

# **ACT Complaints Policy 2021**

**Presented by:**

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ACT Alliance

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ACT Alliance as a membership-based organisation is committed to provide high-quality humanitarian, development & advocacy programmes and to working in an open and accountable way

Our commitments are clearly stated in ACT Code of Conduct as well as Code of Good Practice, part of ACT Q&A Framework

Occasions when ACT secretariat or ACT members do not meet the reasonable expectations, ACT stakeholders have a right to raise a concern, give feedback and lodge a complaint

ACT Alliance Complaints Policy is managed by the ACT secretariat with purpose to:

- Recognise, promote and protect ACT stakeholders rights, including the right to raise a concern and/or complain
- Set out roles, responsibilities and timeframes on handling of complaints
- Ensure a consistent mechanism
- Provide a confidential, safe, efficient and transparent mechanism
- Ensure learning
- Increase stakeholders satisfaction

Previously updated in Oct 2016, a revision was required to reflect ACT's strategy and policies that come into effect since:

- Global Strategy 2019-2026;
- Endorsement of Misconduct Disclosure Scheme;
- CHS investigation guidelines to support investigations.

And in addition to:

- Clarify types of complaints addressed by the policy etc.
- To support members in awareness raising through e-Learnings.
- Meet expectations from members with regards to setting up their own complaints systems.

- Led by Reference Group on Quality & Accountability.
- Supported by a consultant provided by ACT CoS.
- Other related ACT policies/commitments reviewed.
- Consultations held with:
  - Q&A Reference Group Members;
  - Child Safeguarding Communities of Practice/Focal Points;
  - Humanitarian Team/Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response (EHR) Reference Group;
  - Complaints Handling Committee (current & former).

## The following main changes have been made:

- 1.1 Added information on ACT Alliance endorsement of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.
- 1.2 Added CHS investigation guidelines to support investigations applying principles and format.
- 1.3 Changed 'Obligation to disclose' to 'Obligation to report' to avoid an obligation for victims (disclosing an abuse is different from reporting an abuse).
- 1.4 Added a section on malicious complaints to underline the potential of intentional harm to undermine CSO leadership and the needed diligence in dealing with such issues.
- 1.5
  - Added section on supporting members in awareness-raising efforts (through e-learnings, etc.).
  - Clarify responsibilities in complaints handling within the secretariat and members.
  - Ensure training of relevant key players and obligation to keep updated with recent developments within the sector.
- 1.6 Changed to be clearer on expectations from members in terms of setting up their own complaints systems including consultations with communities.

- 1.7
  - Adapted title to new name of Complaints Handling Committee (former CHAG).
  - Added that CHC is subgroup of the Q&A Reference group and also follows this ToR.
  - Adapted to reflect a higher involvement of the General Secretary in the CHC, as well as clear responsibilities in case of absence of the Focal Point (confidentiality).
- 2. Took out part of introduction as this relates to practical handling and is moved to this section (Scope of the policy). Added obligation to establish a CRM when receiving ACT funds.
- 2.1 Clarified the different types of complaints addressed by the policy and clarified which information is provided to whom after reception of a complaint.
- 2.3 Reworded section on anonymous complaints to underline importance of receiving such complaints while also including awareness on potential manipulation.
- 2.4 Added the Subject of Complaint's (SoC's) right to information on the facts when interviewed.
- Added additional information on secure data transmission and data protection.

