

Complaints Policy

Key Data and Policy Statements

- 1 Title: Complaints Policy
- 2 Author: Joss Saunders
- 3 CMT Sponsor: John Shaw
- 4 Area of Governance: Risk and Regulatory
- 5 Date for renewal: 5 June 2010
- 6 Approved by: CMT
- 7 Geographical Scope: Global
- 8 Confidentiality: None

Policy Statement

Receiving feedback from and responding to complaints from stakeholders is an important part of improving Oxfam GB's accountability. Oxfam GB will therefore establish a variety of mechanisms under this one common policy to encourage feedback about its work from all its stakeholders and where this feedback represents a complaint about Oxfam's conduct to respond in a timely and appropriate manner. This policy will be actively disseminated to all stakeholders. The policy will be kept under review and subject to an annual report to trustees from the Company Secretary.

Procedures for implementing policy

Complaints policy: how to make a complaint

Supporter Relations: procedures for handling and responding to complaints and for publicising Oxfam's complaints policy and procedures

Trading Division: procedures for handling and responding to complaints generated in shops and for publicising Oxfam's complaints policy and procedures

International Division: procedures for handling and responding to complaints generated through Oxfam's programme and for publicising Oxfam's complaints policy and procedures

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

What this policy is about

This policy statement provides a single source of information on Oxfam GB's complaints policy and procedures. It is global in intent and coverage and is a public document.

Receiving feedback and responding to complaints from stakeholders is an important part of improving Oxfam GB's accountability. Ensuring that our stakeholders can hold us to account will improve the quality of our work in all areas of activity.

Oxfam GB has long had procedures in place so that supporters or members of the UK public can make a complaint, and Oxfam GB has internal systems to ensure complaints are handled appropriately. However we recognise that not all our stakeholders have had equal access to these procedures if and when things go wrong.

We will work hard to introduce procedures that ensure all our stakeholders in the UK and around the world have a clear and accessible means to make a formal complaint about Oxfam and have it dealt with.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by Oxfam GB or its staff and volunteers. 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 action

Concern about the behaviour of staff or volunteers

A complaint has to be about some action for which Oxfam is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is **not**:

A general inquiry about Oxfam GB's work

A request for information

A contractual dispute

A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation

A request to unsubscribe from an Oxfam GB service e.g. a campaign newsletter or email

The complaints procedures do not apply to complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities in the UK or other countries in which we operate. Such issues will be dealt with under the relevant regulatory regime.

Procedures for making a complaint

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about Oxfam GB's work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff or volunteers at a local level. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal complaints mechanism is required for those occasions when an individual or organisation wishes to make their complaint a matter of record and to receive a formal response.

How to make a complaint

All formal complaints should be made in writing either directly from the individual or organisation making the complaint or via someone acting on their behalf. See below for details about to whom to address a complaint.

Who can make a complaint?

This policy is global in application. A complaint can be made by:

any supporter

partner organisation

community or individual with whom we work

any member of the public whether an individual, company or other entity in the UK or around the world.

Who is not covered by this policy?

Complaints by Oxfam GB volunteers, about their role as a volunteer, are governed by the "Resolving Differences" procedures.

Complaints by staff are governed by "Dealing with problems at work" and "Anti harassment and bullying" procedures.

To whom should a complaint be addressed?

Who is responsible for responding to complaints?

To ensure consistency of response and to manage complaints effectively Oxfam GB's Supporter Relations Department will be the primary body responsible for responding to general complaints.

The **exceptions to this** are complaints related to our trading/shops activity or complaints related to our global programme activities due to the specific nature and/or geographical location of their activities:

Contact details

Supporter Relations:

**Oxfam Supporter Relations
Oxfam House
John Smith Drive
Cowley
Oxford
OX4 2JY**

Telephone calls from the UK dial 0870 333 2700

Telephone calls from overseas dial +44 (0) 1865 473727

Email: via our website, www.oxfam.org.uk/contact

Trading/Shops:

Complaints about Oxfam GB shops should be directed to the appropriate shop manager or their Area Manager. Details are available in the shop. However anyone making a complaint about a shop or a specific shop issue can also make a complaint to Oxfam House through the Shop Support Team, telephone 0845 3000311 or via Oxfam GB's web site, www.oxfam.org.uk/contact

Global Programme:

Oxfam GB's senior representatives in country are responsible for responding to complaints about Oxfam GB's programme in that country. If the complaint is about the senior representatives, complaints should be directed to the relevant Regional Director. Details are available from the Oxfam GB country and/or Regional Office or via notices distributed by Oxfam programme staff. See below for **contact details**.

In summary:

It is the responsibility of the Supporter Relations Department to devise and publicise procedures for handling complaints from all sources and for responding to complaints from whatever source. A record of complaints made to the Supporter Relations Department, along with responses, will be maintained by the Department.

It is the responsibility of the Trading Division to devise and promote procedures for handling complaints relating to Oxfam shops and for responding to complaints. A record of complaints made, along with responses will be maintained by the Trading Division.

