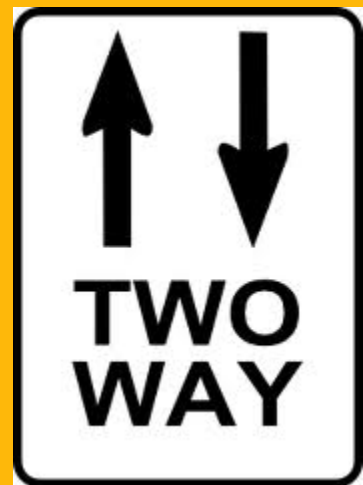




Defending Dignity.
Fighting Poverty.

CARE International in Kenya
**Complaints Handling
Policy**



Adopted June 30, 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

a) Background

CARE International in Kenya is committed to handling complaints, originating both internally and externally, in a clearly defined, effective and expeditious manner. Our core values (Respect, Integrity, Commitment and Excellence- RICE) foster a culture that:

- Treats beneficiaries, employees and other stakeholders with respect by acknowledging their right to complain and have a complaint handled professionally
- Actively solicits and acts on stakeholder feedback
- Acknowledges that a complaint received gives CARE the opportunity to maintain confidence in our work as well as enhancing relationships within and outside CARE.

CARE, through its Humanitarian Accountability Framework, (HAF), seeks to maintain its reputation as an organization delivering high quality and accountable services and is committed to maintaining its responsiveness to the needs and concerns of beneficiaries, staff and other stakeholders.

“We are accountable for our actions and decisions, and beneficiaries and other external parties have the right to complain about us and seek remedy for decisions that affect them”

Handling complaints effectively is **everyone’s job!** Everyone working within CARE must understand this policy. Efficient management of complaints enables CARE to identify problems and continuously improve quality and delivery of service.

b) Objectives and purpose of the complaints handling policy

The Policy is designed to provide guidance on the manner in which CARE receives and handles complaints made against the organization, its partners and its employees. The objective of this policy is to assist CARE Kenya, its partners and employees to resolve complaints in an efficient, effective and professional manner. It provides guidelines for dealing with complaints and also includes a process for internal review of complaint handling.

c) What is a complaint?

Beneficiaries, staff and other members of public may be dissatisfied or have concerns about the level or quality of services provided by CARE and may wish to lodge a complaint. A valid complaint is one where CARE and or CARE staff may appear to have failed to respond appropriately. This policy is intended to address complaints made to CARE. A complaint shall be defined as follows:

An expression of dissatisfaction made to CARE, related to its services and goods, or the complaints - handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Below are examples of areas where wrongful conduct may potentially occur within CARE.

Breaches in Code of Conduct; Lack of accountability to beneficiaries; Suspected Theft or Fraud; Misappropriations; Conflict of Interest; Misuse of Organizational Assets; Illegal activities; Corruption; Non-compliance with Program; Harassment & Exploitation of Beneficiaries

Each CARE office has an established complaints mechanism.

Any person or organization with any concern about inappropriate or improper conduct or non-compliance with CARE’s policies, procedures or applicable laws by any CARE employee or management is invited to lodge a complaint which shall be dealt with in accordance with this complaint handling policy, and any other relevant CARE policy.

NB: CARE will not accept complaints that are already the subject of legal proceedings.

d) Anonymous complaints

- CARE cannot fully investigate anonymous complaints as CARE may not be in a position to determine the validity and nature of the complaint when the source of the complaint is unknown nor seek additional information when investigating the complaint. An anonymous complainant may not be provided with reasons for any decision made about their complaint.
- CARE will not disclose the identity of complainant(s), should the complainant request their details remain confidential at the time the complaint is lodged.
- CARE encourages complainants to provide full contact information when lodging complaints.
- In the event that an anonymous complaint is received CARE will take note of the issues raised and, where necessary, try and resolve them appropriately. However, for the reasons outlined above, issues raised in anonymous complaints may not be fully actioned.

e) Related policies/documents

- CARE international code of conduct
- CARE International policy on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Human Resource policies and procedures
- Whistle blowing policy

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS HANDLING

CARE will handle complaints in accordance with the following principles

Principle	
Commitment	CARE is committed to efficient and fair resolution of complaints. Feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders is welcome .It is the stakeholders’ right to raise a concern.
Fairness	CARE recognises the need to deal with all complaints in an impartial manner. No decision and subsequent action will be taken until a full investigation is complete. The respondents/subjects of complaint have a right to know all the allegations made against them and be given the opportunity to fully respond.
Visibility and access	<p>This Policy will be distributed to all employees and shall be promoted internally in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by inclusion in the CARE's orientation pack • during ongoing human resource and other CARE policies and procedures training • via CARE’s website and intranet • inclusion in shared drives and other knowledge management and learning tools <p>CARE’s Complaints Handling Policy is also promoted externally,</p>

