



# GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY

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**Effective date**

Prepared by Corporate Governance on 24/4/19

**Authorisation**

This Policy was authorised by Corporate Governance on 24/4/19

**Policy owner**

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**Version history**

Version Number	Date Revised	Revision Description	Approval	Date Effective
2	24/4/19	Additional clarity re external complaints processes	Angela Sharpe	24/4/19

**1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 HOST International (HOST) is committed to ensuring the integrity of the organisation through maintaining high professional standards, including appropriate standards of behaviour and conduct.
- 1.2 This Grievance, Complaints and Feedback Policy (Policy) functions to promote a timely and transparent response to internal and external grievances, complaints and feedback.
- 1.3 HOST encourages individuals covered by this Policy to resolve any grievances or complaints as they arise.
- 1.4 HOST will aim to deal with any grievance or complaint received in a prompt, sensitive, impartial, confidential and supportive way in line with the HOST Grievance, Complaints and Feedback Procedure.
- 1.5 Whilst seeking resolution and prevention of future conflict, the principles of natural justice apply. The confidentiality of complainants and respondents will also be respected in accordance with relevant laws.
- 1.6 All efforts will be made to resolve grievances and complaints in a manner that:
  - Is timely, with it being dealt with at the time it arises, or as soon as possible thereafter;
  - Is clear, so that complainants have access to and understand how the process works;
  - Is flexible, with informal and formal, internal and external options of resolution offered;
  - Is accessible, as some complainants may need support, such as advocacy, to help them assert their rights. They have the right to access this support;
  - Acknowledges the rights of complainants to access external complaints' mechanisms;
  - Ensures that the views of all involved are seen as having equal validity, unless proven otherwise;
  - Ensures the process is non-discriminatory;
  - Ensures the complainant feels comfortable to continue to access the service after making a complaint;
  - Respects the confidentiality of the complainant and all involved parties, other members of staff, management and other relevant parties;
  - Acknowledges that the outcome of resolving a complaint is the improvement of service systems, and relationships between people and thus an improvement in the service. Where re-occurring issues are identified through the complaints process, strategies can be developed to resolve them.

**2. Application of this Policy**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all workers including senior managers, officers, directors, consultants, contractors, trainees, agency workers; volunteers; students, contractors and other associated stakeholders.
- 2.2 This Policy is also applicable to grievances related to bullying, harassment or discrimination; however these will also be managed in accordance with the respective policies.
- 2.3 All staff are expected to adhere to this Policy wherever possible to ensure a consistent and fair process when assisting with any grievance within the workplace.

- 2.4 This Policy does not remove the obligation of any supervisors/managers to identify and address, as part of their normal responsibilities, practices that may lead to a grievance being raised. All supervisors and managers have the responsibility to take reasonable steps to identify and attempt to prevent and resolve issues in the workplace and ensure consistent application of this Policy.
- 2.5 HOST will ensure all workers receive initial and ongoing conflict resolution training and are provided with appropriate support in dealing with complaints effectively.
- 2.6 Copies of this policy will be provided to all staff, volunteers, students and external parties where required, at commencement and from time to time. Staff are encouraged to read and understand this Policy and the respective procedure and seek clarification as needed.
- 2.7 This policy will be available on HOST's website and accessible to all stakeholders.

### **Queries about this policy**

- 2.8 All workers have a responsibility for ensuring they take the time to read and understand this Policy.
- 2.9 There are a number of persons within HOST who have been designated to deal with any concerns or questions about this Policy. Staff and volunteers should contact their direct supervisor in the first instance and for any further queries they can contact your designated Human Resources (HR) contact.
- 2.10 External parties should contact the Corporate Governance team.

### **Non-contractual status of this policy**

- 2.11 This Policy is not in any way incorporated as part of any Award, service level agreement or enterprise agreement entered into by HOST, nor does it form any part of an employee's contract of employment. HOST may amend this Policy at any time in its sole discretion.

