

HELP LESOTHO EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS POLICY 300-20

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is twofold: first, to ensure that complaints received by Help Lesotho about our activities, services, programs, staff or volunteers are handled in a manner that is expeditious, fair and transparent; and second, to use complaints as a means to improve programs and services. This policy does not cover complaints by Help Lesotho staff. These are dealt with in Help Lesotho's Human Resource Policy Manuals.

2. DEFINITIONS

Board refers to the Board of Directors of Help Lesotho

Staff refers to the staff of Help Lesotho residing in both Lesotho and Canada and includes interns

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by Help Lesotho as an organization or by a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of Help Lesotho. Examples include but are not limited to:

- perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- failure to observe policy or procedures;
- error made by a staff member or volunteer; or
- unfair or discourteous actions or statements by a staff member or volunteer.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Guiding principles for handling complaints are the following:

- It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible;
- The review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties;
- Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome;
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints;
- Updates are provided to complainants during review processes; and
- Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.

3.2 A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email). An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint shall first determine the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem. It is the responsibility of the person who receives the complaint to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it. If the complaint is transferred, the

recipient shall acknowledge to the transferor that he/she has received it and will act on it.

3.3 The person who initially receives the complaint shall acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on either by him/herself or another employee. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that shall be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address shall immediately be recorded.

3.4 Help Lesotho staff shall make every effort to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff shall listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately. Complaints received in writing shall be acknowledged within two business days and staff shall attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.

3.5 Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it shall be escalated to the Executive Director or Country Director. If the unresolved complaint is about the Country Director, the Executive Director shall manage it. If the unresolved complaint is about the Executive Director, the Chair of the Board shall manage it.

3.6 Complainants shall be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt shall be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days so that all complaints are resolved within a month of having been received.

3.7 Help Lesotho staff shall keep a record on a common tracking document of all complaints. The staff person who manages the complaint shall record on the tracking document a description of the complaint, who managed it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and a description of the resolution.

3.8 Staff shall inform the Executive Director or the Country Director as soon as feasible of all complaints that can not be resolved within two business days or that involve money.

3.8 The Executive Director and the Country Director shall each maintain in a secure place a binder containing the records of complaints developed pursuant to 3.7.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Executive Director in Canada and the Country Director in Lesotho shall have responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. They shall develop a common tracking document to be used separately in each country to record complaints and subsequent action.

4.2 The Executive Director as part of her regular report to the Board shall provide the number and type of complaints at least once annually.

5. COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY

5.1 This policy is posted on the portion of the Help Lesotho website to which the general public has access

6. REVIEW & EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

6.1 The Board shall review this policy within 5 years of its most recent adoption with a written record of the review attached to the policy.

7. DATE OF ENACTMENT AND SIGNATURES

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of Help Lesotho at a duly constituted meeting on May 30, 2013. The Board subsequently reviewed a revised version of the policy and adopted it on January 13, 2020