

YWCA Malawi Feedback and Complaints Policy

This policy outlines how YWCA Malawi handles feedback and complaints about the work of YWCA Malawi, its staff or other affiliated persons. If you have feedback or complaints about the work of YWCA Malawi, please see the ***World YWCA Statement on Complaints against World YWCA Member Associations***. If there are any concerns relating to the actions of the YWCA Malawi or its staff, volunteers, Board or governance bodies members, YWCA Malawi offers a mechanism to address these concerns. This document outlines what can be expected from YWCA Malawi office and YWCA Malawi board when we receive complaints, and the process and timelines for responding to the complainant.

1. Purpose

To strengthen accountability, YWCA Malawi is committed to a mutually respectful, open, collaborative and transparent communication with and feedback from its internal and external stakeholders and general public; in line with the YWCA Malawi values, policies, the Standards of Good Management and Accountability and codes of conduct.

Although this policy does not go into detail on receiving neutral or positive feedback, YWCA Malawi welcomes all kinds of feedback and encourages people to submit this to YWCA Malawi via feedback@ywcam.org.

2. Handling complaints

YWCA Malawi will uphold the following principles when handling complaints:

Confidentiality: We are committed to protecting the privacy and safety of those who submit feedback to YWCA Malawi, as well as anyone else named or otherwise involved in the issue. All information received will be treated in confidence, and will not be shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the processing of the complaint. If YWCA Malawi needs to share the complaint received with the YWCA Malawi Board, all identifying information relating to the complainant will be removed, including names, contact information, and information about the complainant's position – unless the complainant requests otherwise.

Objectivity: Complaints are addressed in an impartial and objective manner. Any potential conflicts of interest on the part of the Office or Board will be declared, and the person with a conflict of interest will be excused from the complaint review and response process.

Timeliness: Complaints that fall within the scope of this policy, as defined above, will be processed in accordance with the timeframes outlined below in Section 7, Process. Any delays to the process will be communicated to the parties involved as soon as possible, with an estimated new timeline.

Learning-oriented approach: It is YWCA Malawi's aim that all complaints received lead to learning and improvement. As such, YWCA Malawi will work to address any weaknesses or deficiencies that may be brought to light by the complaints received and aim to communicate transparently about learnings and progress.



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3. Key terms and concepts

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this policy:

Feedback: Any positive or negative statement of opinion/comments, or more formal complaints, from a stakeholder about our mission and values, strategies, policies, objectives, decisions, activities, governance, performance, use of resources, or behavior of YWCA Malawi staff, volunteers, Board or global governance bodies members. YWCA Malawi distinguishes two types of external feedback: a **comment**; and a **complaint**.

Comment (or general feedback): An expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, or a suggestion for improvement. It may be expressed formally or informally, and may or may not require a response.

Complaint: A more formal claim that YWCA Malawi has failed to meet a YWCA Malawi value or commitment. A complaint may be a written or verbal statement against YWCA Malawi expressing dissatisfaction with YWCA Malawi work and/or policies, and a response and/or resolution is expected.

Serious/sensitive complaint: These are complaints relating to gross misconduct, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption, or other illegal actions.

YWCA Malawi Office: The YWCA Office, in consultation with the YWCA Board, develops YWCA Malawi's strategy, implements work plans and programmes, and support and coordinates local chapters at district level.

YWCA Malawi Board: The YWCA Board is the main decision body for YWCA Malawi, making all decisions regarding policies, membership and overseeing the work of the Executive Director and YWCA Office.

4. Scope

Complaints addressed by this policy

This policy applies to the work carried out by YWCA Malawi, its staff, interns, consultants, volunteers, Board, and local chapter members and may relate to:

- YWCA Malawi's compliance with the Standards of Good Management and Accountability, and World YWCA policies, particularly the codes of conduct;
- YWCA Malawi's compliance with the 12 Accountability Commitments of Accountable Now;
- The functioning of this feedback and complaints mechanism. *Complaints not addressed by this policy*

YWCA Malawi is not able to accept or look into:

- Issues that are, or could be, the subject of legal proceedings (e.g. relating to contractual matters or criminal activities). These should be dealt with under the appropriate legal jurisdiction;
- Complaints on YWCA Malawi's advocacy work because it does not align with the complainants' personal beliefs;
- Abusive or offensive;
- Repeatedly stated in a manner not conducive to resolution.

5. Who may submit a complaint?

Any person or entity may submit a complaint, as long as it is in line with the points laid out in Section 4, Scope.

Investigating a complaint uses YWCA Malawi's limited resources, so we expect the person who is making the complaint to:

- Provide as much information as possible;
- Be willing to be contacted and engage in the resolution process, if warranted;
- Understand that making a complaint triggers a formal process which require resources.

Feedback provided by or concerning a person under 18 will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Complaints may be submitted anonymously. This may limit the extent to which we are able to respond to the complainant, particularly if contact details are not provided. However, YWCA Malawi will make sure in all cases to take the information we receive into consideration and follow up internally as far as possible, and use it as an opportunity to learn.

