

**Medecins Sans Frontieres Ireland (“MSF Ireland”)  
Complaints policy**

**1. Introduction and scope**

- 1.1 MSF Ireland is committed to providing a high-quality service for those we assist and our supporters. If we fail to meet this high standard, we want to hear about it so that we can respond to your concerns, put things right and learn lessons for the future.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out MSF Ireland’s approach to receiving and dealing with complaints.
- 1.3 The policy applies to complaints received from people assisted by MSF Ireland, supporters, and other individuals who encounter MSF Ireland. Complaints from MSF Ireland employees will be dealt with under MSF UK/IE’s Grievance Policy and complaints from MSF Ireland contractors, affiliates and volunteers will be dealt with under MSF UK/IE’s Complaints Procedure for Volunteers, Workers and Self-Employed Individuals.

**2. What is a complaint?**

- 2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action or inaction of MSF Ireland or its trustees, staff or volunteers. This may be a concern about the services we provide or how you have been treated by our staff.
- 2.2 We will deal with all complaints seriously, fairly and efficiently.

**3. Who can make a complaint?**

- 3.1 Anyone affected by an action or inaction on the part of MSF Ireland can make a complaint.
- 3.2 If, for any reason, you are unable to make the complaint yourself, a representative (such as a friend or family member) may complain on your behalf. In this case your representative should explain why you are unable to make the complaint yourself. We may need to contact you directly to confirm that you have consented to your representative acting on your behalf.

**4. How do I make a complaint?**

- 4.1 If the issue relates to a specific service or individual you are already in contact with, where appropriate, in the first instance you should seek to resolve the matter directly with the individuals concerned.
- 4.2 If the issue remains unresolved, you can make a formal complaint to MSF Ireland using one of the following methods:
  - (a) By emailing the following address: [complaints@dublin.msf.org](mailto:complaints@dublin.msf.org)
  - (b) By letter addressed to: Complaints, MSF Ireland, 9 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4; or
  - (c) By telephone on: +353 (0)1 660 3337

- 4.3 Your formal complaint will be managed by one of the following individuals:
- (a) the Head of Fundraising, for complaints about fundraising activities;
  - (b) the Executive Director, for all other complaints.

## **5. What information should I provide?**

5.1 To help us resolve the issue efficiently and fairly, it would be helpful if you could provide the following information in your complaint:

- (a) Your full name;
- (b) Your contact details (including address, email address and telephone number);
- (c) How you would like us to contact you in relation to your complaint;
- (d) Your relationship to MSF Ireland (i.e. donor, assisted person);
- (e) A detailed description of your complaint and what you think went wrong, including dates and times of any reported incidents;
- (f) Details of what you have done to try and resolve the issue so far;
- (g) What you think we should do to resolve the matter
- (h) Any issues around confidentiality in relation to the individual(s) complained about, MSF's Operational Centres and/or third parties; and
- (i) Copies of any documents related to the complaint.

5.2 All personal data provided will be processed securely and transparently. For further information, see paragraph 9 below, and our privacy notice at <https://www.msf.ie/msf-ireland-privacy-notice>

5.3 We appreciate that individuals may wish to make a complaint on an anonymous basis. MSF Ireland will take all reasonable steps to investigate all complaints, including those made on an anonymous basis. However, we do ask that individuals making a complaint provide their name and contact details wherever possible, as without this information it will be difficult for MSF Ireland to fully investigate the complaint, it will make it harder for us to verify information relating to the alleged incident(s) and will prevent us from being able to update you on the progress of our investigations.

5.4 You can ask us to keep your identity confidential and specify any other aspects of the complaint that are sensitive. We will discuss with you what details we are able to disclose as part of MSF's investigation process. We note that our legal and regulatory obligations may mean that we are obliged to disclose the existence and nature of your complaint. We only do so on an anonymised basis, although there may be instances where we are compelled to provide further detail.

5.5 MSF Ireland will take reasonable steps to investigate all complaints, including historic complaints. However, we do ask that, where possible, complaints be made as soon as

reasonably possible after the event being complained about. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the complaint, the passage of time may mean that it is harder for us to verify information relating to the alleged incident(s).

