# EMBRACE THE MIDDLE EAST: COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK POLICY

Introduction

Embrace the Middle East (Embrace) believes that those who support our Christian partners' work have the right to hold us to account. This involves giving supporters the power to hold Embrace to account in ways that shape the organisation's policies, priorities, and actions.

This policy aims to ensure that effective feedback and complaint response processes are established and continually improved across all aspects of Embrace's work.

It is also your right to make a data protection complaint if you are concerned about the way your personal information has been handled. Where complaint processes differ between fundraising and data protection, it will be made clear in the policy.

Definitions

- Complainant - the person making a complaint or giving feedback.
- Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by Embrace or its staff. It is a criticism that expects a reply and a desire for an outcome for things to improve.
- Data complaint - a formal expression of concern or dissatisfaction from an individual (or organisation) about how their personal data has been collected, used, stored, shared, or kept secure by Embrace.
- Feedback - any expression of an individual's views or opinions regarding Embrace's work, which may be positive (a compliment), neutral (a suggestion for improvement), or negative (a complaint).

## Scope of Policy

This policy covers feedback from people regarding Embrace's grant-making, fundraising, communications, trading activities and handling of data. We also welcome feedback, whether positive or negative on our staff and volunteers.

This policy does not cover feedback/complaints from suppliers, contractors, staff or volunteers. Concerns from Embrace staff and volunteers are dealt with under separate internal policies. It also does not cover feedback/complaints about an organisation which is not an Embrace partner, unless there is a safeguarding concern. Safeguarding breaches by an external organisation/community member will be referred to our Safeguarding Focal Point and resolved according to local guidelines. General requests for information are also not covered by this policy.

## Why feedback is important

Embrace the Middle East is committed to providing a high-quality service to our supporters, however we recognise that there may be times when our grant-making, fundraising, communications or trading activities do not meet our high standards and a supporter becomes unhappy. When this happens, it is important that we know so that we can effectively deal with the situation, try to prevent it from happening again and learn from any mistakes.

## How to provide feedback

We encourage our supporters to email, call, or write to us with their feedback or complaint and our staff will be pleased to help resolve the issue promptly. Our contact details are outlined below:

**Email**: info@embraceme.org

**Website:** https://embraceme.org/contact-us

**Call:** 01494 897950

Write to:

Embrace the Middle East
Old Library Building
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
HP11 1BG

How Embrace responds to complaints

**We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days.** We aim to respond fully to all complaints within 10 working days and wherever possible we will get back to you faster.

In more complex situations, where an immediate response is not possible, we will investigate the matter and get back to you as soon as possible. If we think it will take longer than 10 days, we will let you know.

For Data Protection specific complaints

Embrace will acknowledge receipt of a data protection complaint **within 30 calendar days** of receiving it. In this acknowledgement we will confirm that the complaint has been received and outline the next steps in the process. We will also provide a point of contact for any further queries.

While the data complaint is ongoing, Embrace will provide updates keeping you informed of progress to let you know if there are delays or if further investigation is required. We will also respond to reasonable requests for information from the complainant about the status. Embrace will communicate the outcome of the complaint as soon as we are able, once the investigation has been completed.

When dealing with all Complaints, we promise to:

- Take your feedback seriously and treat you with respect
- Do all we can to address your concerns and fix any mistakes
- Keep you informed about progress and provide a prompt response

- Provide an explanation or apology where we have got things wrong
- Learn from any mistakes and work to ensure we improve in future. This can include updating policies, procedures, and training.
- Tell you who to contact if you wish to escalate your complaint further

While we take all feedback and complaints seriously, there are occasions where we may choose not to respond to complaints. They include:

- If a complaint is not linked to the work of Embrace the Middle East. We may reply to clarify but are not obliged to.
- If a complainant is overtly abusive, offensive or prejudiced. This includes the harassment of a staff member.
- If someone unreasonably pursues a complaint we have already responded to.
- If a complaint is anonymous. Embrace cannot respond to these, however we will investigate so that if there are any improvements to be made, they can be actioned.

Escalating your complaint

We hope to resolve all complaints to our supporters' satisfaction. However, if you would like a further response, you may escalate your complaint internally within Embrace. Please do this within two weeks of receiving Embrace's response. Your complaint will then be referred to the appropriate Head of Department or Director.

A review and further response will be sent to you within 20 working days.

Escalating your complaint externally

If a complainant remains unsatisfied by the response from Embrace their complaint can be escalated to the external body best placed to respond.

## Fundraising Complaints

If your complaint is concerned with fundraising and you feel it has not been resolved by Embrace, then the Fundraising Regulator can investigate.

Contact can be made via their online complaints form or by calling: 0300 999 3407. You can also write to the Fundraising Regulator at:

Fundraising Regulator, 50 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8RT

### Data Protection Complaints

For a data protection complaint, you can escalate the complaint at any time in the process to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) using their online form or by calling 0303 123 1113 for assistance.

### Charitable Work Complaints

For complaints that fall outside the above parameters you can contact the Charity Commission. You can check if your complaint meets their reporting criteria here.

### Complaint record-keeping

All complaints (data protection & fundraising) are kept on secure systems where the nature, actions and outcomes of the complaint are logged. This includes relevant correspondence from the complainant.

The data is kept in accordance with Embrace's Data Retention Policy as per our data protections obligations.