



Chernobyl Children International Complaints and Response Process

This document outlines Chernobyl Children International's formal complaints and response process. The process provides safe, accessible and effective ways for staff, volunteers and the general public to exercise their right to raise complaints about Chernobyl Children International's operations, and for a response or redress to be given.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service, action, or behaviour– or the failure to deliver on any of these. In terms of our CRM, this complaint may relate to Chernobyl Children International or any of our programme partners.

A valid complaint is one about actions for which Chernobyl Children International and/or its programme partners are responsible, and must be both relevant to and within the control of Chernobyl Children International and/or the partner organisation. Both Chernobyl Children International and our partners should be held accountable for the promises and the commitments we make, what we do, and how we do it.

Who can make a complaint?

Individuals raising complaints about Chernobyl Children International may include, but are not limited to:

- Any staff member or volunteer of Chernobyl Children International or a programme partner organisation
- Individuals representing a programme partner organisation
- Delegated representatives of a Chernobyl Children International staff member and/or staff of a programme partner organisation
- Beneficiaries of programmes delivered by Chernobyl Children International or its partners
- Non-beneficiaries within the area where Chernobyl Children International or its partner work if their complaint relates to our programme or that of our programme partner organisations
- Delegated representatives of our beneficiaries
- Any other stakeholder affected by the work of Chernobyl Children International including local leaders, government representatives, representatives of other agencies, etc.
- Any member of the public
- Our suppliers

How to make a complaint

Formal complaints can be made either directly from the complainant or via someone acting on their behalf such as a Chernobyl Children International staff member receiving a complaint by phone or in person and recording the complaint on behalf of the complainant.

For complaints about suspected cases of fraud or corruption the following channels should be used:

- By post marked “Private & Confidential” to CCI’s External Auditors:
Anthony Cooney, Crowleys DFK, Chartered Accountants, 5 Lapp’s Quay, Cork.
Phone: 021- 4272900

In order to ensure confidentiality, complaints submitted through these channels will be opened only by the External Auditor or his/her delegate.

For all other complaints the following channels should be used:

- By post marked “Private & Confidential” to: Lisa Carmody, Fundraising & Communications Executive, Chernobyl Children International, 1A The Stables, Alfred Street, Cork
- By email to Fiona Maher: fmaher@chernobyl-ireland.com
- By telephone to: 021-4558774 during official office hours and requesting to speak to Fiona Maher, Fundraising & Communications Officer.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a principle that restricts access to and dissemination of information. Confidentiality helps create an environment in which people are more likely to raise concerns or complaints, or to stand in witness against bad practice or incidents of abuse. People might not raise concerns if they fear reprisal or retaliation from Chernobyl Children International or its partner or any other stakeholder in so doing.

Confidentiality ensures that information is shared on a strict need-to-know-basis with a limited number of specified people for the purpose of taking action. The CRM procedures that we put in place must ensure reasonable confidentiality and security of all relevant records and documents. Breaches of confidentiality will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action against any staff member involved. This will offer an element of protection and safety for the complainant.

What happens after the complaint is made?

The designated manager responsible for handling the complaint will provide a written response to the complainant and for those implicated in the case as appropriate. For sensitive cases potentially resulting in disciplinary action for a member of staff of Chernobyl Children International or a partner organisation, the complainant is not entitled to know the type of disciplinary action taken as this is a confidential matter between Chernobyl Children International/the partner organisation and the staff member. It is sufficient to say if the complaint has been substantiated or not and if in fact substantiated then referred to management for a decision on disciplinary action.

The complainant should receive an acknowledgement of receipt within two weeks of submitting the complaint where an approx. date is given for when they can expect to receive a response. Timeframes will vary, it is however important that the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.

A copy of the written response sent to the complainant should be kept by the Fundraising & Communications Executive who will add it to the file, record it in the database, and close the case once it is clear that an appeals process will not be pursued or such a process is finalised.

What happens if the complainant is unhappy with our response?

Should the complainant not feel satisfied with the response received despite having had the opportunity to request further clarification or feedback, s/he can submit a formal written appeal directly to the CEO of Chernobyl Children International Adi Roche. This can be done in writing by post marked "Private & Confidential" to the following address:

Adi Roche CEO, Chernobyl Children International, Ballycurreen Industrial Estate, Kinsale Road, Cork.

At this point the case will be reviewed, the procedures followed, the investigations conducted, the outcomes and the actions taken to date will be assessed. The CEO or designated Chernobyl Children International staff will respond and keep the complainant informed about the appeal process. The final outcome will be recorded on the complaints database (excel sheet). The response to an appeal is final in terms of the Chernobyl Children International CRM process although the complainant might continue to pursue the matter legally.

When we will not respond to a complaint

Chernobyl Children International cannot respond to a complaint about:

- Other organisations
- Issues not related to our programmes
- Local or national government, local authorities, etc.
- Individual request for support outside of our program activities.

For these types of complaints we should, in so far as we reasonably can, assist the complainant to make a safe referral to the appropriate body.

Situations where Chernobyl Children International will stop responding to a complaint

No complaint will be ignored and we will treat everyone who makes a complaint with courtesy and respect. In return, we expect complainants to raise their complaints fairly and appropriately. In cases where complainants harass staff, behave abusively or unreasonably pursue their complaint, we reserve the right to withdraw our investigation of their complaint. A decision about what constitutes a persistent, habitual or offensive complaint within the HO CRM should be taken by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) but only on receipt of a request detailing the circumstances and justification from the manager responsible for responding to the complaint.

In all such instances, the complainant will be informed by the COO that we do not propose to consider further, or correspond about, the complaint or any specific points raised in the complaint and the reasons for it.