Feedback, complaint and response procedures[[1]](#footnote-1)

## 1. Types of complaint

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| Complaints received via the complaints and response mechanism (CRM) can be classified as:   * complaints that the CRM can handle:   + non-sensitive, e.g., complaints about the quality of the programme   + sensitive, e.g., staff or volunteer behaviour * complaints that the CRM cannot handle. There are mostly those about issues that are not directly related to the programme |

### What types of complaint can the CRM handle?

Generally**, non-sensitive complaints** are related to the quality of the programme and involve issues such as timeliness, security, non-fulfilment of promises or expectations, relevance and quality of support delivered, and lack of information. The table below provides common examples of non-sensitive complaints.

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| **From beneficiaries** | **From non-beneficiaries** | **General** |
| * Dissatisfied with amount of support * Dissatisfied with duration of support * Dissatisfied with project change or closure | * Dissatisfied with being excluded from assessment * Dissatisfied with being excluded from project * Wants to be included in the project * Wants other assistance | * Reporting beneficiary of project spending transfer inappropriately * Reporting that another CTP beneficiary is not eligible for the project |

**Non-sensitive requests for information, problem-solving or follow-up** may involve issues such as: amount of support, duration of support, date of transfer, card not received after training, transfer not in account after SMS reception, card eaten by ATM, card lost, card stolen, other card problems, question on how to use card and PIN problems.

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| **Important:** CRM should not be advertised as the main channel for requesting information but it is anticipated that the CRM will receive requests for information and action. In order to build trust, these requests should be responded to but the community should be encouraged to approach staff and volunteers in person for information. |

**Sensitive complaints** may refer to staff or volunteer disrespect, misconduct, allegations of corruption, nepotism or favouritism, allegations of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, aggressive or threatening behaviour, discrimination, or other forms of disrespect for the community and its customs. Sensitive complaints may refer, also to the roles and actions of committees or community focal points involved in the programme activities.

### What types of complaint can the CRM not handle?

This CRM cannot handle complaints about issues that are not directly related to the programme. This includes complaints about internal community disputes, actions of government and external agencies. Effort should be made to refer complaints about other humanitarian organizations, especially allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse by the staff of these organizations, to the organizations involved but no response to these complaints can be guaranteed.

## 2. Managing complaints

This tool gives suggestions on how to manage complaints. It should be adapted to your context and needs, in alignment with the organizational SOPs, Code of Conduct and other relevant documents.

### Human resources involved

* CRM focal point – to be appointed at headquarters level
* CRM focal point substitute– to be appointed at headquarters level
* CTP officer – field level
* Programme manager staff – to be appointed depending on the programme sector
* CRM committee – comprising the four staff mentioned above.

### Roles and responsibilities of the CRM focal point

* Respond to complaints or questions to which he/she can respond immediately.
* Refer to the relevant senior manager[[2]](#footnote-2) immediately if it is clearly a sensitive complaint.
* Refer complaints he/she cannot deal with to CTP officer. This can be done by phone but must be accompanied by an e-mail to the CTP officer copied to the relevant programme manager staff.
* Contact the CRM committee for urgent matters arising in between meetings.
* ‘Own’ and be responsible for the CRM database.

### CRM database

* A database should be created and kept on a laptop ‘owned’ by the focal point.
* A security password to the database should be created.
* The database should be edited only by the focal point or the focal point substitute.
* The focal point may bring the database laptop to the CRM committee meetings so as to update the information directly.
* A back-up system should be created. At the end of every working day, the focal point or the focal point substitute should update the back-up file (*file name: CRM database dd.mm.yyyy*).

### Roles and responsibilities of the CRM committee

* Meet on a weekly basis or more often when required[[3]](#footnote-3) to discuss progress, and agree on follow-ups and tasks involving anyone outside the committee.
* Invite the relevant senior manager to attend the meetings when required.
* Refer non-sensitive complaints that cannot be responded to without further investigation at the local level to the key staff member in the relevant office. The name and contact details of the complainant will be included only if necessary for gathering more information about the complaint. The complainant will be asked during the phone conversation whether they are happy for their details to be passed on for this purpose (see point below ‘receiving complaints via telephone hotline’ for details).
* Refer sensitive complaints to the relevant senior manager.
* Make every effort to refer complaints about other NGOs to an appropriate person.
* If possible and relevant, refer the case to other NGOs in the area (e.g., to UNHCR if it is about refugees, to Save the Children if it is about child protection, etc.)

