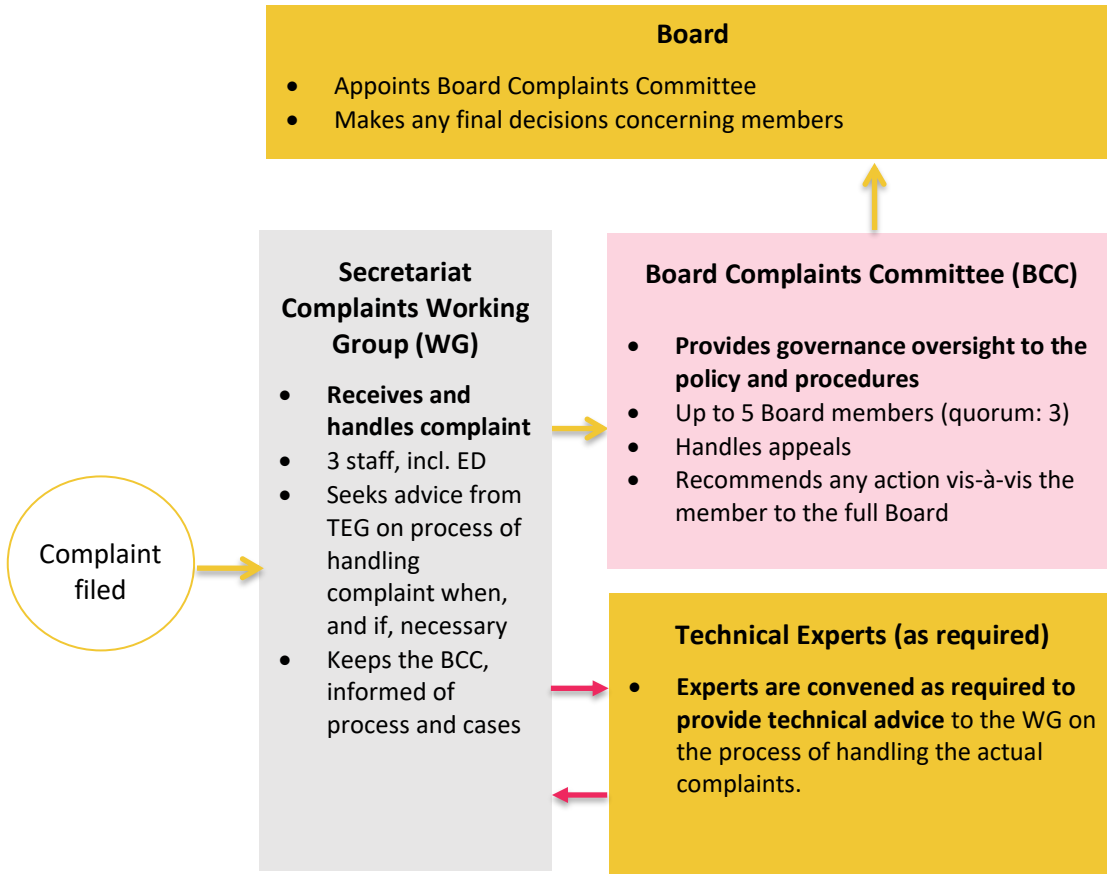


# Procedures for the CHS Alliance Complaints Policy

June 2021

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## 1) Roles and Responsibilities



The entities involved in the complaint handling are described below:

### i) CHSA Secretariat Complaints Working Group

**Who:**

- A group of three (3) staff, including the Executive Director, will handle the complaints received.
- When you raise a complaint or write to [complaints@chsalliance.org](mailto:complaints@chsalliance.org), these three staff have access to your complaint.
- The staff members in this Working Group will be listed on the CHS Alliance Website.

**Responsibilities**

- Receives, handles, tracks, and works with the complainant and implicated member organisation to address the complaint.

- Maintains the confidential tracking database (data only available to the three members of the Working Group).
- Maintains regular communication with the complainant and implicated member organisation.
- Where required (depending on the level of complexity with the case), the Working Group will seek the advice of a select group of TEG members on the *process* of handling the complaint. This is at the Working Group's discretion while ensuring strict confidentiality regarding identifiable information, unless permission is explicitly obtained.
- Seeks the expertise of external experts to pursue investigations or follow-up on complaints if and when necessary. In cases where an investigation is deemed to be necessary by the Working Group, an independent investigation may be undertaken or commissioned.
- Provides updates on the overall process of handling of complaints (with anonymised data) to the TEG and the Board Complaints Committee twice a year.

### **Data Protection**

This Working Group receive all information about the complaint. The staff members will not divulge any personal details from any of the complaints outside of the group, without explicit consent, or unless there is a well justified reason for doing so. All details are kept on a confidential database and anonymised once the complaint is finalised.

