

BKFA COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY



1 Introduction

Birthing Kit Foundation Australia believes that complaints must be listened to, assessed fairly, and responded to respectfully. This is part of being accountable, and being willing to continuously learn.

We are committed to working according to the standard required by the Code of Conduct of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Any person who believes we have breached the ACFID Code of Conduct is entitled to make a complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. Such complaints should be marked 'confidential' and may be lodged via email to code@acfid.asn.au or addressed to:

Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee
C/-- ACFID
Private Bag 3
Deakin ACT 2600, Australia

Complaints made to Birthing Kit Foundation Australia may be lodged via email to info@bkfa.org.au or addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia
PO Box 330
Belair South Australia 5052

or to:

Chair of the Board of Directors
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia
PO Box 330
Belair South Australia 5052

2 Guiding principles

We have adopted principles for our complaints policy as informed by ACFID's shared values as follows:

- Integrity
- Transparency
- Effectiveness
- Cooperation
- Equity
- Respect
- Accountability

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3 Defined expressions

Beneficiary means a mother or traditional birthing attendant who receives materials or training as a result of the Foundation's activities;

Chief Executive Officer means the person in the most senior management position of the Foundation.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products or services, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

4 Education

Our staff and our Board members represent the Foundation. We will ensure that they are all aware of the complaints policy and procedures through standard induction and review processes.

5 Publicising Our Policy

Our website has a link to this policy and informs on the complaints process.

We provide this policy to each of our field partners and will require the field partner to make the policy known to the beneficiaries and any other stakeholders with whom the field partner works in the relevant country. Genuine opportunities for feedback and or complaints will be provided to beneficiaries.

6 Communication

For all complaints we will:

- Acknowledge and record the complaint;
- Seek to understand the complaint;
- Ask the complainant to specify the outcome/s they are expecting;
- Advise the complainant of the action being taken, and expected timeframes;
- Advise the complainant of the outcome of any action.

7 Initial assessment of complaint

We will first assess whether a complaint should be investigated having regard to all relevant circumstances including:

- Whether allegations of danger to health or safety are involved;
- Whether allegations of corruption, fraud or dishonesty are involved;
- Whether allegations of incompetence waste or other problems impeding the Foundation's work are involved;
- Whether an investigation is practically possible given the sufficiency of allegations and details provided, and impediments to investigation.

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8 Inquiries, minor complaints and jurisdiction

We will endeavour to deal immediately with inquiries and minor complaints which are made verbally by telephone or in person; that is, during the initial phone call or meeting.

9 Investigation

If investigation is required it will be directed by the Chief Executive Officer. The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness of the complaint. Investigations will be planned, structured, and documented. Investigations regarding the Chief Executive will be handled by the Chair of the Board.

10 Fairness, objectivity and confidentiality

We will ensure that a person implicated in a complaint is not involved in the handling of that complaint.

We will not disclose the personal details of the complainant or another person involved in the complaint without their permission.

We will not make an adverse determination about a person without due process.

11 Timeframes

Our objective is to attend to complaints promptly and efficiently. Verbal complaints will be responded to within 5 business days and written complaints within 30 calendar days.

12 Closure

The Chief Executive Officer will ordinarily make the decision on a minor complaint (a complaint that requires no investigation). Decisions with regards to major complaints will be referred to our governing board. Decisions will be notified to the complainant in writing.

13 Escalation

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of her/his complaint, or the way we are handling it, the matter will be escalated, from staff member to Chief Executive Officer, or from Chief Executive Officer to Chair of the Board. If a matter cannot be resolved by the Chair and the Board, we will refer the complainant to the Code Committee of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

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14 **Overriding urgency**

If it appears that a criminal act may have taken place, or if there may be an immediate risk to anyone's health or safety, we may determine that the matter be reported to the police or that urgent action is required.

15 **Report and Review**

Information about enquiries and complaints and how they are handled will be included in the monthly operations report to the Board.

Our Annual Report will include de-identified information on complaints.

The operation of the complaints policy and procedures and associated complaints log will be reviewed periodically by the Risk Audit and Compliance Committee, which will report to the Board with an assessment of our processes and recommendations for improvements if indicated.

16 **Point of contact**

For beneficiaries and stakeholders outside Australia and without direct access to our website or email, the relevant field partner is the first point of contact and complaints should be addressed to the field partner. We will require our field partners to provide us with information on any complaints and how they are resolved, and will seek to confirm the implementation of this policy in our monitoring and evaluation processes.