### CRM focal point tasks to support learning from and improvement of the CRM

* Check that complaints forms and sealed boxes are taken to activities.
* Encourage staff and volunteers to integrate information about the CRM in their meetings and communications with communities.
* Encourage staff and volunteers to give their feedback on how the CRM is working and how it could be improved, and address any questions they may have.
* Produce a monthly report summarizing the types of complaint (and question) received, responses given, challenges faced, any recommendations for improving the programme and the CRM, etc.
* Make relevant additions to the frequently asked questions (FAQs) for staff and volunteers as needed.
* Share relevant feedback regarding other organizations with the programme manager as agreed.

## 3. Receiving complaints, requests and feedback via telephone hotline

### General guidance

* One staff member should be appointed as the hotline manager to ensure confidentiality, consistent responses and follow-up of all cases.
* The CRM focal point is the one responsible for updating complaints in the CRM database.
* ‘Hotline answering hours’ must be established and informed: e.g., between 09:00 and 14:00, from Monday to Friday, except public holidays.
* If a missed call is received, call back within 48 hours.
* Outside hours, an answering machine, answer phone or message machine should inform the ‘hotline answering hours’ and suggest the e-mail address as an alternative channel.

### Suggested conversation guide

***Introduction:***

*“My name is* ***xyz*** *and I work for the Red Cross. This is the cash transfer programme hotline. “*

The caller beneficiary may go into some detail at this stage. As soon as you can, try to explain the following:

*“This hotline is to raise complaints and questions, request information or provide feedback about the programme... Before we talk about why you are calling today, I must explain that I won’t be able to address your query immediately, and I need to first take some information from you. This will help the Red Cross to address your query. This may take five to ten minutes so are you happy to stay on the line or would you like me to call you straight back?”*

***Complaint collection:***

Elicit the information needed to complete the feedback and complaint form template.

**Closure:**

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| “Thank you for this information and your (sensitive) **complaint**. We will treat this complaint confidentially.  “According to our procedures, because of the nature of this complaint, I will now refer your complaint to relevant senior manager.[[4]](#footnote-4) This staff member will decide how to address your complaint within one week, and we will aim to resolve this issue within 30 days.[[5]](#footnote-5) Are you happy for me to pass on your information to her/him in case he/she needs to contact you?” | “Thank you for this information and your (non-sensitive) **complaint/ question/request.** We will treat this confidentially.  “According to our procedures, I will now work with my colleagues to address your complaint/question/ request in the next week *(immediately, if in relation to questions xyz).* We will aim to resolve this query within two weeks.[[6]](#footnote-6) Are you happy for me to pass on your information to my colleagues so they can follow up?” | “Thank you for this information and your **feedback**  “I will pass on your feedback to the relevant staff.” |

## 4. Receiving complaints, requests and feedback via e-mail

* The CTP officer should check the dedicated e-mail inbox regularly: e.g., between 09:00 and 14:00, Monday to Friday.
* The CTP officer should register all complaints received on print versions of the feedback and complaint form. The completed form should be scanned along with the original e-mail, and e-mailed to the CRM focal point, who is responsible for updating the CRM database.
* An auto-reply should be set up as follows:

*“This message is to confirm that your e-mail was received. The team will try to respond to your message within 48 hours of receiving your call or e-mail, although it may take longer in some cases.[[7]](#footnote-7)*

*If your message is urgent, please contact the hotline number: 22222222****.***

*Available: Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 14:00*

*The hotline is answered by an independent team.*

*Calls will be charged at your normal rate or you can make a missed call and we will call you back.*

*The team will endeavour to respond to your query / concern within 48 hours[[8]](#footnote-8) of receiving your call, missed call or e-mail, although it may take longer in some cases.*

*Thank you for contacting the Red Cross.*

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*\*Please note that this is not an individual reply to your e-mail, but an e-mail receipt confirmation.\*”*

* The CTP officer should answer again to ask for more information as needed (by phone is preferable, if a phone number is given).

