



SOS Sahel International UK

Complaints Policy and Procedure/Whistleblowing

April 2018

Policy Statement

This policy applies to SOS Sahel International UK. A complaint can be made by any supporter, partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work or any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in the United Kingdom or anywhere else in the world.

Ensuring that our stakeholders can hold us to account will improve the quality of our work. SOS Sahel International UK strives to be excellent in all that it does but recognises that this cannot always be the case. When we make a mistake we want and need to be informed. We will use the information to endeavour to put things right and to help us to become more effective.

Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by SOS Sahel International UK or its staff, volunteers or anybody directly involved in the delivery of our work. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed.

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

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign
- Concern about the behaviour of staff, volunteers or contractors.

A complaint has to be about an action for which SOS Sahel International UK is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

Both SOS Sahel International UK and its partners should be held accountable for the promises and the commitments we make, what we do, and how we do it.

SOS Sahel International UK cannot respond to a complaint about: - Other organisations (except SOS Sahel International UK's partners) - Issues not related to our partner's programmes - Local or national government, local authorities, etc.

A complaint is not:

- A general query about SOS Sahel's work
- A request for information

- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation ·

Principles

Accessibility. Complainants should be able to make a complaint as easily as possible: written correspondence, email, telephone, verbally, via a third party, etc. We are committed to making communication with us as easy as possible

Timeliness. SOS Sahel UK aims to resolve complaints in a timely manner (see below). In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within this timeframe the complainant will be informed about the progress made to date and when they can expect to receive a response. Complaints should be made within 3 months of the relevant incident. In exceptional circumstances SOS Sahel International UK may be able to respond to a complaint that is older, although the passage of time may make it harder to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.

Confidentiality. Some complaints need to be kept confidential in order to safeguard those making or involved in the complaint. However in some instances we might judge that the complainant will be better served if others are involved in the resolution of a complaint. Third parties will only be included in the resolution of confidential complaints on a case-by-case basis and with the agreement of the complainant.

Documented. Some complaints may be both made and resolved verbally, e.g. by telephone or face to face. Where they are unable to be resolved verbally, complaints must be made in writing. Outside the UK you may need assistance to do this, and SOS Sahel International UK will help you to present your complaint.

Right to appeal. Complainants who have launched a well-founded complaint and who are unsatisfied with SOS Sahel's response to that complaint have the right to appeal.

After an Appeal After the internal appeal, there is no further internal process. You may however still contact our UK Regulator, the Charity Commission. Outside the UK, we will notify you if there is an external procedure, but in any event you may contact the Charity Commission.

Mutual Respect. Everyone who makes a complaint to SOS Sahel International UK will be treated with courtesy and respect. In return, SOS Sahel international UK expects people who make a complaint to communicate their concerns fairly and appropriately. Where complainants harass staff, behave abusively, or unreasonably pursue complaints, SOS Sahel International UK reserves the right to withdraw or modify its complaints process.

Part of a learning process. We will log and monitor all serious complaints and results of such complaints and this information will be brought, regularly, to the attention of appropriate senior managers in order that we learn from what we do and how we do it. This information will not necessarily be available to the public.

SOS Sahel International UK will keep this policy under review.

Process and Procedures

Who can make a complaint?

Individuals raising complaints about SOS Sahel International UK may include, but are not limited to:

- any staff member of SOS Sahel International UK or a programme partner organisation

- beneficiaries of programmes delivered by SOS Sahel partners
- non-beneficiaries within the area where SOS Sahel's partner work if their complaint relates to the programme partner organisations
- delegated representatives of our beneficiaries
- any other stakeholder affected by the work of SOS Sahel partners including local leaders, government representatives, representatives of other agencies, etc
- members of the public

If the complaint is about the Director this will be brought to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
If the complaint is about the Chair this will be brought to the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees.

How to make a complaint?

Formal complaints can be made either directly from the complainant or via someone acting on their behalf.

For general complaints the following channels should be used:

- by post marked "Private & Confidential" to: SOS Sahel International UK, The Old Music Hall, 106-108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE
- by email to: mail@sahel.org.uk
- by telephone to: + 44 (0)1865403305 during official office hours between 9am and 5pm (UK time) Monday to Friday . A voice mail/answering phone facility will be available outside of these hours.

What happens after the complaint is made?

1. The Director will review and acknowledge the complaint within ten working days on receipt of the complaint
2. We will send the complainant an acknowledgement of having received the complaint and give a date when the complainant can expect to be informed about the process being followed to handle the issue. Time frames for handling complaints will vary depending on their nature. We will keep the complainant informed throughout the process.
3. In the event that the complaint is about an issue that falls outside the control of SOS Sahel International UK, we will advise the complainant of this in the acknowledgement letter.
4. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Director will identify the appropriate person to provide a response.
5. If the matter can be resolved directly, the designated person will provide a prompt response.
6. If the matter needs to be investigated, appropriate people within the organisation will be appointed to conduct this confidentially. Only a limited number of persons who need to know about the complaint will be informed. In instances where appropriate action is required SOS Sahel International UK reserves the right to keep the action confidential.

What happens if the complainant is unhappy with our response?

Should the complainant not feel satisfied with the response received despite having had the opportunity to request further clarification or feedback, s/he can submit a formal written appeal directly to the Chair or Vice-Chair of Board of Trustees.

