

Maindee

**Maindee Unlimited - UK Charity No: 1160272**

## **Complaints Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Maindee Unlimited (“the Charity”) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- make sure everyone at the Charity knows what to do if a complaint is received
- make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is :

- any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of the Charity.
- either written or spoken or made by any other communication method ( see below)
- made by one or more members of the public
- about the Charity’s action or lack of action, or
- about the standard of service provided by the Charity

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Charity.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. Complaints posted on social media (such as Facebook messages) should not be handled on social media but should be redirected to email.

On receiving a complaint we need to ensure that we **pause and think** to ensure that the correct action is taken .

The complaint should be received from the person subject of the matter being raised and **not** from someone on their behalf unless they have the written permission of that person to act for them i.e. we need the consent of the person allegedly upset !

**Note** : As a general rule children aged 11 and over are deemed to have the capacity to make their own decisions/ complaints. We can of course involve parents but really should try to deal with the child unless they give consent for their parent to act on their behalf

### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with our Trustees

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Written complaints may be sent to the Charity at:  
Maindee Library [79 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8BY](#)  
or by e-mail to [admin@maindee.org](mailto:admin@maindee.org)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to any of the Charity's staff, volunteers or Trustees at any of our events or activities.

### **Receiving Complaints**

***The starting point for receiving all complaints or representations must be to do so in partnership with the complainant, acting in their best interests and following the procedures set out in this guidance. The complainant should be informed that we will make every effort to deal with their complaint and their calm co-operation in the process will be expected***

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Simple complaints (eg: "*I got to the library but it was closed*") posted on Facebook can be acknowledged and dealt with there but should not be further handled on social media if of a more serious or confidential nature.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Charity.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure

- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by e-mail so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

### **Stage One**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to a nominated trustee **within one week**.

On receiving the complaint, if it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint **within a week**. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of the Complaints Procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply **within four weeks**. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

The reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Should there be no response to the Stage 1 investigation within 3 months the Charity will assume that the investigation conclusion has been accepted and no further action will be taken.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Trustee level. At this stage, the

complaint will be passed to the Chair, or another appropriate Trustee.

The request for Stage 2 review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and the timescale in which the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair, or other Trustee, who receives Stage Two complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

As in Stage 1 the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions of the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx)

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Management Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage 2 review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed and evaluated annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

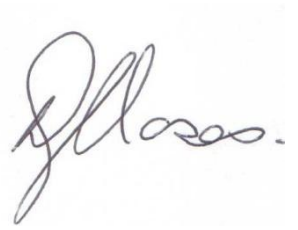
### **Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
- Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility
  - of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

**Approved by: Trustees**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Moses", is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Moses, Chairperson, on behalf of Maindee Unlimited Trustees  
April 2023

This policy will be reviewed in April 2025.