and influence our service delivery and quality assurance.

4. Complaints Procedure

Stage One

Any external individual wishing to make a complaint should first submit this to admin@respond.org.uk. The complaint will be forwarded to the relevant service manager and logged by the Operations Manager.

We aim to resolve issues quickly and satisfactorily. Complaints will be recorded and acknowledged within five working days of receipt. We hope that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally by speaking to the person/s involved, either by telephone or face-to-face. Appendix 1 includes guidance on making phone contact with a complainant.

If not, a written response will be submitted to the complainant by email by the relevant service manager within 20 working days of the complaint being received. The email will:

- Summarise the initial complaint.
- Outline the investigation and/or action taken by the Service Manager.
- Outline any future action to be taken by Respond.

The complainant will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal to the Acting CEO within 10 working days. The complaint will then progress to stage two (see below).

The appeal may be based on the following grounds:

- A failure to follow procedure.
- Complainant does not accept the decision.
- New evidence subsequently coming to light.
- Apparent inconsistent approach.

Stage Two

The Acting CEO will appoint a senior member of staff to re-investigate the matter. The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the appeal within 20 working days of receipt. Alternatively, the complainant may be invited to a meeting to resolve the issue. Where there are any delays, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the delay. Any decision and findings will be final.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered. Action may be limited if fuller information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

6. Data Protection

To process a complaint, Respond will hold personal data about the complainant. This will be held securely in accordance with the Data Protection

Act 2018. The identity of the complainant will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint.

However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies, or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

7. Monitoring

Complaints are important tools, which along with surveys issued to our volunteers and user feedback will allow Respond to review the services we provide. They offer a useful source of information about how individuals see our charity and the services we provide.

Any information obtained will be considered regularly by the senior management team. Wherever possible, the information will be used to improve and further develop our services.