

Complaint and Response Mechanism Fact Sheet

Concern Worldwide is committed to strengthening its accountability measures. This includes the establishment of a pilot Complaint and Response Mechanism (CRM) in Mornei. A Complaint and Response Mechanism offers a safe, accessible, confidential and transparent channel through which anyone can raise a complaint about Concern Worldwide's decisions or actions and a timely response is provided.

1. Complaint Channels

The following channels will be provided to the community in Mornei and Rongataz to enable complaints to be lodged:

1. Complaints placed in a complaint box
2. Complaints shared with Concern staff or community volunteers
3. Complaints shared with a community leader (Sheiks) and then shared with Concern staff

2. CRM Scope

Complaints can be divided into two groups: valid and invalid. Concern **can respond (valid)** to complaints about:

- Targeting of assistance/services (beneficiaries' selection criteria)
- Quality and quantity of assistance/services received from Concern or its partners
- Appropriateness of assistance/service received from Concern or its partners
- Behaviour of Concern and partners' staff and anyone associated with Concern's programmes¹
- Misuse of Concern's funds
- Concern programme decisions

Concern **cannot respond (invalid)** to complaints about:

- Other organisations²
- Issues not related to Concern's programmes
- The local or national government, local authorities, etc.
- Internal matters of the community such as physical violence between community members, marital disputes, tensions between various community groups and all other such matters which fall within the jurisdiction of the civil justice system
- Complaints which are under investigation by law enforcement agencies or matters under litigations/court trial

Complaints can be further categorised into sensitive and non sensitive. **Sensitive complaints** include:

- Allegations of fraud and corruption i.e. breach of Concern's Anti-Fraud Policy
- Harassment, exploitation or abuse or any gross misconduct or malpractice of Concern or partner staff or any individual associated with Concern's programmes as per Concern's Programme Participant Protection Policy and Concern's Staff Code of Conduct
- Issues related to any type of abuse of power by Concern or partner staff or any individual associated with Concern's programmes
- Breach of confidentiality

¹ As defined in Concern Programme Participant Protection Policy this includes: i) people employed or engaged by Concern, whether national or international, full or part time, consultants, interns, contractors or volunteers, or any person actively involved in the Concern programme; ii) Concern's partner organisations, their staff and anyone working on their behalf; iii) visitors to Concern's programmes and accompanying dependants of international staff.

² Concern has taken the decision not to engage in the referral of complaints related to the decisions or actions of another organisation. Instead, the complainant will be advised to direct their complaint to the relevant organisation. This will need to be clearly communicated to the community.

- Discrimination
- Political interference in our programmes
- A credible security risk to the organisation, Concern or its partners' staff or assets
- A real or potential threat to the wellbeing of beneficiaries
- Any actions which are considered a criminal matter in Sudan or the country of nationality of the alleged perpetrator

Non-sensitive complaints include:

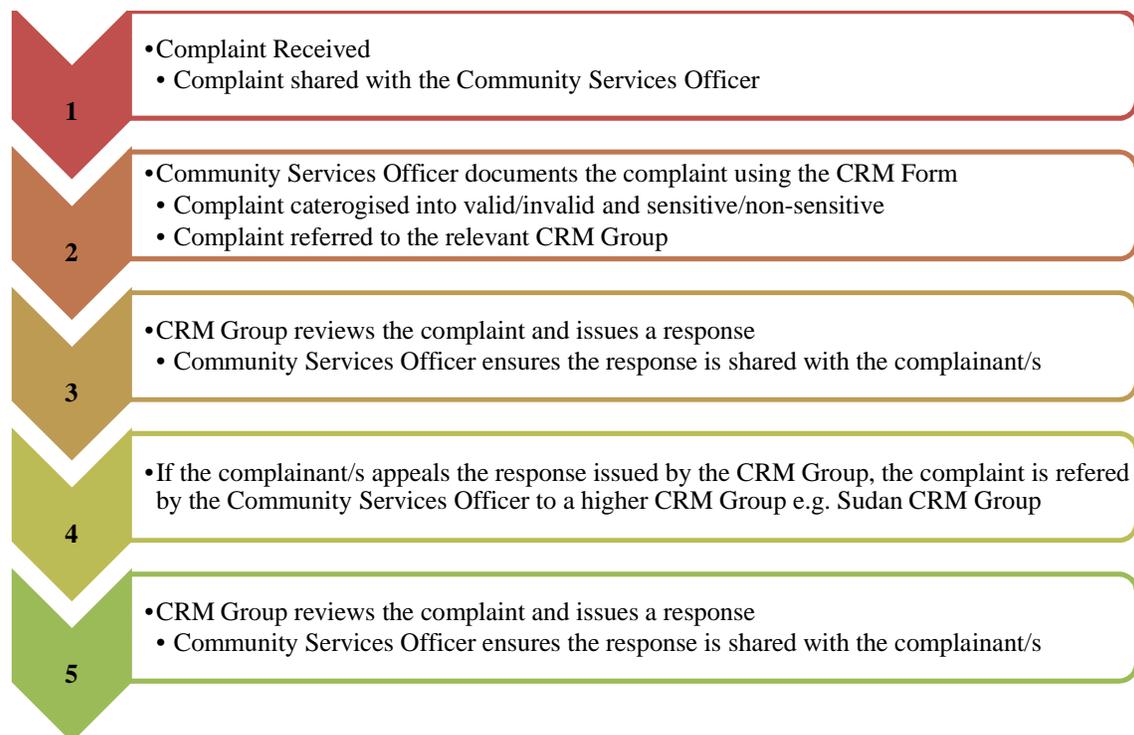
- Beneficiary selection criteria³
- Quality and/or quantity of assistance/services provided by Concern or its partners
- Lack of adequate information
- Inefficient service delivery mechanisms
- Level of partner and/or Concern presence in the community
- Decision making processes in the community

