

# Procedures for making a complaint about Oxfam Shops and Trading Activities

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## 1. How does Oxfam receive and record complaints?

The procedure for handling complaints about Oxfam Shops is facilitated by the Shop Support Team. There are several ways in which a complaint can be registered:

- **Letter:** Complaints can be sent in writing to the Shop Support Team, at the following address: Shop Support, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2JY
- **Phone:** Contact the Shop Support Team on 0300 200 1333 during office hours from 9.00am – 5.00pm Mon to Fri
- **Email:** support@oxfam.org.uk

Upon receipt of any complaint Shop Support Team will record the following information:

- contact details of the complainant
- the date the complaint was received
- a copy of the letter and/or any documentation received
- brief notes about any specific issues complained about
- any action requested
- any immediate action to be taken

Oxfam records this information to help to ensure complaints are responded to promptly and that relevant information is captured to assist with business improvement. In addition, this enables Oxfam to:

- monitor the progress of a complaint
- provide evidence that the complaint was considered and of the outcome
- identify trends or recurring themes in complaints cases
- compile reports on complaints

It is possible to track the complaint through this practice, and for updates to be provided on request, or at pre-determined times.

## 2. How are complaints acknowledged?

Within 14 days of receiving a complaint, a complainant will be given either:

- i) a final response which adequately addresses the complaint, or
- ii) a response which explains why we are still not in a position to make a final response, giving reasons for the further delay and indicating when we expect to be able to provide a final response

Complainants may be asked to specify a preferred means of communication, through which they will receive any future correspondence

## 3. Who will acknowledge a complaint?

Shop Support assigns complaints according to the criteria set out in the table on the following page. This is to ensure the most relevant person responsible for the complaint is given the opportunity to respond. The person who is assigned to dealing with the complaint will ensure that a timeframe for a response is communicated to the complainant.

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<b>Content of complaint</b>	<b>Assigned to the relevant:</b>
Complaints that pertain to general practice of all/most Oxfam's shops, for example a nationally promoted initiative or activity	Manager accountable for the activity
Complaints about retail standards within a specific shop, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Customer service</li><li>- Refunds</li><li>- Products – pricing, selection or merchandising</li></ul>	Shop Manager
Complaints relating to a shop manager, or about a specific regional area, or complaints which a shop manager is unable to resolve. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Location of shops</li><li>- Shop closures</li><li>- Complaints about the whole shop team (where the shop manager is included)</li></ul>	Area Manager
Complaints of malpractice within a shop	Will be managed within the terms of Oxfam's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace Policy
Complaint or people-related issue from a volunteer	Will be referred to the HR (Human Resources) Advisor and managed within the terms of Oxfam's Resolving Differences policy
Complaint or people-related issue from a member of staff	Will be referred to the HR Advisor and managed within the terms of the relevant Oxfam HR policy

### 4. How are complaints investigated?

The person assigned to the complaint will investigate, or arrange for another appropriate person to investigate the complaint. An investigation will usually involve speaking with the people involved in the complaint to try to establish the facts in order to:

- understand the cause of the complaint raised
- define any changes or solutions that need to be made as a result of the complaint

Oxfam may need to contact a complainant during this time and cooperation during this time is important in order to complete the investigation in a timely manner.

### 5. Resolving complaints and providing feedback

Once the investigation and recommendations have been concluded, complainants will be contacted by the assigned person (or the Shop Support Team), who will share, where appropriate and not confidential, the findings of the investigation and any actions that have been taken or have been planned as a result of the complaint.

### 6. Closing the complaint

Once a complaint has been responded to the complaint will be regarded as closed.

### 7. Appeal and escalation process

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint they request it to be escalated\* to the next level manager and, after this, in some cases\*, request an internal review (an appeal):

- The appeal should be made in writing within 14 days of receiving the complaint response
- Appeal letters should be sent to Shop Support, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Oxford, OX4 2JY
- The appeal should set out briefly:
  - the nature of the appeal,
  - the steps already taken and details of the response received and a statement as to why you remain dissatisfied

Upon receipt of your Appeal, the following process will take place:

- Someone will be selected to conduct the appeal (they will be more senior than the person who conducted the first investigation)
- The internal reviewer will receive all of the complaint and investigation material, and any representations from the complainant on why the initial decision was incorrect.
- The reviewer will conduct further investigations if they consider that the initial investigation was insufficient
- The complainant will be sent a further acknowledgement letter giving:
  - the contact details of the reviewer
  - timeframes for the appeal
- Once the internal review is complete, the complainant will be informed what the decision is and what the external appeal options are (there is no further recourse within Oxfam)

*\*Not all complaints are subject to a right of Appeal or escalation. Where complaints consist of disagreements with nation-wide policy and procedures we will explain the rationale for that policy or procedure and look into any local factors to help explain our position. We will also record details for monitoring and feedback purposes and ensure it is reported to the appropriate senior management. However, these complaints would not be applicable for Appeal. In this scenario, if the complainant remains unhappy with the initial response the final escalation will be handled by Oxfam Trading Division's Customer & Shop Support Team Manager or another senior manager as appropriate.*

### 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of our drive for continuous improvement, Oxfam reviews complaint management regularly to identify trends in complaints and areas of service needing improvement:

- We record relevant complaints centrally to enable effective monitoring and evaluation
- Written records of the outcome of complaints and appeals will be retained as appropriate, in order to provide a report on the handling of such matters and any common themes arising
- Where this is the case, these will be implemented in order to improve the service and may be shared across service areas where there is benefit in doing so.
- The implementation of lessons learnt will be monitored to ensure that opportunities for improvement are not missed.
- It is important to ensure data protection requirements are adhered to and therefore care will be taken to ensure sensitive details are not recorded

### 9. Privacy

Throughout the complaints process we will respect the privacy of the complainant and details will only be shared with those dealing directly with the complaint. We will not share an individual's personal details with other organisations.