



THE GRASSROOTS TRUST (UK)

Complaints, concerns and feedback policy

Policy Lead	Executive Officers
Audience	Anyone who engages with the Grassroots Trust
Formally endorsed by	Trustees
Last updated	November 2024
Next Review	November 2027

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

“Our people” in this Policy refers to employees, consultants, volunteers, interns and those working under our name – whether serving in the UK or overseas.

- 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 people are expected to act in line with our 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 people 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 (in all languages relevant in each particular project) 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. Where possible 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 may use feedback anonymously wherever possible to help us learn and improve our services in the UK and programmes we deliver internationally.
- 4.2 We will only use the information you have given to investigate your complaint or concern and to learn from and improve our procedures.

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. If you still feel we have not addressed your concern adequately, please address a letter or email to “The Chair of Trustees” and sent it to the Grassroots Trust office. All such communication will be read by the chair of trustees and, where appropriate, brought to other trustees’ attention for full review. Following that review you will then receive a written response.
- 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
2nd 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 various 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.

7 Review and maintenance

7.1 This policy was approved in November 2023. It will next be reviewed in November 2024.

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