6. Who will be involved in reviewing the complaints we receive?

All complaints submitted will be received and reviewed by YWCA Malawi's Complaints Focal Points (Executive Director, a staff member and a Board member), who are responsible for logging feedback and ensuring complaints are investigated. Where there are potential conflicts of interest within the YWCA Malawi Office staff or Board member appointed as Complaints Focal Points, an alternative member of staff or Board will be appointed to deal with the matter.

Quarterly or more often, as warranted, the YWCA Malawi Office will share information with the Board Chairperson on complaints received and actions taken to address them.

A summary of the complaint – without any information that could disclose the complainant's identity – may also be shared with other YWCA Malawi staff and Board members for learning purposes.

7. Process for submitting feedback and complaints about YWCA Malawi

Submitting a feedback or complaint

Feedback may be submitted by visiting the YWCA Malawi dedicated feedback page:
<https://www.ywcam.org/feedback/>

You can also contact YWCA Malawi by mail, phone, or email:

Complaints Focal Points, YWCA Malawi, Ginnery Corner, Behind Kabula Pharmacy, Post Office Box 2447, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi.

Telephone: +265 1 872 767

Email: feedback@ywcam.org

Submissions to the above postal address, telephone and email are received by the staff Complaints Focal Point.



If the feedback or complaint relates to YWCA Malawi Office activities or personnel, it should be addressed directly by YWCA Malawi's Executive Director, Board member and staff Complaints Focal Points.

If there is a serious complaint to make in regards to YWCA Malawi Executive Director, it should be addressed directly by the Board Chairperson, Board member and staff Complaints Focal Points.

If the complaint relates to the YWCA Board, it should be addressed directly by the Board Chairperson. If the complaint relates to the YWCA Board Chairperson, it should be addressed directly by the Complaints Focal Points.

When submitting a complaint, please provide the following information:

1. An explanation of the issue. If your concern relates to a specific YWCA Malawi Standards of Good Management or Accountability Commitments, YWCA Malawi policy, or mechanism, please mention which one.
2. If your complaint relates to a specific member of staff, the Board, Trustees, and local chapter members, or other person affiliated with YWCA Malawi, it would be helpful for you to specify the person concerned; however, this is not mandatory.
3. Any steps you may have already taken in this regard, including previous correspondence with YWCA Malawi or any affiliated persons on this matter.
4. Whether you would like us to disclose your identity to those directly involved/mentioned in your concern when we are looking into the matter. If you do not specify, we will by default keep your identity confidential.

How we will process complaints

Recording the complaint: The complaint, once received, will be recorded by the YWCA Malawi staff Complaints Focal Point in a secure password protected online folder. All communication and documents relating to the issue will be saved in the folder.

Acknowledgement of receipt: YWCA Malawi will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 business days, explaining YWCA Malawi's mandate, next steps, and scope/limits of actions. This information will be communicated to the complainant via email, as far as this is possible.

Investigation and response: YWCA Malawi Complaints Focal Points will investigate the complaint to assess whether it is well-founded, speak to any staff or other affiliated persons involved in the issue, and agree on a plan to respond to the issue.

During this period, YWCA Malawi Complaints Focal Points may reach out to the complainant (if contact information was provided) to request further information or clarification.

Following up with the complainant: YWCA Malawi Complaints Focal Points will share in writing with the complainant the outcome of the investigation of the complaint, including any actions planned to take in response, within a month after receiving the complaint.

Appeals: YWCA Malawi takes seriously the proper and fair functioning of the YWCA Malawi complaints handling process, and will look into any issues raised in this regard. Appeals will not necessarily result in a



different decision, but if the complainant believes the complaint has not been handled fairly, they may present an appeal requesting an internal review of the process. The request for appeal should be submitted in writing. YWCA Malawi will acknowledge the appeal within 10 business days of its receipt and will handle the appeal and inform all parties of its resolution with the utmost brevity. In order to guarantee objectivity in the appeals process, a member of staff and/or Board other than that which were initially assigned as Complaints Focal Points will be responsible for the review process.

External transparency, learnings and improvements

All complaints and feedback will be logged from their receipt to their resolutions. YWCA Malawi will use this register to periodically monitor the type of complaints received, the measures taken to resolve them and their outcomes, and any proposals for improvement. This information will be shared with the YWCA Malawi Board on a quarterly basis and with the World YWCA Board through the annual internal report to the movement. The report will be used to analyze and improve the procedures and practices, and will be presented for review by the YWCA Board. YWCA Malawi will not include specific information about individual complaints to ensure confidentiality for all parties involved.

If you have used the YWCA Malawi feedback mechanism and you believe that it is not functioning, you are welcome to bring this to the attention of the World YWCA Board, as having a functioning feedback and complaints mechanism is a key requirement for Accountable Now members.

8. Review of this policy

This policy was last reviewed and approved by the YWCA Malawi Board in November 2023. The policy will be periodically reviewed to assess whether it is still effective and fit for purpose. Updates may be made as frequently as needed, subject to approval by the YWCA Malawi Board.