	<p>including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displaying information on CARE’s boards about how others can contact CARE • verbal information provided by staff and • contact information on CARE’s website
Confidentiality	<p>Complainant’s identity will be actively protected from disclosure unless the complainant expressly consents to its disclosure</p> <p>CARE will keep in confidence all information provided to it in the course of the complaints review, including, but not limited to: documents, reports, or other detailed information, unless the complainant agree to their release or where it is necessary to do so in order to investigate the complaint.</p> <p>Confidentiality here does not mean keeping information secret. It means sharing the information only on “need to know basis”.</p>
Responsiveness	<p>Receipt of each complaint is acknowledged to the complainant immediately (with exception of anonymous complaints). Complaints will be handled in an efficient and effective manner. Complainants will be treated courteously and kept informed of the progress of their complaint throughout the complaint-handling process.</p>
Resources	<p>CARE will allocate sufficient resources for complaints handling (from receipt of complaint to resolution and feedback).</p>
Accountability	<p>All CARE employees shall be responsible and accountable for effective complaints handling.</p>
Continual improvement/ Review and audit	<p>In order to ensure the continued suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the Complaints Handling Policy and to identify areas for improvement, the policy will be reviewed periodically, with a view to identifying and rectifying systemic or recurring problems having regard to: internal factors (such as changes to CARE’s organizational structure); analysis of the records contained in the Complaints Register; and feedback from complainants.</p>

3. PROCEDURES

a. How a complaint may be made

Where a complaint is about a particular service or employee conduct, you may wish to address your complaint to an appropriate member of the department/sector, orally, or in writing. Where possible, complaints should be made in writing so that the details of the complaint are clear and complete.

Complaints may be lodged by:

- Telephone
- In person
- Electronic complaints system “**The Bell**” –(Available to CARE staff in Dadaab only)
- In writing, including fax.
- Email [**compliance@care.or.ke**](mailto:compliance@care.or.ke)

Complaints must include the name, address and contact number of the complainant and a brief description of the issue. As above (1 d) anonymous complaints will be noted and resolved where possible but may not be fully actioned.

Any members of staff can receive a complaint and must follow the procedures set out in this policy to record and action/refer the complaint.

b. What information is required when making a complaint?

When making a complaint, please provide the following information:

- Your name, position and contact details
- Your relationship with CARE (i.e. the nature of your engagement with CARE)
- The nature of the complaint
- Details of the CARE employee involved (if applicable)
- Copies of any documentation supporting the complaint.

c. Assistance with making a complaint

If you need assistance in formulating or lodging a complaint, please contact a staff member that you are comfortable with. If this is not appropriate, please contact the human resource representative in your area or any manager.

d. Acknowledgement of complaints and timeframe

We are committed to acknowledging all complaints immediately upon receipt. Once a complaint has been received, we will undertake an initial review of the complaint.

We will endeavour to resolve complaints within **four weeks** of receiving the complaint, but this will not be possible for every situation. Where the process exceeds four weeks, we will contact you to inform you of the reasons for the delay, and indicate to you when we expect to be in a position to complete our review of the complaint.

e. Your rights during the complaint process

You have the right to enquire as to the status of your complaint by contacting the employee who has been identified to you as handling your complaint.

f. Response to a complaint

Once we have reviewed your complaint, we will provide you with a response (Written or verbal).. The following are the steps followed from reception to conclusion.

1. Recording of the Complaint: recorded in database for tracking purposes (which is kept confidential)
2. Acknowledgement of the Complaint: Our aim is to resolve complaints immediately, wherever possible. Although more complex issues may not be resolved on-the-spot, the complainant is to be made aware that their matter is under investigation.
3. Reviewing of complaint: Determine if the complaint falls within the given scope in 1 (c) above. If it does, the below procedure will follow

A team of not less than two staff knowledgeable in the are/scope of complaint is formed to investigate the allegations made. (gather sufficient detail about the complaint in order to properly investigate and respond, eg complaints logs or service information; consult with others where appropriate, eg suppliers, beneficiaries, staff, etc; communicate clearly and professionally with the complainant, verbally and/or in writing; retain a file on the complaint including dates, actions taken and outcomes and advise HR department; keep the HR representative informed (including dates and outcomes) so the Complaints Register can be updated.

4. Providing feedback

g. Further action/ Appeal

Within 14 days of receiving the decision/response, the complainant, if not satisfied, has a right to (once only) appeal. The appeal should be addressed to **compliance@care.or.ke** only. It will be forwarded to the country director within three (3) working days.

A review of the decision made regarding the complaint will be done by a committee and make final decision.

4. POLICY REVIEW

CARE may update this policy at any time in its complete discretion, including for the purpose of clarification.