

Shield & Rebuild – COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedure used by Shield and Rebuild Charity Ltd for receiving, assessing, and responding to complaints. This policy is intended to ensure that the charity handles complaints fairly, efficiently, and effectively.

This policy provides guidance to staff and people who wish to make a complaint on the key principles and concepts of our complaint management system.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff (paid and volunteer), contractors and our governing body, receiving or managing complaints from the public and clients made to or about us, regarding our products, services and staff, or our complaint handling process.

This organisation expects staff at all levels to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. Shield and Rebuild Charity Ltd will provide a register for receiving complaints and processing complaints.

When responding to complaints, staff (paid and volunteer) act in accordance with complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints. Staff should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

The charity is committed to seeking and receiving feedback and complaints about the services, systems, practices, procedures, products and complaint handling. Any concerns raised in feedback or complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

2.1 People making complaints will be:

- a) provided with information about the complaint handling process and how to access it
- b) listened to, treated with respect by staff and actively involved in the complaint process where
- c) possible and appropriate, and
- d) provided with reasons for the decision/s and any options for redress or review.

3. Responsiveness

The charity will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

The charity 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.

The charity is committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the following:

- e) the complaints process
- f) the expected time frames for our actions
- g) the progress of the complaint and reasons for any delay
- h) their likely involvement in the process, and
- i) the possible or likely outcome of their complaint.

The charity will advise people as soon as possible when they are unable to deal with any part of the complaint and provide advice about where such issues and/or complaints may be directed (if known and appropriate).

The charity will also advise people as soon as possible when they are unable to meet time frames for responding to the complaint and the reason for the delay.

4. Confidentiality

The charity will protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used as permitted under the relevant privacy laws, secrecy provisions and any relevant confidentiality obligations.

5. The three levels of complaint handling

Level 1

The charity aim to resolve complaints at the first level, the frontline. Wherever possible staff will be adequately equipped to respond to complaints, including being given appropriate authority, training and supervision.

Level 2

Where this is not possible, the charity may decide to escalate the complaint to a more senior officer within the organisation. This second level of complaint handling will provide for the following internal mechanisms:

- a) assessment and possible investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made, and/or
- b) facilitated resolution (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and
- c) attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties).

Level 3

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of our decision (by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission for example).

6. Procedure

6.1 Receive

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, the charity will record the complaint and its supporting information.

The record of the complaint will document:

- a) Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- b) Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- c) Any other relevant information, And
- d) Any additional support the person making a complaint requires

6.2 Acknowledge

The charity will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When appropriate the charity may offer an explanation or apology. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

6.3 Assess and investigate

- a) After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the charity will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within control. The charity will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, the charity will consider:
 - i. How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is;
 - ii. Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
 - iii. How the person making the complaint is being affected
 - iv. The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
 - v. Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.
- b) After assessing the complaint, the charity will consider how to manage it. The charity may:
 - i. Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
 - ii. Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, or
 - iii. Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

- c) The charity will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on progress, particularly if there are any delays. The charity will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium.
- d) Which actions is decided to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

6.4 Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the charity will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

- a) The outcome of the complaint and any action taken
- b) The reason/s for the decision
- c) The remedy or resolution/s that is proposed or put in place, and
- d) Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

6.5 Close the complaint: document and analyse data

- e) The charity will keep records about:
 - iv. How the complaint is managed
 - v. The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
 - vi. Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.
- f) The charity will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager, senior management or the Chair of our governing body

7. Review and Amendments

- a) This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains compliant relevant law and best practice.
- b) Any amendments will be documented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

8. Inconsistency

To the extent of an inconsistency with the relevant legislation and the policy and procedure, the legislation will prevail.