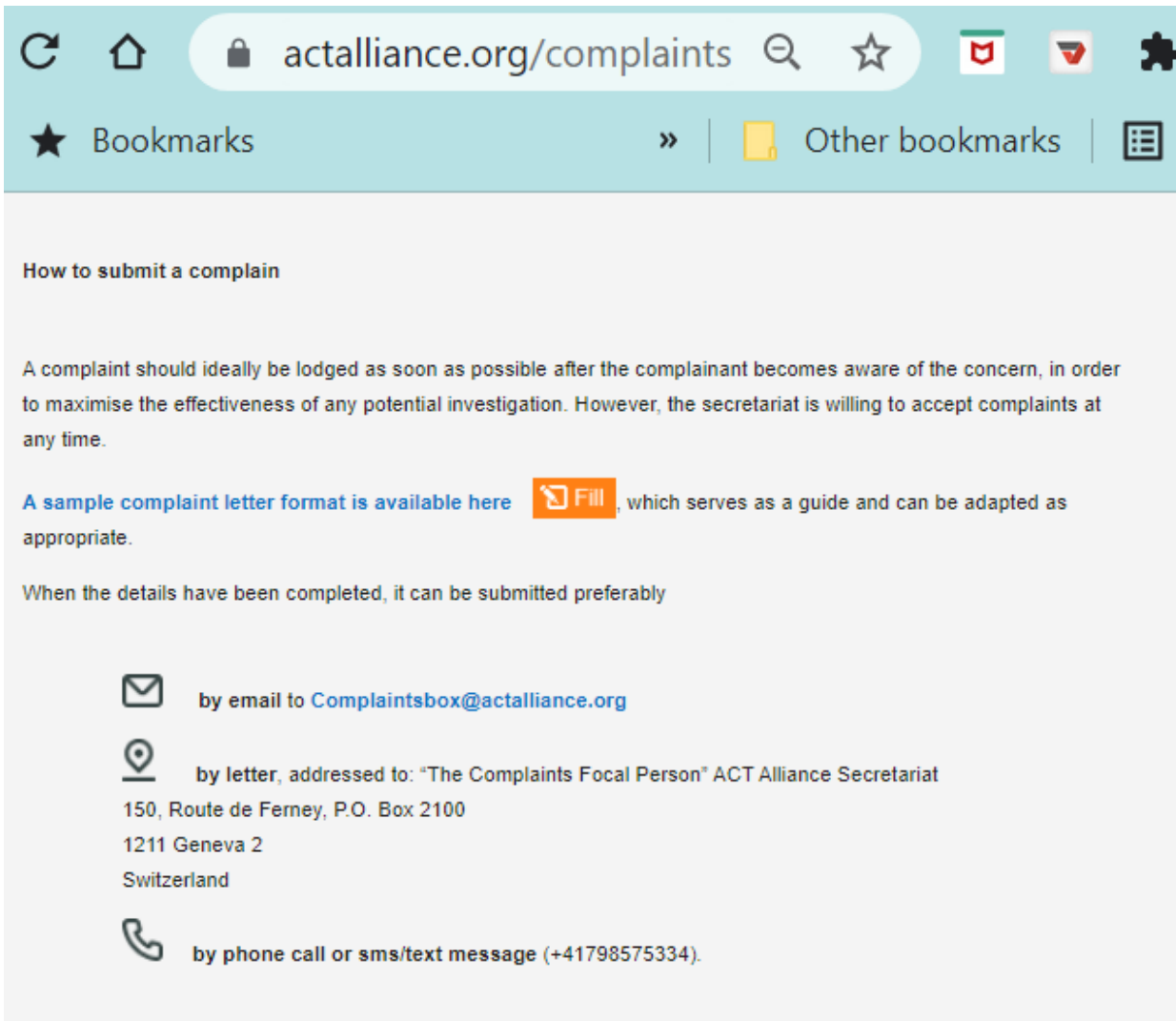
- 3.3 Added French and Spanish in addition to English as preferred languages.
- 4.2 Added the obligation for investigations to be survivor centered.
- 4.3
  - Added encouragement to adhere to the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme for members.
  - Added on feedback to the victims of sexual violence in case the allegation cannot be substantiated.
- 4.4 Moved information on disciplinary actions from other sections to have a more consistent approach.
- 5.2 Added that minor policy changes can be approved by the CHC (in line with good practice within the sector).
- Annex 1 Included a definition of the obligation to report.

Overall: Decided to continue to use the term 'Subject of Complaint' rather than 'Subject of Concern' as is now often done by UK-based organisations. The rationale being that the latter terminology can lead to confusion as many organisations also speak about populations or people of concern when they speak about beneficiaries



# Top things you need to know about ACT complaints mechanism!

1. It is easy to send a concern, feedback or complaint to the secretariat.  
Email: [complaintsbox@actalliance.org](mailto:complaintsbox@actalliance.org) | Message/Call: +41798575334 | Letter addressed to “The Complaint Focal Person” (See webpage <https://actalliance.org/complaints> )
2. Don't worry; we are trained on how to handle complaints, particularly the sensitive ones, with the utmost care and confidentiality.
3. We want to know about any violations in the code of conduct, breaches of any ACT policy or even a concern about the quality of work you may have.
4. You will hear back from us within 03 working days of our receipt of your concern.
5. Did you know that all employees of ACT members and the secretariat are required to report allegations, concerns or suspicions of breaches related to abuse, exploitation and fraud and corruption?
7. We aim for all ACT members to have their own functioning, safe & accessible complaints mechanism for staff and communities.
8. Ensure your communities know how to raise a concern or complaint; the ACT complaints mechanism is also meant for them – help them access us if the need arises!
9. Attempt the E-Course on Complaints Mechanism available at [fabo.org/act](http://fabo.org/act)




The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [actalliance.org/complaints](https://actalliance.org/complaints). The browser interface includes a home button, a search icon, and a star icon. Below the address bar, there is a bookmarks bar with a star icon and the text "Bookmarks", followed by a right-pointing arrow, a yellow folder icon, and the text "Other bookmarks".




The main content area of the browser shows the following text:

**How to submit a complain**

A complaint should ideally be lodged as soon as possible after the complainant becomes aware of the concern, in order to maximise the effectiveness of any potential investigation. However, the secretariat is willing to accept complaints at any time.

A [sample complaint letter format is available here](#) , which serves as a guide and can be adapted as appropriate.

When the details have been completed, it can be submitted preferably

-  **by email to** [Complaintsbox@actalliance.org](mailto:Complaintsbox@actalliance.org)
-  **by letter**, addressed to: "The Complaints Focal Person" ACT Alliance Secretariat  
150, Route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100  
1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland
-  **by phone call or sms/text message** (+41798575334).

**Thank you!**