

(Procedure number) **Standing Operating Procedure**

Version 0.1	February 1 st 2020	
Title	Complaints against Irish Red Cross voluntary service and behaviour of members	
Scope	<p>Written complaints from internal or external sources that the quality of voluntary service or behaviour is not in accordance with the standards expected by the Irish Red Cross (IRC) and adversely affect the complainant.</p> <p>This procedure may involve matters involving Youth members where the complaint is not a child protection issue under the Children First Guideline.</p> <p>This procedure does not cover child protection issues under the Irish Red Cross Safeguarding Policy Statement and Procedures and statutory requirements.</p> <p>Complaints relating to clinical matters will remain covered under the Adverse Clinical Incident Policy and the Fitness to Practice Policy</p> <p>Complaints concerning the non-voluntary services of the Irish Red Cross and against salaried staff are outside the scope of this procedure.</p>	
Process Objective	To ensure that complaints received by the Irish Red Cross are appropriately investigated, valid complaints are resolved, and the quality of voluntary service and behaviour is improved. All complaints to be responded to within 14 days of receipt either verbal or written.	
References	<p>Terms of Reference of the Membership and Disciplinary Committee Irish Red Cross 2015-2018</p> <p>(Insert here the Child Protection policy document and specify the statutory provisions under which child protection issue complaints are made – specify the precise section(s))</p>	
Definitions	<p>Secretary General is the Secretary General of the Irish Red Cross. Any reference to the Secretary General will include the executive staff of Irish Red Cross.</p> <p>Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator means a person assigned by the Chair of the Membership and Disciplinary Committee to a Region of Irish Red Cross to assist officers in a region who have responsibilities to make decisions on disciplinary inquiries and reports in order to facilitate a positive outcome</p>	
Flowchart		
Procedure		
Step	Action	Responsibility
1	Handling complaints on initial receipt	
1.1	When a complaint is received within the voluntary service, endeavour to resolve it informally before it becomes a written complaint	Unit/Community Support/Youth Officer
1.2	If the complaint is not resolved, inform the complainant that they may send the complaint in writing to the Branch Chair	Unit/Community Support/Youth Officer

1.3	When a complaint is received by the Head Office, request the complainant to raise it directly with the volunteer against whom it is made or with their Leader/Operational Officer with a view to resolution	Secretary General
1.4	If the complainant is not agreeable to the referral, request the complainant to send their complaint to the Branch Chair	Secretary General
1.5	Acknowledge receipt of complaint to complainant within seven days. Review the details of the complaint. If the complaint is minor, go to step 1.6. If the complaint warrants investigation, go to step 1.7 If the complaint is unjustified, go to step 1.8	Branch Chair
1.6	If the complaint is of a minor nature and any corrective action can be addressed immediately, implement the corrective/preventive action without delay and no later than 28 days after receipt of the complaint.	Branch Chair
1.7	If the complaint warrants investigation, assign the investigation within 14 days of receipt, to a Branch Officer not involved with or immediately supervising the volunteer against whom the complaint is made. The Branch Chair may assign the investigation to a Branch officer of another Branch where they think appropriate and by agreement with another Branch Chair, If the complaint involves allegations of serious misconduct or neglect of duty by volunteers, also inform the Area Chair immediately. The Branch Chair may involve a member with particular expertise in supporting the Branch Officer where such expertise is required and not possessed by the investigating Branch officer.	Branch Chair
	The Branch Chair may consult with the Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator for advice on an investigation at any stage in the process. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will provide advice on the disciplinary process and facilitate in supporting both the investigation and resolution. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will not direct actions or make decisions which are within the Branch Chair's responsibilities. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will be available, on request by the Branch Chair, to advise the Branch Officer, as required.	Branch Chair Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator
1.8	Conduct an investigation to: - Ascertain the facts - Collect reports from all involved - Provide a report with recommendations to the Branch Chair within 28 days of receipt	Branch Officer
1.9	Review and assess the investigation report from the investigating Branch Officer. Make decisions on any corrective/preventive actions to be taken. Take corrective/preventive actions. If the investigation reveals a matter of serious misconduct or serious neglect of duty by volunteers, inform the Area Chair immediately	Branch Chair
1.10	Inform the person against whom the complaint was made of the proposed outcome. Inform the complainant of the corrective/preventive actions taken or why no further action will be taken. Inform the complainant that if they are unhappy with the response, they may submit, within 28 days, a further written complaint to the Branch Chair who will forward it to the Area Chair within 28 days	Branch Chair