## 5. Receiving complaints, requests and feedback via complaint boxes

### General guidance:

* Locked complaint boxes should be made available to beneficiaries during distributions and trainings, and collected by the CTP focal point.
* The keys to the complaint boxes should not travel with the boxes.
* The CTP officer will transfer the information to printed versions of the feedback and complaint form. If appropriate or required, the CTP officer should make a follow-up phone call (preferably, if contact number provided) or send an e-mail to the beneficiary.
* The CTP officer will send the completed complaint collection form, along with the original complaints form (scanned) by e-mail to the CRM focal point.
* Upon receipt, the CRM focal point will enter all written complaints into the CRM database. Complaints forms (hard copies) should be kept on file. The hard copies must be marked with a log number that corresponds to the complaints database. They should be locked in a safe place to be kept confidential.

## 6. How to follow up specific complaints

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| **Type of complaint** | **Immediate action required** | **Next steps and responsible person** | |
| **If received in person** | **If received via hotline,  e-mail or complaint box** |
| Allegation of aggressive/ threatening behaviour (staff and volunteers) | Yes | Staff should refer beneficiary to the existing complaint channels, particularly the hotline. | CRM focal point refers complaint to relevant manager. |
| Allegation of corruption/fraud/ nepotism/ favouritism/ discrimination (staff and volunteers) |
| Allegation of sexual harassment/ abuse/ exploitation (staff and volunteers) |
| Reports of aggressive/ threatening behaviour (at ATM or checkpoint) |
| PIN problem | Yes | Staff should refer beneficiary to the existing complaint channels, particularly the hotline. | CRM focal point should work with CTP officer/ programme manager to investigate. Likely action will be to contact FSP for PIN reissue. |
| Card eaten by ATM | CRM focal point should work with CTP officer/ programme manager to investigate. Likely action will be to contact FSP. |
| Card lost | CRM focal point should work with CTP officer/ programme manager to ensure the beneficiary is identified (e.g. card number). Likely action will be immediate call FSP to cancel and reissue card. |
| Card stolen |
| Other card problems | CRM focal point should work with CTP officer/ programme manager to investigate. Likely action will be to contact FSP. |
| Dissatisfied with amount of support | No | Staff should refer beneficiary to the existing complaint channels, particularly the hotline. | CRM focal point should consult the programme manager for help on how to explain this. Likely action is to call the beneficiary. |
| Dissatisfied with duration of support |  |
| Dissatisfied with project change or closure |  |
| Dissatisfied with being excluded from assessment |  | CRM focal point refers complaint to CRM committee. |
| Dissatisfied with being excluded from project |  |
| Wants to be included in project |  |
| Wants other assistance |  |
| Reporting beneficiary of project spending transfer inappropriately |  |
| Reporting another CTP beneficiary is not eligible for the project |  |
| Questions about amount of support |  | Staff and volunteers can try to clarify. If they are not able to do so or if the beneficiary has further questions, staff and volunteers should refer beneficiary to the existing complaint channels, particularly the hotline. | CRM focal point should consult the programme manager for help on how to explain this. Likely action is to call the beneficiary. |
| Questions about duration of support |  |
| Questions about date of transfer |  | CRM focal point refers complaint to CRM committee. |
| Question on how to use card |  |
| Training received, but card not yet received |  | Staff should refer beneficiary to the existing complaint channels, particularly the hotline. |
| SMS has been received but no transfer in account |  |

## 7. Complaints response timing and method

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| **Sensitive complaints** | |
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| **Non-sensitive complaints, questions or information requests** | |
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| **Feedback** | |
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### How should responses be given?

### A response should be given:

* generally, individually to the complainant, either by the CRM focal point or by the CTP officer.
* individually to the complainant by the relevant manager, if deemed appropriate by the CRM committee.
* preferably via phone, especially when complaint is received via phone; by e-mail when complaint is raised by e-mail and no phone number is given.
* collectively to the community, either by widespread communication (e.g., in community meetings or using leaflets and noticeboards) or by means of immediate visible action to address the complaint. A collective response will be used particularly when multiple similar complaints are received.

1. Adapted from Lebanon Red Cross CRM BFM procedures for staff and volunteers [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. To be defined in accordance with the organisational SOPs, Code of Conduct and other relevant documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ideal periodicity will depend on the context. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Staff to be defined in accordance with the organizational SOPs, Code of Conduct and other relevant documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Deadlines to be defined in accordance with the organizational SOPs, Code of Conduct and other relevant documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Idem. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Deadlines defined in accordance with the organizational SOPs, Code of Conduct and other relevant documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Idem. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)