

# People In Aid Complaints Procedure

Revised October 2010

## Purpose of procedure

This procedure is intended to assist People In Aid staff in responding to and dealing with complaints, be they related to People In Aid or a member. Depending on the nature of the complaint, People In Aid's procedure for terminating membership may pertain.

## Scope of complaints

The procedure sets out how People In Aid should respond to complaints it may receive from external stakeholders relating to

- People In Aid's promotional activities
- provision of People In Aid information, resources, goods and services
- the People In Aid Code implementation / assurance process
- People In Aid staff conduct
- the conduct of a People In Aid member (either with regard to internal or external stakeholders).

It is also the mechanism for People In Aid staff to bring 'complaints' they may become aware of regarding member conduct to the attention of HR Services / the Executive Director.

Any complaints will be taken seriously, and may relate to any period of time whether in the past or present.

## Roles & responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to be familiar with this procedure, and should be aware of the members' code of conduct ('Member rights and responsibilities'). Where they believe this has been infringed, or where they receive a complaint directly or indirectly, then they are responsible for bringing the infringement to the attention of HR Services / the Executive Director directly.

The process allows all complaints to come to the attention of the Executive Director, who, according to the seriousness of the complaint, and the possible sanction, shall keep the Board of Trustees appraised appropriately.

People In Aid's procedure for terminating membership applies for any complaint where the sanction is likely to result in the termination of membership.

## Nature of complaint, and procedure

### 1. People In Aid's activities (advocating good practice)

*For example may relate to an event/conference (quality), article/publication (accuracy, views etc.).*

#### **Procedure:**

- Upon receipt, non-member complaints to be escalated to Director of HR Services (HRSD) to review, discuss with Operations Manager (OM), and the Executive Director (ED) should be made aware of the complaint and proposed redress.
- Complaints by a member should be forwarded for information to ED by HRSD on receipt.
- All complaints should be reviewed by ED/OM/HRSD for legitimacy, accuracy, and appropriate redress should be considered.
- Redress may take the form of an apology plus statement of commitment to learn from criticism. On occasions a credit note may be issued. Money back should not be offered,

except at the discretion of the ED, and only when the consequences of not doing so outweigh the cost of doing so.

**2. Provision of People In Aid information, resources, goods and services (strengthening capacity and facilitating learning)**

*For example may relate to events such as workshops or special interest groups (quality, duplication, clashes); reports (accuracy, quality); website.*

**Procedure:**

As under item 1.

**3. The People In Aid Code implementation / assurance process**

*For example may relate to the content of the People In Aid Code, its relevance, accuracy, content of case studies, or recognition, e.g. the integrity of the assurance process or certification / Quality Mark process, or member conduct.*

**Procedure:**

- Complaints should be brought to the attention of the HRSD who shall inform the ED of the nature of the complaint, the legitimacy, accuracy and implications.
- The ED and HRSD will review the validity of the complaint and appropriate redress, and present to the Trustees (ORG sub-committee), who will review and make a recommendation to the Board.
- Where complaints relate to the content of the People In Aid Code, then the ED and HRSD will determine the appropriate course of action, which is unlikely to involve the Board until the next Code revision process.
- Where complaints relate to the certification process, then the Quality Mark review panel will be involved as appropriate.
- According to the Board decision, the ED will inform the agency of the Board decision and, as appropriate, prepare statement/s for distribution to the press/media and for posting to People In Aid's own website, outlining (briefly) the nature of the complaint, its validity and People In Aid's redress.
- Furthermore, when deemed appropriate, any decisions shall be communicated to the wider membership / sector.

**4. People In Aid staff conduct**

*For example may include behaviour likely to bring the organisation into disrepute or to harm the reputation.*

**Procedure:**

Complaints from internal stakeholders regarding a staff member should be directed to the line manager, in accordance with the grievance procedure. The line manager shall decide whether the disciplinary procedure should be invoked.

Complaints from external stakeholders should be directed to the line manager, who, depending on the nature of the complaint, will decide whether the disciplinary procedure should be invoked.

**5. Member conduct**

*May relate to the way an agency is managing its staff, the way it is portraying its membership of People In Aid or its status with regard to the People In Aid Code. Could be brought to People In Aid's attention via an internal stakeholder or an external stakeholder, or may come to People In Aid's attention directly.*

People In Aid is not an ombudsman and neither is it set up to respond to complaints or adjudicate on HR-related disputes within an organisation. As appropriate, we will point aggrieved employees to their internal procedures, to works councils or trade unions.

**Procedure:**

- Complaints should be brought to the attention of the HRSD who shall inform the ED of the nature of the complaint. Other than acknowledging receipt, any communication with the complainant must be approved by the ED or HRSD.
- The ED and HRSD will review the validity of the complaint and appropriate redress, and present to the Trustees (ORG), who will review and make a recommendation to the Board.
- According to the Board decision, the ED will inform the agency of the Board decision and, as appropriate, prepare statement/s for distribution to the press/media and for posting to People In Aid's own website, outlining (briefly) the nature of the complaint, its validity and People In Aid's redress.
- Furthermore, when deemed appropriate, any decisions shall be communicated to the wider membership / sector.

**Overview of complaint process**