1.11	If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, record this in a separate Chair's report and close off the complaint. Send the completed closed investigation and outcome to the Secretary General for filing in the Irish Red Cross administrative system and for statistical data collection on complaints	Branch Chair
1.12	Forward to the Area Chair within seven days of receipt of a written complaint that has been unresolved following Branch investigation and on request by the complainant that it be forwarded to the Area Chair. Acknowledge the receipt of the written complaint to the complainant within seven days of receipt	Branch Chair
2	Complaints received or referred to the Area Chair	
2.1	Where a written complaint has been received directly from a complainant by the Area Chair, acknowledge the receipt and the action to be taken and forward the complaint to the Branch Chair for investigation under step 1.5	Area Chair
2.2	Where a written unresolved complaint is received from the Branch Chair, review the details of the complaint, the Branch investigation report and Chair's proposed corrective/preventive actions. If the complaint is minor, go to step 2.3. If the complaint warrants investigation, go to step 2.4 If the complaint is unjustified, go to step 2.5	Area Chair
2.3	If the complaint is of a minor nature and any corrective action can be addressed immediately, instruct the Branch Chair to implement the corrective/preventive action within 14 days. Implement the corrective/preventive actions within 14 days	Area Chair Branch Chair
	The Area Chair may consult with the Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator for advice on an investigation at any stage in the process. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will provide advice on the disciplinary process and facilitate in supporting both the investigation and resolution. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will not direct actions or make decisions which are within the Area Chair's responsibilities. The Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator will be available, on request by the Area Chair, to advise the Area Officer, as required.	Area Chair Regional Disciplinary Investigations Facilitator
2.4	If the complaint involves allegations of serious misconduct or serious neglect of duty by volunteers, inform the Board immediately. If the complaint warrants investigation, assign the investigation within 14 days to an Area Committee Officer not involved with or immediately supervising the volunteer against whom the complaint is made. The Area Chair may involve a member with particular expertise in supporting the investigating Area Committee Officer where such expertise is required and not possessed by the investigating Area Committee officer.	Area Chair
2.5	Conduct an investigation to: - Ascertain any additional facts and documentation not already compiled in the Branch Report - Review and provide a written report with recommendations to the Area Chair within 28 days	Area Committee Officer
2.6	Review and assess the investigation report from the investigating Area Committee Officer. Make decisions on any corrective/preventive actions to be taken within 14 days. Take corrective/preventive actions within 14 days of decision	Area Chair

2.7	Inform the person against whom the complaint was made of the proposed outcome. Inform the complainant of the corrective/preventive actions taken or why no further action will be taken. Inform the complainant that if they are unhappy with the response, they may submit a further written complaint within 28 days to the Area Chair who will forward it to the Board of the Irish Red Cross	Area Chair
2.8	If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, record this in a separate Chair's report and close off the complaint. Send the completed closed investigation and outcome to the Secretary General for filing in the Irish Red Cross administrative system and for statistical data collection on complaints	Area Chair
3	Receipt of written complaints by the Board	
3.1	Refer complaints received from the Area Chair to the Chair of the Membership and Disciplinary Committee	Board
3.2	Refer to the Branch Chair any written complaints received directly unless the matter is of such gravity in the Board's opinion as to decide to refer it to the Membership and Disciplinary Committee without any prior investigation	Board
4	Receipt of written complaints by the Secretary General	
4.1	Written complaints under this procedure will be received by the Secretary General and acknowledged within two working days. The complaint will be forwarded within the same two working days to the Branch Chair of the Branch of the member(s) involved in the voluntary service provision or behaviour complained against	Secretary General
4.2	The Secretary General will not investigate or be part of the conduct of an investigation under this procedure	Secretary General
4.3	Annually, prepare a summary report of complaints received and forward to the Board	Secretary General
4.4	The summary report will ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All valid complaints received by the Irish Red Cross have been addressed and resolved as much as possible to the satisfaction of the complainant and the Irish Red Cross - Corrective and preventive actions have been completed - Any trends which become evident are addressed with a view to preventing the circumstance giving rise to similar complaints in the future - Opportunities for improvement identified during the processing of complaints are identified and acted upon - The performance objectives of the Irish Red Cross have been attained 	Board

Notes: All documentation will be retained in Irish Red Cross Head Office administrative system and will only be deleted in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2018. All anonymised statistical data regarding complaints will be retained by the Secretary General