A complaint can be made by:

- beneficiaries of programmes delivered by Concern or its partners
- non-beneficiaries within the area where Concern or its partner work
- Concern or its partners' staff, although staff should be encouraged to use the existing line management/reporting system and grievances policy
- other stakeholders affected by Concern's work, including local leaders, government representatives and representatives of other organisations

4. Complaint Handling

The following diagram represents the various steps in the receipt and handling of complaints by Concern:



- The Mornei CRM Group will be led by the Assistant Area Coordinator- Mornei. The group should comprise of a representative from Senior Management, Programmes and Systems and will meet each week.
- The Community Services Officer will share the complaint with the relevant CRM Group, minus the personal details of the complainant.
- Sensitive complaints will be referred directly to West Darfur CRM Group, to ensure a transparent and impartial response can be provided.
- Concern will strive to ensure complaints are resolved in a timely manner, with 80% responded to within two weeks and no more than 10% of complaints remaining unresolved in any one year.
- Disclosure of the complainant's details will only be permitted at the request of the Assistant Country Director- West Darfur or Country Director.
- Electronic records and all supporting documents, including the CRM database, must be held on a desktop computer⁴.
- The desktop and file must be password protected and the folder containing hard copies of complaints and all supporting documents must be locked in a secure storage unit when not in use.
- The original copy of a complaint must be held by Concern at all times and electronic reproduction of a complaint form and all supporting documents is prohibited as this constitutes a potential violation of Concern's commitment to a safe and confidential CRM.
- Referral of a complaint between CRM Groups must only be communicated by email and directed only to the members of that CRM Group.

4. **Guidance on Complaint Handling:**

- Concern must work closely with communities, addressing them in small groups and **consistently explaining the purpose and scope of the CRM**, including why some complaints can be addressed and others cannot.
- Ensuring clarity amongst communities as to **what constitutes a valid complaint is crucial** in order to avoid a CRM becoming overloading with complaints.
- Where possible complaints should include the **contact details of the complainant/s, a detailed description of the complaint and the complainant/s anticipated outcome.**
- All complaints must be **handled without discrimination** and **ensure the confidentiality** of the complainant/s is maintained.
- If a complaint is found to be untrue following an investigation, Concern **guarantees that no action will be taken against the complainant and Concern will not victimise the person who made the complaint.**
- Concern expects **complainants to raise their complaints fairly and appropriately.** In cases where complainants harass Concern staff, behave abusively or unreasonably pursue a complaint, **Concern reserves the right to withdraw or modify its CRM.**
- For complaints received which **fall outside the scope** of Concern's CRM, such as domestic violence or sexual abuse, where possible Concern will assist the **complainant in a safe referral to the concerned body.**
- Concern can't provide a **direct response or redress for the decisions, actions or behaviour of government staff; including those with whom we work in partnership.** However, Concern will refer the complaint to the relevant management in a safe manner and promote a timely response to the complainant.
- Information related to a complaint is **shared on a strict need to know basis**, with a limited number of specified people for the purpose of taking action.

⁴ Such records should not be stored on a laptop computer due to the risk of theft.

Complaints which are sensitive in content are handled at the discretion of Concern and guided by the following:

- Communities are aware that Concern is committed to handling complaints without discrimination or victimisation of complainants.
- Concern can't commit to issuing a response to complaints lodged anonymously as the identity of the complainant is unknown. Without sufficient details about the complaint it will prove difficult for Concern management to effectively respond.
- Sensitive complaints will not be reviewed by Mornei CRM Group but will instead be referred to the West Darfur or Sudan CRM Group in order to ensure a transparent and impartial response is issued.
- Concern will evaluate the seriousness of the issues raised in a sensitive complaint, examine the credibility of the allegations and the supporting facts and determine the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources in order to deliver a transparent and impartial response