It is the responsibility of the International Division to devise and promote procedures for handling complaints related to Oxfam's programme and for responding to those complaints. A record of complaints made, along with responses will be maintained by the International Division.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled on a confidential basis if requested by the complainant. In some cases it may be necessary to disclose information to third parties. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis and only with the agreement of the complainant.

Oxfam will not respond to complaints made anonymously.

Time Limit for making a complaint

Any complaint should be made as soon as possible, when events are fresh in the mind. They must be made no later than three months from the date the complainant became aware of the incident that is the source of the complaint.

This gives adequate time for the complainant to have considered their arguments, and for all relevant facts to remain fresh. Any departure from this time limit will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, by the recipient of the complaint in conjunction with the Company Secretary.

This time limit does not apply if other, relevant organisational or legal procedures lay down a different time limit.

What happens after a complaint is made?

Oxfam GB will aim to resolve complaints within ten working days of receipt. In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within this timeframe the complainant will be informed, in writing, about when they can expect a full response.

What happens if I am unhappy with Oxfam's response to my complaint?

Complainants are entitled to challenge any response received from Oxfam GB save where these challenges amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints. In the event of a complainant being dissatisfied with the response from Oxfam to their complaint they may write to the Director of Oxfam who will consider what action should be taken and inform the complainant about what further action may or may not be taken.

Oxfam is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board. If your complaint is about an Oxfam GB fundraising initiative then a complaint can be made to the Fundraising Standards Board via their web site at www.frsb.org.uk or you can contact them at:

Fundraising Standards Board, Hampton House, 20 Embankment, London, SE1 7JT

Telephone: 0845 402 5442

Complainants are also entitled to write directly at any time to the Charity Commission, which is responsible for charity governance in the UK.

You can write to the Commission at:

Charity Commission Direct

PO Box 1227

Liverpool

L69 3UG

Or Telephone (00 44) 0845 3000218

Or visit the Charity Commission's web site www.charity-commission.gov.uk

When will Oxfam not respond to a complaint?

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

A decision about what constitutes a persistent, habitual or vexatious complaint will be taken by the Company Secretary, except where the complaint is about the Company Secretary, in which case it will be decided by the Finance Director. The Company Secretary, or the Finance Director, will advise the complainant of the decision and the reasons for it. In such cases, the complainant will be advised that Oxfam GB does not propose to consider further, or correspond about, the complaint or any specific points raised in a complaint.

Monitoring and Reporting

Oxfam GB will keep this policy under review, and complaints registers will be monitored regularly. An annual report will be produced by the Company Secretary Corporate Management Team and Oxfam's Council on the implementation of this policy. This report will not be available to the public.

If you wish to contact Oxfam about any of the above then please contact Oxfam's Supporter Relations Department on 0870 333 2700 (international dial 00 44 1865 473727) or write to Supporter Relations Department, Oxfam, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2JY or send an email via Oxfam's web site www.oxfam.org.uk/contact

Contact details for Oxfam GB Regional Centres:

Central America and the Caribbean

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, Alejandro Dumas #347, Col. Polanco
Mexico, D. F
Mexico

Countries covered by the Regional Centre:

Barbados, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti,
Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua

East Asia

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, 223 Hydon Compound Unit 601, Nana Tai
Sukhumvit Soi 4, Sukhumvit Road,
Bangkok
Thailand
10110

Countries covered by the Regional Centre

Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam

Horn and East Africa

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, Shelter Afrique House
Mamlaka Road
Nairobi
Kenya
Postal Address
PO Box 40680, GP00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Countries covered by Regional Centre

Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, North Sudan,
Rwanda, Somaliland, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.

Middle East, Eastern Europe and Confederation of Independent States

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX3 4JY

Countries covered by the Regional Centre

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories and Israel, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Yemen.

South America

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, Av. Salaverry 3361
San Isidro
Lima
Peru 27

Countries covered by the Regional Centre

Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru.

South Asia

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, 27 Community Centre
East Of Kailash
New Delhi
India

Countries covered by the Regional Centre

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Southern Africa

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, Southern Africa Regional Management Centre
195 Allcock Street, Colbyn
Pretoria
South Africa
0083
Postal Address
Oxfam GB Southern Africa, Postnet Suite No. 183, Private Bag x15, Menlo
Park 0102, Pretoria, South Africa

Countries covered by Regional Centre

Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe,

West Africa

Regional Director, Oxfam GB, Point E Rue 5XL
Dakar, Senegal
Postal Address
BP 3476, CP 18524, Dakar RP

Countries covered by Regional Centre

Chad, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone

For a full list of Country Offices please visit www.oxfam.org.uk

Individual arrangements for disseminating this policy “in-country” will be put in place by the Country Programme Manager based on guidance issued from Oxfam House. These plans will take into account local conditions, but with the intention that members of the public in those countries as well as the individuals and communities with whom Oxfam GB works will be able to make a compliant in line with this policy.