**Meets:** Working Group will meet whenever a new complaint comes in and as often as needed. Requires a quorum of 2.

## **ii) Board Complaints Committee**

**Purpose:** Receives updates on the **overall process** of addressing complaints from the Secretariat WG.

### **Responsibilities**

- Provides overall oversight for the implementation of the complaints policy/procedures.
- Receives updates on the overall process about complaints from the *Secretariat Working Group* in terms of numbers, types of complaints, and status of follow-up.
- Acts as the Appeals Body for any complainants or member organisations that find that the process by which an outcome was achieved did not satisfactorily follow the CHS Alliance Complaints Policy and its complementary procedures.
- Based on the outcome of complaints and/or appeals, makes a recommendation to the *Board* for any follow up with members, including possible removal from the membership, drawing on the advice of the *Secretariat Complaints WG* and *TEG*
- Meets once a year to ensure oversight of the overall complaints policy/procedures and can be called for ad hoc meetings at the request of the Secretariat Working Group.

### **Data Protection**

- All members of the BCC sign a CHS Alliance confidentiality agreement.
- All identifiable information received by the BCC is anonymised, unless explicit consent is provided by the complainants.

**Meets** - At a minimum once a year, otherwise meetings are on ad hoc basis as requested by the Secretariat. *Quorum for meeting is 3 BCC members*

**Terms** of 3 years, and a limit of two terms. If a member leaves, the Board appoints their replacement.

Please also note the role of the CHS Alliance Governing Board, which is to

- Appoint Board Complaints Sub-Committee.
- Take decisions vis-à-vis members based on the recommendations of the Board *Complaints Committee* (which makes its recommendation based on the advice of the *Secretariat Complaints WG*)

### iii) Technical Experts

**Purpose:** if and where needed the CHS Alliance WG will enlist the support of experts to assist in the complaint. The complainant will be informed of this.

#### Data Protection

- Any expert handling the complaint will sign a CHS Alliance confidentiality agreement.
- All identifiable information received by the expert will be anonymised, unless explicit consent is provided by the complainant.
- Information received in relation to a complaint relating to an identified or identifiable person will be retained for a period of sixty calendar days, after the closure of the complaint, including any appeal process, and then deleted, and / or paper versions destroyed.

## 2) Steps of how Complaints are Received, Handled, Decided, as well as Appeals

The following are the steps of how a complaint will be handled (*NB: Days indicated below are working days*):

- 1) **Day 0: A Complaint is Filed:** The complainant files the complaint on their own or with the help of the CHS Alliance Secretariat using a standardised form [*See elements above*].
- 2) **Working Days 1-3: The Complaint is Recorded:** The Secretariat Complaints WG (“WG”) records the complaint in its confidential database for tracking purposes [*NB: if an online form is used, it could be automatically uploaded to the database*].
- 3) **Working Days 1-3: The Complaint is Acknowledged:** The WG will acknowledge receipt of the complaint (once the complaint is recorded) in writing or via the complainant’s preferred means of communication, with a written log kept in the database for tracking purposes.
  - The complainant will be informed that the WG will review the information provided and revert with any further questions and/or suggest a way forward within 10 working days.
- 4) **Working Days 2-13: The Secretariat Complaints Working Group Convenes:** Receives the complaint and convenes to review the complaint and decide on one of the following ways forward:
  - A) **More information needed:** To request further information/details from the complainant:
    - Information is requested from the complainant and once that information is received, the WG reconvenes to decide a way forward.
      - A deadline of three months will be indicated for receiving the requested information or the complaint will be closed.
  - B) **Outside the scope of the policy:** To decide the complaint is not within its remit and to communicate that to the complainant:
    - The complainant is informed that the complaint falls outside the scope of the policy with a clear explanation, leaving space for further questions/information from the complainant.
      - If possible, an alternative way forward is suggested to the complainant.
  - C) **Agree a way forward:** To agree on a way forward vis-à-vis the member organisation and/or complainant and communicate that to the complainant and/or organisation:

- Inform the complainant and/or organisation about the proposed way forward to address the complaint and agree next steps with the organisation, including with proposed time frames that are agreed in consultation with both the complainant and/or the organisation.
- D) **Seek advice:** To agree to seek advice from the Technical Experts if required:
- The WG seeks the advice of the TE on questions related to the process around responding to the complaint.
    - Once the advice is received, the WG reconvenes to decide the way forward.
- 5) **Complaints Process Appeal:** If the complainant or member organisation found that the process followed by those involved in this process did not satisfactorily follow the CHS Alliance Complaints Policy and its complementary procedures, an appeal can be made within 30 days of the outcome. This should be addressed to the Chair of the Board Complaints Committee. It is at their discretion to decide on the process to be followed and they commit to taking a final decision within three months.
- 6) **Decisions around Member Organisation:** If there are decisions to be taken concerning sanctions around a CHS Alliance member organization, these are taken by the Board within two months of the final outcome of the complaint or appeal, based on the advice of the Board *Complaints Committee* (which draws on the advice of the WG and TEG).

### 3) Flowchart

