

## **How to set up a complaints and response mechanism**

Feedback can be positive or negative: complaints mean that things may have gone wrong. Receiving complaints and responding to them is central to accountability, impact, and learning.

### **I. Information**

Tell people how to complain and that it is their right to do so.

- Use staff and notice boards to give information about complaints processes.
- Be clear about the types of complaint you can and can't deal with.
- Know your agency's procedures on abuse or exploitation of beneficiaries.
- Explain details of the appeals process.

### **II. Accessibility**

Make access to the complaints process as easy and safe as possible. Consider:

- How will IDPs in remote locations be able to make complaints?
- Can complaints be received verbally or only in writing?
- Is it possible to file a complaint on behalf of somebody else (owing to their illiteracy, fears for their personal safety, inability to travel, etc.)?

### **III. Procedures**

Describe how complaints will be handled.

- Develop a standard complaints form.
- Give the complainant a receipt, preferably a copy of their signed form.
- Enable an investigation to be tracked and keep statistics on complaints and responses.
- Keep complaint files confidential. Ensure discussion about the complaint cannot be traced back to the individual complainant.
- Know your agency's procedures for dealing with complaints against staff.

### **IV. Response**

Give beneficiaries a response to their complaint.

- Make sure each complainant receives a response and appropriate action.
- Be consistent: ensure similar complaints receive a similar response.
- Maintain oversight of complaints processes and have an appeals process.

### **V. Learning**

Learning from complaints and mistakes.

- Collect statistics and track any trends.
- Feed learning into decision-making and project activities.