

Moving Mountains Complaint Procedure Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines how our Northern Irish charity receives, investigates, and resolves complaints. It aims to provide a fair, transparent, and accessible way for stakeholders to voice concerns, ensuring we learn from mistakes and protect public trust.

This policy applies to complaints raised by:

- Donors, supporters, and members of the public in the UK.
- Staff, volunteers, and trustees of the charity.
- Staff of our direct-implementation NGO partners in Kenya and Nepal.
- Beneficiaries and local community members directly impacted by our overseas projects.

*Note: For issues involving child safety, adult exploitation, or financial fraud, please refer directly to our **Child Protection Policy**, **Safeguarding Policy** or **Financial Controls and Procurement Policy** for specialized reporting pathways.*

2. General Principles

We handle all complaints according to these core guidelines:

- **Accessibility:** The process is simple to find and understand, both in the UK and overseas.
- **Confidentiality:** Details are shared only with those strictly necessary to investigate the issue.
- **Impartiality:** Investigators review facts objectively without bias or conflict of interest.
- **No Retaliation:** No one will face negative consequences or lose aid for making a complaint in good faith.
- **Timeliness:** We acknowledge and resolve issues within strict deadlines.

3. Accessible Channels for International Partners and Beneficiaries

Because our projects are implemented directly by local NGOs in Kenya and Nepal, we require multiple, secure communication methods to bridge language and distance barriers:

- **Email:** A dedicated, secure email address monitored directly by the UK Board ([Insert Secure Complaints Email]).

- **Partner Grievance Mechanisms:** Our partner NGOs must maintain a local feedback loop, such as a physical complaints box at project sites or a designated local phone line.
- **Direct Escalation:** Local staff and beneficiaries have the right to contact the UK charity directly if they feel the local NGO has ignored their complaint, or if the complaint involves the local NGO's leadership.

4. The Three-Stage Complaints Process

[Stage 1: Informal Resolution] → Resolved within 5 working days

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▼ (Not resolved / Serious)

[Stage 2: Formal Investigation] → Acknowledged in 3 days; Resolved in 20 days

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▼ (Dissatisfied with outcome)

[Stage 3: Board Review Appeal] → Final decision within 21 working days

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Whenever possible, minor complaints should be resolved quickly by the staff member or local partner involved.
- The team member must log the issue internally and resolve it informally within **5 working days**.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

- If an informal fix fails, or if the matter is serious, the complaint is escalated to the Complaints Coordinator.
- The charity will send a formal written acknowledgement to the complainant within **3 working days**.
- The Complaints Coordinator (or an independent Trustee) will investigate the facts, interview relevant parties, and provide a full written response within **20 working days**.

Stage 3: Board Review (Appeal)

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response, they can appeal to the Chair of Trustees.
- The Chair will form an internal review panel consisting of at least two Trustees who have had no prior involvement in the case.
- The panel will review all evidence and issue a final, binding decision within **21 working days**.

5. Escalation to External Regulators

If the complainant is unhappy with the final Board decision, or if the issue breaches statutory laws, they may escalate the matter directly to the appropriate external bodies:

- **In Northern Ireland:**
 - **Charity Governance Issues:** The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI).
 - **Fundraising Disagreements:** The Fundraising Regulator.
 - **Data Privacy Breaches:** The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- **In Kenya:**
 - The Regulatory Department of the NGOs Co-ordination Board or the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC).
- **In Nepal:**
 - The Social Welfare Council (SWC) or local district administrative offices.

6. Logging, Learning, and Review

- **The Complaints Log:** The Complaints Coordinator will maintain a secure, central register detailing every complaint received, the investigation steps, and the final outcome.
- **Data Retention:** Complaint records are confidential and stored securely for **7 years** before permanent deletion.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The Board of Trustees will review the Complaints Log at every quarterly meeting to identify recurring trends, fix systemic errors, and update operating procedures.

7. Review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy every two years, or earlier if legislation, CCNI guidance or the charity's activities change.