



Complaints Policy

This policy advises employees how Jersey Overseas Aid handles, investigates and records complaints received by its supporters or members of the public.

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Document profile

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Title	Complaints
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Linked polices	Whistleblowing Policy Safeguarding Fraud

Version No.	Sources
1	In developing it's Complaints Policy, JOA consulted an array of existing resources including (i) CHS Alliance procedures and complaints policy and mechanisms to report (ii) complaints polices of Care International, best practice guide Humanitarian Response, ReliefWeb, Complaint Handling (HCSS), British Red Cross, (iii) guidance and processes of the Government of Jersey Complaints Board, Greffier & Information Commission.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

We seek to constantly improve our service to our partners, volunteers and members of the public and to ensure our complaints' policy adheres to best practice. We regard a complaint as an opportunity for us to reflect on our processes and practices and see if we can strengthen and improve them. On occasion we recognise that we may not meet our high standards.

When a complaint is received it will be logged and investigated promptly. When dealing with complaints we aim to:

- be open and transparent through well-publicised, accessible information and processes,
- understood by all those involved in a complaint;
- ensure our investigations and responses are evidence based, providing a consistent approach to the management and investigation of complaints;
- be logical and rational in our approach;
- be sympathetic in our responses to complaints
- respond within appropriate time frames;
- provide a level of detail appropriate to the seriousness of the complaint;
- identify the causes of complaints and take action to prevent recurrences; and
- use 'lessons learnt' as a driver for change and improvement.

1.2 Purpose

Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) is committed to providing a high standard of service to all our stakeholders and members of the public. We aim to do our job in a fair and reasonable way and to provide an efficient service. This policy sets out how individuals can express their views about how we work. JOA is open and responsive to receiving feedback whether as a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all feedback given to us, either by telephone, mail, email, social media or in person. It applies to all our JOA staff, commissioners, volunteers, agency workers and contractors and others working JOA.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone who works for, or with, or on behalf of JOA has some responsibility for ensuring complaints and enquiries are appropriately managed. The roles below have key areas of responsibility:

- The Executive Director is the senior accountable officer and is required to provide assurance to the Board of Commissioners that complaints management is effectively managed.
- The Board of Commissioners are ultimately responsible for ensuring JOA meets its regulatory obligations.
- JOA staff have the responsibility for actively championing complaints, handling and management
- All staff, whether permanent, temporary, seconded, voluntary or contracted must ensure they are familiar with this policy and that they comply with it and its associated procedures on a day-to-day basis.

3. Definitions

Complaint

A complaint is where either an individual or organisation considers that JOA has fallen short of their reasonable expectations and communicates their dissatisfaction by telephone, mail, email, through social media, or in person.

Enquiry

An enquiry is where an individual or organisation asks a question to gather further information about any of the activities or events delivered by JOA. Where it is unclear whether a communication is an enquiry or a complaint, it is generally best to err on the side of caution and treat it as a complaint

4. Who can raise a complaint?

A complaint can be made by anyone. This may be someone directly or indirectly affected by the matter causing dissatisfaction or worry, or by an individual or organisation acting on behalf of someone else e.g. in the case of a person who is unable (for whatever reason) or lacks capacity to raise the complaint themselves.

Some individuals may not wish to provide their contact details or identify themselves when raising a complaint and JOA will accept and manage in the same way all complaints, even if they are received anonymously. If a complaint is submitted anonymously, we are unlikely to respond with any updates and may have impact on resolution if we are unable to contact if we need to clarify the issue. All staff must be vigilant towards identifying a complaint and upon receipt ensuring it is handled appropriately in line with the procedures for complaint handling.

5. Complaints Process

6.2 Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints and will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We will inform people making a complaint as soon as possible, of the following:

- The complaints process
- The expected timeframes for our actions
- The progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- Their likely involvement in the process, and
- The possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate). We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

6.3 Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner and if appropriate, we will ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any staff member whose conduct or service is being complained about.

Conflicts of interests, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. Internal reviews of how a complaint was managed will be conducted by a person other than the original decision maker.

6.4 Responding flexibly

Our staff are supported to resolve complaints as quickly and as simply as possible. We will be flexible in our approach to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives. We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

6.5 Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of people giving feedback where this is practical and appropriate. Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by JOA as permitted under the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018. Information is only disclosed to those with a demonstrable need to know and/or a legal right to access those records.

6.6 Safeguarding

If at any point, there is a safeguarding concern it must be investigated as per the Safeguarding Policy. A safeguarding alert must be raised without delay. Where there is a complaint

involving a vulnerable adult or child, the appropriate Safeguarding Lead should be informed and the most appropriate route of investigation agreed.

7. Recording of complaints

JOA maintains accurate records of all complaints and enquiries received. Such records are managed in line with Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018.

8. Vexatious complaints and persistent complainants

All complaints and enquiries will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. However, unreasonable or abusive complaint behaviour does happen from time to time and vexatious and repetitive complaints are an increasing problem. Difficulties in handling such situations can place strain on time and resources and can be stressful for staff dealing with these complex and challenging issues.

JOA defines vexatious complaints as those where it can be demonstrated that it is without basis and it would tend to, or is being made with an intention to, cause worry, upset, annoyance or embarrassment. Unreasonably persistent complainants are defined as those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with JOA, hinder JOA's consideration of their or other people's complaints.

JOA aims to respond to all complaints however, on rare occasions, such as where the complaint is identified as vexatious in nature. In some cases, we may determine to respond to the complainant to advise we will not be taking the complaint any further, or we may choose not to respond. Such decision not to respond will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with due regard to the individual circumstances.

9. External Appeal

JOA aims to satisfactorily resolve a complaint for all involved. Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, despite having had the opportunity to request further clarification or feedback, the complainant can raise the matter externally, via The Jersey Court Service, which comprises of the Judicial Greffe for review. The complaint can be made by email, phone or in writing to:

Email	www.jgreffe@gov.je
Phone	+44 (0) 1534 441300
Post	Royal Court House Royal Square St Helier Jersey JE1 1JG

10. Monitoring, training and evaluation

Training and awareness of complaints handling is to be implemented to all employees.