

Disclaimer: The information provided here is intended for guidance only. They are not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it. City of Sanctuary affiliated groups must make sure their policy is relevant for their specific content.

[insert CoS group name/logo]

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Introduction

[insert CoS group name] is committed to providing high-quality services and creating a positive and inclusive environment for refugees, people seeking sanctuary, volunteers, (staff), and the local community.

We value feedback and take all complaints seriously. This policy outlines how complaints will be handled, ensuring that they are addressed in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

We commit to reviewing this policy every [insert years] and will publish on our website [insert link] for ease of access.

Scope

This Complaints Policy applies to all [insert CoS group name] activities, including but not limited to:

- Activities and events organised by [insert CoS group name].
- Interactions between volunteers, (staff), and individuals receiving support.
- The quality and accessibility of the services provided to refugees, people seeking sanctuary, and other vulnerable individuals.
- The behaviour of [insert CoS group name] volunteers, (staff), and partners.

Our Commitment

[insert CoS group name] is committed to:

1. Listening and Responding:

- We welcome complaints as a means of improving our services and fostering an open dialogue with the people we serve.
- All complaints will be acknowledged and investigated promptly.

2. Fair and Transparent Process:

- We will treat all complaints fairly, respecting the rights of the individual making the complaint and the person(s) involved.
- The complaints process will be transparent and the steps will be clearly communicated to all parties involved.

3. Support and Confidentiality:

- Individuals making a complaint will be supported throughout the process.
- Complaints will be handled confidentially to the extent possible, but where necessary, information may need to be shared with relevant parties (e.g., managers, local authorities).

4. Timely Resolution:

- Complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible, keeping individuals informed of progress throughout the process.
- In cases where an immediate resolution is not possible, we will aim to provide an interim solution.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is defined as:

- A formal or informal expression of dissatisfaction regarding the services, actions, or behaviour of [insert CoS group name] (staff), volunteers, or partners.
- Any concern about the quality or accessibility of our services.
- A complaint can relate to a wide range of issues, including but not limited to:
 - Unprofessional or inappropriate behavior.
 - A service not meeting expectations.
 - Delays or lack of communication.
 - Health and safety concerns.
 - Mistreatment or discrimination.

How to Make a Complaint?

1. Informal Complaints:

- We encourage individuals to address concerns informally, where possible. If someone is dissatisfied with an aspect of our service, we recommend they speak directly with the (staff) member or volunteer involved.
- Many issues can be resolved through a respectful conversation, and we encourage a solution-oriented approach.

2. Formal Complaints:

- If a concern cannot be resolved informally, individuals should submit a formal complaint in writing to the designated Complaints Officer or Safeguarding Officer. Complaints can be submitted via:
 - Email: [email address]
 - In writing: [physical address]
 - Phone: [phone number]

3. What to Include:

- The nature of the complaint (what happened).
- Details of the individual(s) involved.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue (if applicable).
- Any supporting evidence (e.g., emails, photos, records of communication).
- Preferred outcome or resolution (if applicable).

Complaints Procedure

1. Acknowledgment:

- Once a complaint is received, it will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- The person making the complaint will be informed of the next steps in the process and a timeline for resolution.

2. Investigation:

- The complaint will be investigated by the Complaints Officer or relevant (staff) member, who will gather facts, review evidence, and interview relevant parties.
- We will aim to complete the investigation within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. If additional time is needed, we will inform the complainant of the delay and provide a new timeline.

3. Resolution:

- After completing the investigation, we will inform the complainant of the outcome and any actions taken. This may include:
 - An apology or explanation.
 - A change in service or practice.
 - Disciplinary action against a (staff) member or volunteer (if applicable).
 - Referral to external bodies if necessary (e.g., local authorities, regulatory bodies).

4. Outcome Review:

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request a review of the decision. This review will be conducted by a senior member of the [insert CoS group name] group who was not involved in the original investigation.
- The review process will be completed within 10 working days of the request.

What to Do if the Complaint Involves the Complaints Officer

If a complaint involves the Complaints Officer themselves or if the complainant feels that the Complaints Officer is unable to act impartially, the following steps should be taken:

1. Report to a Senior Team Member:

- In this case, the complainant should report the complaint directly to a senior member of the [insert CoS group name] group who is not involved in the matter. This could be the Safeguarding Officer, a Manager, or another senior member.
- The senior member will then handle the complaint as if they were the Complaints Officer, following the same procedures outlined in this policy.

2. Alternative Contact:

- If the complainant is unsure who to contact, they may email [alternative email address] or call [alternative phone number], where they will be directed to the appropriate person.

Anonymous Complaints

- [insert CoS group name] will accept anonymous complaints, though it may be more difficult to investigate these effectively without specific details.
- Whenever possible, we will respond to anonymous complaints and take appropriate action.

Unreasonable Complaints

We are committed to addressing all complaints fairly and thoroughly. However, we recognize that some complaints may be unreasonable due to their nature or frequency. Unreasonable complaints may include those that are excessively repetitive, malicious, or unrealistic, or those where no clear or actionable issue is raised. In such cases, we reserve the right to limit our response or refuse to engage further.

When responding to unreasonable complaints, we will:

1. Seek to understand the underlying concerns and ensure the issue is handled appropriately within our policy guidelines.
2. If the complaint continues to be unreasonable, we may communicate our decision to limit further engagement, providing a clear rationale based on our complaints policy.
3. Document the interaction, maintaining transparency and a clear record.

We aim to resolve all complaints in a constructive manner, but we also strive to maintain a balanced approach, ensuring resources are focused on addressing legitimate concerns.

Complaints about [Insert group name]

In the first instance you must contact [Insert group name] directly to raise your complaint.

If after the groups complaints procedure has been exhausted and the complainant is not satisfied they can raise the complaint with City of Sanctuary UK. However, **the complaint will only be investigated by City of Sanctuary UK if the complainant has sufficient evidence** that:-

- A group has acted contrary to the values of City of Sanctuary;
- What a group has done, or not done, is of such a serious nature that it has brought the City of Sanctuary name and reputation into disrepute.

Complaints should be sent to the [Chief Officer](#). If following an investigation, the Chief Officer finds sufficient evidence enough to justify the complaint they will refer

the matter to the trustees to decide whether the group will be removed from the network.

[City of Sanctuary UK complaints policy](#)

Confidentiality

- Complaints will be treated in confidence, and only those who need to know (e.g., relevant (staff), volunteers, managers) will be informed.
- However, in certain circumstances, information may need to be shared with external authorities (e.g., if the complaint relates to safeguarding concerns, criminal behavior, or illegal activities).

Monitoring and Review

- The Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is effective and continues to meet the needs of the organization and those we serve.
- Data on complaints will be monitored to identify any trends or areas where improvements can be made.

Contact Information

- **Complaints Officer:** [Name, role, and contact details]
- **Safeguarding Officer:** [Name, role, and contact details]
- **Emergency Contacts:** [Local authority contacts, police, etc.]