## **3. What is the difference between a complaint and a grievance?**

- 3.1 A complaint is any dissatisfaction expressed by a staff member related to work or the work environment.
- 3.2 Before a complaint can become a grievance, staff are required to:
  - Try and resolve the issue directly with the person concerned;
  - Discuss the issue with their Supervisor or another relevant management representative;
  - Be respectful and professional in the way information is conveyed; and
  - Make all reasonable efforts to resolve the issue.
- 3.3 A grievance is a problem, concern or complaint related to work or the work environment that has through all reasonable efforts, not been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. It can be about an action, omission, situation or decision that a staff member believes is unfair, discriminatory or unjustified. A complaint becomes a grievance where resolution cannot be achieved by the affected parties.
- 3.4 Single incidents of unreasonable behaviour can also present a risk to health and safety and will not be tolerated.
- 3.5 Individuals who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or under the age of 18 years old will be provided with appropriate support and encouraged to nominate an advocate to assist them to raise their complaint and/or grievance in the appropriate manner for effective resolution.

## **4. Grievance**

A grievance is simply a formal method of solving any form of workplace conflict. Following is a list of common grievance issues:

- Discrimination
- Bullying and Harassment
- Different expectations
- Perceived inequity
- Promotions
- Training
- Transfers
- Rosters

- Inappropriate behaviour
- Work environment
- Interpersonal conflict
- Remuneration and benefits
- Policy and Award interpretation

### External grievances

All external individuals (community members, other organisation's, contractors and suppliers) who have a concern or complaint are in the first instance referred to the Corporate Governance team via [complaints@hostinternational.org.au](mailto:complaints@hostinternational.org.au).

## 5. Non-grievance

Non-grievance related matters may include:

- 5.1 Performance Management and/or disciplinary action unless the process followed breaches policy or procedure. This is in accordance with the Performance Management policies and procedures.
- 5.2 WHS issues or concerns unless they are unresolved by initiating the relevant WHS issue related procedure.
- 5.3 Any issue that can be addressed by an alternative documented HOST policy or procedure.
- 5.4 While the parties to the grievance attempt to resolve the matter in accordance with this Policy, work must continue as normal, other than with respect to bona fide health and safety issues, while the matter is being dealt with.

## 6. Investigating grievances

### Investigating internal grievances

- 6.1 The decision to act on an internal grievance and any dispute on this subject will be determined at the absolute discretion of the HOST Human Resources (HR) team. In order to allow for appropriate investigation and due process, grievances must be directed to the relevant recipient only.
- 6.2 Where the HR team are implicated in the grievance, this grievance will be investigated by another independent party.
- 6.3 Individuals and stakeholders who are of a minority group, vulnerable, disadvantaged or under the age of 18 years old will be provided appropriate support in lodging a grievance by the relevant team/teams.

### Investigating external grievances

- 6.4 Where an external grievance is raised, a representative from the Corporate Governance team will record the lodgment of the concern or complaint and investigate accordingly.
- 6.5 Individuals and stakeholders who are of a minority group, vulnerable, disadvantaged or under the age of 18 years old will be provided appropriate support in lodging a grievance by the relevant team/teams.

## 7. Feedback

HOST welcomes both positive and constructive feedback from staff, volunteers, students and all parties external to HOST. HOST believes that engaging in positive discussion regarding improvements to be made and issues to be investigated are key to adhering to HOST values. Staff and external bodies/individuals are encouraged to submit all feedback to [feedback@hostinternational.org.au](mailto:feedback@hostinternational.org.au).

## 8. Protection

Individuals who raise grievances or disputes will be protected by:

- Fair Work Act general protections provisions (staff)
- Equal opportunity laws (staff)
- Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act).

## 9. Documentation and Reporting

All documentation relating to the grievance, complaint or feedback will be filed securely online to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

A register of Grievances and Complaints and any appeal process will be kept by the Corporate Governance team recording the following details:

- details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint
- date lodged
- whether the grievance or complaint relates to a business improvement matter (focused on an individual) or whether it is a systemic problem that requires risk management processes and additional controls implemented
- action taken
- date of resolution and reason for decision
- indication of complainant being notified of outcome
- Complainant response and any further action.

A register of Feedback will be kept by the Corporate Governance team recording the following details:

- details of the feedback provider and the nature of the feedback - whether the feedback is positive, negative, or neither
- date lodged
- action taken (if applicable)
- date of resolution and reason for decision (if applicable)
- response of acknowledgment of feedback provided
- any follow up or required further action.

Reporting on grievance, complaints and feedback will be provided to the Senior Management Team and Board quarterly or as requested.

## 10. Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually or at any other time as required.