



WHISTLEBLOWING GUIDELINE

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Caritas Germany has a high reputation among beneficiaries, partners, authorities, and donors for its professional work and integrity. Like all organizations, however, Caritas Germany faces the risk of activities going wrong, or of harboring malpractice. Caritas Germany is committed to preventing such malpractice, especially in the forms of fraud, corruption, and the abuse of power.

Caritas Germany encourages its staff, partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to report non-compliance with Caritas Germany's Code of Conduct, and especially any perceived instances of malpractice. This Whistleblowing Guideline has been issued to provide guidance on how to do so.

This policy covers all part or full time staff working for Caritas Germany as well as volunteers or consultants, independent of their contractual relationship (employees of the German Caritas Association, temporary consultants / special staff of AGEH, freelancers or volunteers). For the purpose of this document they are all referred to as "staff". Staff of local project partners can also raise their concerns in reference to this policy in case of need. It also covers partners, business partners such as suppliers, service providers etc., other stakeholders like donors, local authorities, or beneficiaries, as well as the general public.

2. DEFINITION

"*Malpractice*" for the purposes of this policy may include but is not limited to: fraud, corruption, criminal offenses, non-disclosure of a conflict of interest, or the abuse of power — including sexual exploitation.

3. PROCEDURE FOR RAISING A CONCERN

For Caritas Germany staff: If you believe that the actions of any staff member or person(s) having to do with Caritas Germany could constitute malpractice, you should raise your concerns with your line manager. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your line manager for any legitimate reason or because you fear negative personal consequences for yourself

such as reprisal, victimization, or dismissal, you may contact the line manager's direct superior.

For staff of local project partners, beneficiaries, business partners and all other stakeholders: You should address your complaints to the local experts on the ground or to other staff of Caritas Germany.

Under extraordinary circumstances, in which it would not be appropriate to report to the responsible person or the higher-ranking superior, you can discuss the issue with the appointed ombuds person. Complaints to the Ombudsperson may be raised via email in English, German, French, or Spanish.

Please always include full details of the issue raised along with your concern as well as any available supporting evidence. Please also state whether you wish your identity to be kept confidential. When addressing a complaint to the Ombudsperson, please give a brief reason why Caritas Germany managers cannot deal with the issue.

Caritas Germany does not encourage anonymous reporting and is only able to process complaints that include the contact details of the complainant.

You can find the name of the current Caritas Germany Ombudsperson and their contact details on Caritas Germany's website¹ and at the end of this document.

4. HANDLING OF DISCLOSURES

All disclosures will be taken seriously and processed using the following procedure:

1. In the case that a disclosure is made to a manager and the issue raised falls into his or her area of responsibility, the manager has the duty to acknowledge receipt of the complaint², assess or investigate the matter, provide necessary protection to the person raising the concern, and take appropriate action to end the alleged malpractice. If the manager considers the issue to be outside their area of responsibility, she or he is required to pass the issue to the country manager or team leader in headquarters or, where appropriate, to the Ombudsperson to deal with.
2. Should the person raising the complaint have any personal interest in the matter, he/she must disclose this at the outset.

¹ See Caritas Website www.xxxx.de.

² Acknowledgement has to be given by the person to whom the concern is raised. For concerns raised towards with Caritas Germany managers or coordinators this should take the form of a written continuation to the person raising the concern with a copy to the corresponding country officer in headquarters.

3. Any disclosure made under this policy will be acknowledged in writing to confirm that Caritas Germany will investigate the matter, and will reply to the complainant's concerns in due course.
4. The Ombudsperson will deal with and investigate any reported concerns independently, objectively, and confidentially.
5. Assessment, clarification, or investigation of the issue raised should begin within two weeks of the disclosure being made. The duration and scope of the assessment or investigation will depend on its subject matter. In most instances, there will be an initial assessment to determine whether there are grounds for a more detailed investigation, or whether the disclosure is, for example, based on erroneous information.
6. Any investigative activity will be carried out without regard to a person's relationship with Caritas Germany, their position, or length of service.
7. You may be asked to provide further information during the course of the initial assessment of your disclosure, or during the investigation.
8. When an investigation is launched through the Ombudsperson, he/she will also be responsible for reviewing the investigation report.
9. Following investigation, appropriate action will be taken – this could involve initiating a disciplinary process, or informing external authorities if a crime has been committed.
10. Whistleblowers will receive a written notification³ of the outcome of the assessment or investigation.

5. PROTECTION FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

All efforts will be made to keep the identity of the whistleblower confidential, independent of the fact on which level (superior or ombudsperson) the complaint was raised. No member of staff who raises genuinely held concerns in good faith using this procedure will be dismissed or subject to any detriment (e.g. unwarranted disciplinary action or victimization) as a result of their action, even if their concerns turn out to be unfounded.

If whistleblowers believe that they are being placed at a disadvantage within the workplace as a result their use of this procedure, they should immediately inform their line manager or, if this is not appropriate, the line manager's superior or the HR department, respectively the AGEH. Staff who victimize or retaliate against those who have raised concerns under this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

³ The written notification to the person raising the concern must be given by the Caritas Germany managers or coordinators who received and handled the case.

This assurance is not extended to any individual who maliciously raises a matter they know to be untrue or who is involved in any way in the malpractice.

All efforts will be made to keep the identity of the whistleblower confidential. Due to the nature of the information given or because of a need for formal investigation, e.g. in criminal cases which must be passed to the authorities, the identity of the whistle blower may become known. In these circumstances, the implications for confidentiality will be discussed with the whistleblower ahead of any action being taken. In order to not jeopardize a potential investigation, the whistleblower is asked to keep confidential the fact that he or she has raised a concern, along with the identity of those concerned.

6. FALSE DISCLOSURE

Caritas Germany will treat all disclosures of malpractice seriously, and protect staff members who raise concerns in good faith. However, disciplinary or legal action will be taken against staff members who are found to have made a disclosure that they know to be untrue.

This *Whistleblowing Guideline* has been issued by the *Board of Directors* of Caritas Germany in November 2018 and takes effect in January 2019.

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE CARITAS GERMANY OMBUDSPERSON

Information on the person acting as Caritas Germany Ombudsperson can be found on our website: <https://www.caritas-germany.org/internationalaid/principlesandguidelines>

The following person has been appointed as Caritas Germany Ombudsperson:

Mrs. Gertrud Casel

For any correspondence, please use the email address below:

whistleblower@caritas.de