## **6. What happens next?**

- 6.1 All complaints will be dealt with as efficiently as possible. We aim to acknowledge receipt of complaints within 5 working days of receipt and provide a full response within 30 working days of receipt, although it may be longer where we need to work with the Operational Centres within the MSF Movement in order to investigate the complaint (please see 6.8 below).
- 6.2 At each stage of the complaints process we will advise you as soon as possible if we need to extend the timescales set out above (for example, if a key member of staff is away, or in the event that further investigations are needed to resolve the complaint fairly).
- 6.3 Your complaint will be logged and, depending on the nature of your complaint, will be managed by either the Head of Fundraising or the Executive Director. If your complaint relates to the Head of Fundraising or the Executive Director, and your complaint would otherwise have been directed to that individual, your complaint will be managed by another senior member of staff who has not previously been involved in the matters alleged.
- 6.4 Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and without bias in order to establish the relevant facts. We will review all relevant evidence provided and may also gather and consider evidence we have gathered. This may include asking you for further information or speaking to other individuals involved.
- 6.5 Where a complaint relates to an individual (or a group of individuals) who work for MSF Ireland as trustees, staff or volunteers, we will normally inform them of the complaint made against them and give them an opportunity to respond. Exceptions to this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, for example it may not be appropriate for us to inform the individual(s) where to do so may present a risk to you or others.
- 6.6 Where a complaint is particularly serious (for example, if it relates to a crime or there is an allegation of serious harm to an individual), it will be notified to MSF Ireland's Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will consider whether the complaint should be reported to any other third party, such as the Gardaí, other authority and/or the Charity Regulator. If the complaint involves alleged financial impropriety the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees will also be informed.
- 6.7 If appropriate, we may ask a third party outside of MSF Ireland to investigate the complaint. For example, this may be necessary where the nature of the complaint means that it is not possible for us to deal with it independently within MSF Ireland.
- 6.8 Where a complaint is from a person assisted by MSF in the field, we will need to work with the relevant Operational Centre for that field project, in order to investigate and resolve the complaint. Where the complaint relates to an MSF Ireland funded project or involves field staff recruited by MSF Ireland, MSF UK and Ireland will work with the relevant Operational Centre to investigate the complaint and MSF Ireland will aim to provide a full response within 60 working days of receipt of the complaint. Where the complaint relates to a non-MSF Ireland funded project and/or does not involve field staff recruited by MSF Ireland, we will pass the

complaint on to the relevant Operational Centre for investigation and management. We will notify you that we have done this.

6.9 To the extent that the matter complained about is a particular decision, the effect of that decision will not be suspended but for exceptional circumstances determined at the sole discretion of MSF Ireland or the relevant Operational Centre, as the case may be.

## **7. What happens after MSF Ireland has considered my complaint, and what can I do if I am still not happy?**

7.1 We will tell you the outcome of your complaint (using your chosen method of communication), including reasons for the decision made.

7.2 If your complaint is upheld, we will explain the steps we are taking to put things right. This may include reviewing a particular decision and/or putting measures in place to rectify or remedy the position and/or avoid it happening again in future.

7.3 If your complaint is not upheld or you are unhappy with the resolution offered, you may ask for your complaint to be internally reviewed by the Board of Trustees. They will consider the investigation and response provided by the original decision-maker in respect of your complaint and may ask for further information about why you think that decision was unfair. To the extent that the Board of Trustees has been involved in the matter complained of or its original resolution, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will oversee the appointment of an appropriate alternative individual to conduct the review.

7.4 We will tell you the outcome of this review (using your chosen method of communication), including reasons for the decision made. If your complaint is upheld upon internal review, we will explain the steps we are taking to put things right.

7.5 If you are unhappy with our response to your complaint following this internal review, you may wish to escalate your complaint to the following regulator:

(a) Charities Regulator: <https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en/information-for-the-public/raise-a-concern> ;

## **8. Monitoring and record keeping**

8.1 The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring MSF Ireland's complaints process and compliance with this policy.

8.2 The Executive Director will report on any serious matters that need to be brought to the attention of the board as part of his/her written report to every board meeting.

## **9. Data Protection**

9.1 MSF Ireland is committed to processing data securely and transparently, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation including the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003, ePrivacy Regulations 2011 (S.I. 336 of 2011) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2016). For more information, please refer to MSF Ireland's Privacy Statement at <https://www.msf.ie/msf-ireland-privacy-notice>

**Policy owner:** Executive Director

**Date of policy:** 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Date of next review:** 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024