



## Complaints, concerns and feedback policy

<b>Policy Lead</b>	Executive Leaders
<b>Audience</b>	Anyone who engages with the The Grassroots Trust
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	Trustees
<b>Last updated</b>	January 2019
<b>Next Review</b>	January 2020

*This policy explains the standards we have for managing complaints, concerns and feedback we receive from outside of The Grassroots Trust.*

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Grassroots Trust, providing a safe and secure environment for our people and those we seek to assist is core to our mission.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the standards we have when responding to a complaint, concern or feedback about our work, including the behaviour of our staff, volunteers or those working on our behalf.
- 1.3 We will address any concerns you may have about our people, the work that we do or the way we raise or spend money, as quickly and effectively as possible. Feedback is important and helps us to improve.
- 1.4 If you don't feel we have handled your complaint or concern as you would have expected it to be handled, we would like the opportunity to make this right. You can also take matters further if you don't feel we have dealt with the issues or actions you have raised, and this policy sets your options out.

### Scope

- 1.5 This policy applies to all that we do, including in the UK and internationally.
- 1.6 This policy is aimed at people external and internal to The Grassroots Trust. If you are a staff member or volunteer, it also applies to you.

### Definitions

- 1.7 This is what we mean by a complaint, concern or feedback:
  - A **complaint** is where someone tells us they are unhappy about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, our staff and/or volunteers, or any individual working on our behalf.
  - A **concern** is a disclosure or allegation about possible or potential abuse (including sexual exploitation or abuse), wrongdoing, risk, illegal activity or poor practice in any area of our work.

- **Feedback** is an expression of praise or dissatisfaction: it could be an opinion, reaction, comment, compliment, suggestion or remark.

## 2 **Policy statement**

- 2.1 We would like the opportunity to address any complaints, concerns or feedback you may have about our people or the work that we do.
- 2.2 We welcome you getting in touch so we can respond, learn from and improve what we do.
- 2.3 This policy describes our approach to handling complaints, concerns and feedback raised. It describes how we will manage complaints or concerns we receive, including any alleged or actual fraud, misconduct by our people (including sexual exploitation and abuse), or the way we have planned or delivered services, programs or assistance.
- 2.4 We are committed to providing a safe and responsive mechanism for handling complaints and feedback, so we can quickly address any concerns that arise around the behaviour of our people or the organisation. This also supports the way in which we learn as an organisation, so that we can improve what we do. Complaints, concerns and feedback can also be made anonymously.

### **What behaviour we expect from our people**

- 2.5 We expect all of our people to act with integrity as professional representatives of our organisation. We also expect our people to understand how their personal behaviour affects their own safety and security, as well as that of their colleagues (staff and volunteers), partners, funders and people who use our services.
- 2.6 Our staff and volunteers are expected to act in line with the **Code of Conduct**. Our Code of Conduct provides clear standards of behaviour that we expect, and we are committed to ensuring our high standards are met. If you see or experience any behaviour that does not meet our high standards, please let us know.
- 2.7 Our staff, delegates and volunteers are expected to look out for and to proactively report any concerns about our work or the behaviour of our people.

## 3 **What we do with complaints, concerns and feedback**

- 3.1 We aim to make getting in touch with us as easy as possible depending on how you prefer to do this. We can be contacted in writing, email, telephone, through our website, social media, verbally or via another organisation or individual.
- 3.2 Our aim is to make our materials available in plain language and a range of formats so that they can be read and understood. If our materials have been difficult to read or understand, we would welcome feedback as to how we could improve this for the future. If you need an alternative format, please let us know.

- 3.3 If you get in touch with us to complain, share a concern or provide feedback, we expect our people to take it seriously and treat you with courtesy and respect.
- 3.4 Our aim is to make you feel safe, listened to and given an appropriate response when you share a complaint, concern or feedback with us.
- 3.5 If a complaint has been made by, or about, a child or young person under 18 or an adult at risk, we take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the individual, in line with our safeguarding policy/ies.
- 3.6 We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your personal and sensitive information, in line with our data protection responsibilities. Only those who are involved with responding to your complaint will be made aware of it.
- 3.7 We aim to respond to complaints, concerns and feedback as quickly as possible, usually within 10 working days of you getting in touch. Sometimes we may need to investigate your complaint in more detail to ensure we take the right action. Depending on how complex the concern is, we may need some more time to look into it. If that is the case, we will contact you to keep you updated.
- 3.8 When the investigation is complete we will contact you again to provide our response, including what we plan to do about it. We use anonymised feedback to improve the services we provide and also in the training we give to our people.

#### 4 **How we use feedback to improve our services**

- 4.1 We are committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of our work. We use all feedback anonymously to help us learn and improve our services in the UK, service we provide in our retail shops, and programs we deliver internationally.
- 4.2 We will only use the information you have given to investigate your complaint or concern, and we will look to learn from and improve through analysis of anonymous information we collect.
- 4.3 We are committed to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability, which provides good practice guidance for those working in humanitarian response. One of the nine standards is that "communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints." This policy, the training we provide to our people and the way we manage complaints represents our commitment to meeting the standard.

#### 5 **Your rights if you are unhappy with our response**

- 5.1 If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your initial concern, please do let us know as we would like the chance to try and make it right.
- 5.2 You also have the right to contact any of these organisations:
- The Charity Commission, who regulates charities in England and Wales
  - The Fundraising Regulator, who regulates fundraising practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, CAN Mezzanine Building, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH

- The Information Commissioner's Office, who regulate information rights practices  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

5.3 Usually these organisations will take up a case after giving us an opportunity to reply or provide some more information.

## 6 Procedures supporting implementation

6.1 This policy is supported by procedures which our people use to manage and respond to complaints, concerns and feedback. These procedures affect three areas of our work. In each situation we have developed (and continue to develop) different procedures that reflect the needs and available communication methods of that situation. It is expected that all those involved in those areas of operation should be aware and be able to easily explain how anybody could give feedback, express concern or complain. In particular there are three areas of our operations that have different approaches while all reflecting the same underlying values approach and determination. These areas are:

- Our UK Operations. This is how we review, respond and learn from complaints and feedback in our UK Operations.
- Our Fundraising. This is how we review, respond and learn from complaints and feedback relating to how we raise and spend money.
- Our Overseas Operations. This is how we review, respond and learn from complaints and feedback in our international work and programmes.

## 7 Review and maintenance

7.1 This policy was approved in January 2019. It will next be reviewed in January 2020.

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