

BBC Children in Need Complaints policy – external

Introduction

BBC Children in Need (CiN) welcomes both positive and challenging feedback. If you wish to raise a concern with us, you can do this by emailing Pudsey@bbc.co.uk or pudseygrants@bbc.co.uk), phone (0345 609 0015) or by post (BBC Children in Need, PO Box 648, Salford, M5 0LB).

Our approach

Our mission is to help ensure every child in the UK is safe, happy, and secure and has the opportunities they need to reach their potential.

We raise money both throughout the year and in our annual November appeal which is put to work where it's needed most. We fund local charities and projects who help remove the barriers that are facing children and young people, so that they can thrive.

Complaints are a rich source of learning for us, whether it is a process we can improve, how we can communicate more clearly or in a timelier way, or how we can improve on our charitable activity. We take a learning approach to complaints and approach each complaint with an open mind.

Common questions and concerns

We have compiled some answers to frequently asked questions [here](#).

What do we mean by a complaint?

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction that is or could be a direct result of activity undertaken by the charity. A complaint could be about:

- An individual grant making decision
- An organisation CiN funds
- CiN's grant making approach and policies
- CiN's online shop
- CiN's fundraising and marketing activity
- CiN staff or volunteer behaviour
- Content produced by CiN
- Complaints about the way CiN has handled data subject rights requests.

This policy does not cover complaints about programming and content produced by the BBC. These should be directed to [BBC complaints](#).

What you should expect

If you complain to us, you should expect:

- To be treated with respect
- That we will act promptly, follow the steps set out below and keep to the deadlines we set
- That we will genuinely investigate your concern and if we have acted incorrectly, we will try to make it right.
- We will use the information you share with us in accordance with our Privacy Policy, viewable [here](#)
- We won't reveal information to or about a complainant where it is personal data or where there is an agreement or reasonable expectation that we would keep the information confidential
- That we will take any safeguarding concerns to be considered carefully and follow safeguarding best practice

CiN can usually only investigate complaints where the identity of the complainant is known so that it is possible to go back and verify information if needed. When an anonymous complaint is received of a serious nature, we may consider investigating if there is enough information to guide further enquiries.

Grant making complaints

Appeals

CiN does not have an appeal process for grant making decisions. If you are an applicant who wishes to complain about being declined a grant, we will investigate and make sure that we followed our policies and procedures correctly, and if we have acted incorrectly, we will put it right. However, if we have followed our policies and procedures correctly, the decision is final.

Concerns about an organisation we fund

We welcome any concerns about an organisation we fund. In our response we may signpost you to other bodies which you may wish to raise your concerns with, such as:

- the organisations regulator (e.g. the Charity Commission for England & Wales, the OSCR, the CCNI or the CIC regulator)
- the police if you suspect there has been a crime, terrorist activity or if you are worried about someone's safety
- HMRC if you have concerns about tax, like money laundering or tax evasion
- Action Fraud if you suspect fraud

Complaint process

CiN has a three stage formal complaints process. An expression of dissatisfaction may be dealt with informally and avoid becoming a formal complaint by being addressed quickly and fully.

Stage 1: Formal complaint

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days. This will detail when you will receive a response, and who will respond to you. This would normally be the team most connected to the complaint being made, e.g. if the complaint is about a grantee, the national or regional team which manages that grant will investigate and respond.

We may ask you what you want as an outcome of your complaint and the format of response you would like. These may not always be possible but can help guide our response.

A full response will be given within 20 working days. It will include a summary of the complaint and what was discovered in the investigating of the complaint. If the complaint has validity, i.e. CiN didn't correctly follow its own policies and procedures, or mistakes were made which led to the complaint, the response will include an apology and describe what steps will be taken to avoid this happening again. In cases where the complainant has been significantly affected by the issue, we will try to make it right.

If the investigation is unable to be concluded within 20 working days, we will contact you to explain why and provide a date on which a full response will be provided.

Stage 2: Review

We hope and expect that a Stage 1 response will resolve most complaints. However if you aren't satisfied with the response, you have 20 working days to take the complaint to Stage 2. We will again acknowledge this within three working days. Complaints at stage 2 will be investigated and responded to by someone more senior than the original responder. A full response must be given within 20 working days. You may submit new information if it is relevant to your original complaint.

If the Stage 1 response was appropriate, a shorter response will be sent confirming the key points. If the investigator determines that the Stage 1 response was incorrect or missing elements, we will acknowledge that and make it right.

Stage 3: Final review

If you aren't satisfied with the Stage 2 response, you have 20 working days to take the complaint to Stage 3. We will again acknowledge this within three working days and fully respond within 20 working days. A member of the executive team who has not been involved in the complaint previously will review the initial complaint and the subsequent responses.

If they determine that the previous response was appropriate and correct, a shorter response will be sent confirming the key points. If they determine that the Stage 1 or 2 responses were incorrect or missing elements, they will acknowledge that and make it right.

This is the final stage of the CiN complaints process.

We may refer you to an external body you can contact if you are still not satisfied.

- The Fundraising Regulator if you are unhappy about the way you have been asked for donations or how fundraisers have behaved

- The Advertising Standards Authority if you are unhappy about a CiN advertising campaign you think is offensive, deceptive or inaccurate or about the amount of emails or mail you get from CiN
- The Phone-paid Services Authority if it relates to a donation charged to a phone bill
- The Charity Commission if you are in England and Wales and are concerned CiN is:
 - not doing what it claims to do
 - losing lots of money
 - harming people
 - being used for personal profit or gain or
 - involved in illegal activity
- The OSCR if you are in Scotland and have a concern about CiN
- The Charity Commission in Northern Ireland if you are in Northern Ireland and have a concern about CiN
- The ICO if it relates to a data protection issue

Please note that 1st October to 4th January is our busiest period due to our annual fundraising appeal. During that period we may take up to ten working days to acknowledge appeal-related complaints, but you will still receive a full response within 20 working days.

External reporting

We report on our complaints in our own Annual Report and our annual report to the Fundraising Regulator.