ALIMA UK Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

The Alliance for International Medical Action UK (ALIMA UK) makes every effort to meet peoples' expectations, circumstances may arise where an individual has a concern and wishes to bring this to our attention. We will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, in everyone's best interests.

For very serious concerns, such as an individual's safety being placed at immediate risk, take such action as is appropriate. For example, by calling the emergency services.

2. Informal Complaints

Anyone who has a concern should initially raise this with a member of our team at the time, as this enables us to respond and deal with an issue quickly.

We will seek to resolve this and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have, ideally to his or her satisfaction. If unable to, make a note of:

- The complainant's name and contact details, unless he/she is unwilling to provide these.
- The nature of his/her concern and anything that he/she wished to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when, where any action that was taken and the details of others who were present/involved.

Advise the complainant that their concern will be passed to the trustees.

3. Formal Complaints

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she should complete an online Complaint Form or be given our registered address, as they wish. Correspondence should be marked private and confidential. He or she should be provided with a copy of this policy by post or e-mail, when requested.

If sending a written complaint, the individual making the complaint should do so as soon as possible and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and e-mail.
    - If you do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will of course respect this.
- What happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom (limit to 500 words).
- What was felt to be unsatisfactory (limit to 150 words).
- What is believed should be done to address the concern (limit to 150 words).

We will consider only information relevant to the specific complaint issue. Additional narrative, commentary, or unrelated material may not be reviewed.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 working days. The complaint will then be investigated. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, the trustee will contact the person complaining to request this.

A response will be sent within 30 days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 30 days advising when we estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain our findings and what action we will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he or she may appeal the decision, by writing to the Chair, the contact details of whom will be included in our response. Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of our response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days of the appeal being received and will be final.

4. Further Consideration

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, we will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to the Charity Commission, H&SW Executive, Fundraising Regulator, other regulator, or the Police.

Consideration will also be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available investigated. However, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and his or her contact details. This will also allow us to advise him or her of the outcome.

Anonymous complaints should be sent in writing to ALIMA UK's registered office.

124 City Road
London
EC1V 2NX

6. Data Protection Complaints

In line with the ICO's guidance and the Data (Use and Access) Act, we have a dedicated process for handling data protection complaints. Anyone who believes we have not handled their personal information appropriately may raise a data protection complaint with us.

We will:

- Provide a clear and accessible way for individuals to submit data protection complaints (see Complaint Form).
- Acknowledge receipt of such complaints within 30 calendar days.
- Take appropriate steps to investigate the complaint without undue delay, including making necessary enquiries and keeping the complainant informed throughout.
- Communicate the outcome of the complaint promptly and clearly, explaining any actions taken or decisions made.

All complaints will be handled fairly, transparently, and in accordance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

7. Potential Compensation Claim

If a complaint may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal issue, our insurers are to be notified. Details of our insurance provider can be found in Google Drive.

8. Confidentiality

The complaint will be treated as confidential and any communication on this issue, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

9. Artificial Intelligence

We accept the use of AI in drafting a complaint. However, it must still comply with this policy. You should also check it for accuracy, tone and relevance before submitting it, as this will help to ensure we are able to resolve your complaint as quickly as we can. The reason we ask you to do this is that AI makes mistakes and also can make things up (called hallucinating).

We believe that individuals are entitled to challenge, appeal or seek redress for a decision made by or with the help of an AI system. We will ensure:

- Human oversight of systems that allows decisions to be reviewed and, if appropriate, overturned.
- Transparency about how decisions are made and what data was used.

10. Lengthy Or Repetitive Submissions

Please note that we are a charity with limited capacity and we are not lawyers. If we were to receive a complaint that in our view includes:

- An excessive volume of correspondence,
- Repetitive or irrelevant submissions or
- Overly long or unfocused documents

We may ask you to help us to respond to your complaint by summarising it to focus on the key facts, what you feel is unsatisfactory and what you wish us to do in response, in no more than 300 words. We will pause the complaints process pending receipt of this.

11. Availability

This policy is publicly available and given to anyone who advises that he/she wishes to submit a complaint. Requests for a copy of the policy should be sent to info@uk.alima.ngo.

12. Responsibilities

All trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, and third-party representatives of ALIMA UK are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with and complying with this policy, as well as all applicable data protection regulations. A copy of ALIMA UK's Data Protection policy can be found here.
- Seeking guidance and advice from ALIMA UK's senior management if they are unsure about whether any conduct may violate this policy.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

This policy was adapted from a template provided by Charity Excellence.