

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

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### PURPOSE

The Male Survivors Aotearoa ('MSA') Complaints Policy ('Policy') provides a guideline for the public, and users of MSA Member Organisation ('MMO') services as well as peer-workers (both employees and volunteers), trustees and advisors working for the national organisation or an MMO.

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that any complaint made by a member of the public or any user of an MMO service ('client'), in relation to their public or personal interaction with MSA, an MMO or any of their employees or volunteers is properly managed.

This policy defines what we believe constitutes a complaint, the principles that we will apply in dealing with complaints, including the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

### SCOPE

This Policy applies specifically to formal complaints received by MSA or an MMO, (who are bound by this policy in terms of their MMO membership agreement) and requires compliance from all staff (employees and volunteers), trustees and advisors.

The Policy is intended to provide a useful framework for the common-sense resolution of complaints received from members of the public or clients of an MMO.

### OBJECTIVES

Applying this Policy will ensure that:

- Staff, trustees and advisors understand their obligations and responsibilities relating to the proper management of complaints; and
- Complainants will understand and appreciate that we take complaints seriously and have a principled and respectful approach to dealing with complaints.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Complaint

A complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public or a client of an MMO about an action or lack of action, a decision, or the standard of service provided by or on behalf of an MSA or an MMO, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

A complaint is NOT:

- a request for routine services, but a complaint may result in a request for service;
- a request for readily available information;
- allegations against a staff member (employee or volunteer) or a contractor of serious misconduct such as sexual harassment, fraud, or assault;
- complaints from one staff member about another;
- matters for which there is a right of appeal and/or legal remedy; and
- feedback as part of a formal consultation process.

#### Complainant

Means any person or persons that have communicated a complaint to MSA or an MMO.

<b>Complaints Review Panel</b>	Is a group of MSA or MMO Trustees and management appointed by the respective Boards of Trustees to assume responsibility for the management of complaints. The panel is chaired by an independent external party appointed by the respective Boards of Trustees of MSA or an MMO.
<b>Complaints Investigator</b>	Will be the organisational Privacy Officer or another person appointed by the Complaints Review Panel.
<b>MMO</b>	Is an organisation that is affiliated via a formal membership agreement as an official Member Organisation of MSA.
<b>MSA</b>	Is the national organisation Male Survivors Aotearoa, which provides national governance, coordination and representation for MMO's.
<b>Staff</b>	Means an individual engaged as an employee or volunteer by MSA or an MMO to enable and/or provide services to male survivors of sexual abuse.
<b>Trustee</b>	Means a duly appointed trustee of MSA or an MMO

## PRINCIPLES

The following principles are core to how we handle complaints. We will:

- Be mindful of the need to minimise the efforts of complainants to register and resolve a complaint;
- Try to see things from the complainant's perspective, to understand and address the issues that have result in a complaint;
- Treat complaints with priority, give a timely response and communicate in a way that is easy to understand;
- Be fair and act with integrity; take a genuine, fresh look at the issues raised; and not be defensive and ensure that the issues raised are assessed on their own merits;
- Learn from complaints and use this knowledge to improve how we do things; acknowledge our mistakes and put them right if we can
- Educate our staff to apply the policy, processes and procedures for complaints resolution and manage complaints in accordance with the defined and agreed processes and procedures;
- Actively manage any service user conduct that negatively and unreasonably impacts on the organisation and our staff

As far as possible, complaints will be handled with discretion and in accordance with the MSA's Privacy Policy.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The **Chair of the Board of Trustees** (of MSA or an MMO) has overall responsibility for this policy and procedure.
- A **Complaints Review Panel (the 'CRP')**, which is appointed by the Board of Trustees, consists of Trustee and management representatives, and chaired by an independent external party (Review Panel Chair) appointed by the Board, will oversee the operation of the complaints process to ensure it is effective. The responsibilities of the CRP include:
  - Ensuring that the organisation provides an adequate complaints education process for its trustees and employees, including appropriate training for the Complaints Investigator;
  - Monitoring the effectiveness of the complaints management procedure and ensuring that identified process improvement opportunities are actioned;
  - Reporting regularly to the Board on complaints management and resolution outcomes.

- The **Complaints Investigator** will be the Privacy Officer<sup>1</sup> of the organisation or such other person appointed by the CRP, who reports to the Chair of the Panel and is responsible for effective facilitation of the complaints management process on behalf of the CRP;

## COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

The complaints management process will observe the following protocols:

- **Lodging a complaint:** A complaint must be received in writing by email, letter, or fax using the template suggested (refer Appendix One) to ensure that the level of information provided is adequate to assess and investigate the complaint.
- **Information security:** All complaints must include the name of the complainant and their contact details. All complaints are treated as confidential information and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the identity of complainants and those complained against. Complaints information is managed in accordance with our Privacy Policy<sup>2</sup>
- **Complaints management:** All complaints received will be managed as follows:
  - The Chair of the Board of Trustees of the organisation receiving the complaint will review all complaints received and decide whether they fall within the scope of this policy or require referral to another authority for resolution;
  - Where complaints received by MSA involve an MMO, or vice versa, the two Chairs of the respective organisations will confer and decide whether MSA or the MMO is best positioned and appropriate to deal with the complaint;
  - For complaints that fall within the scope of this policy, the Complaints Investigator will complete an assessment of the complaint, consult the complainant and other parties to the complaint as necessary, and make a recommendation as to resolution of the complaint to the Complaints Review Panel;
  - The Complaints Review Panel will determine what actions are necessary to resolve the complaint and either authorise the Complaints Investigator to communicate the outcome to the complainant or, depending on the nature and gravity of the complaint, the Chair of the Complaints Review Panel may elect to communicate the outcome personally;
  - All complaint management outcomes will be communicated in writing to the complainant advising of the decision, the reason for the decision, details of any further actions that need to be taken by either party and the actions available to the complainant if they disagree with the outcome;
  - If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome they may elect to refer the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, such review once completed shall be the final outcome determination of the organisation. If the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome, they may choose to refer the matter to another appropriate authority for review.
- **Process effectiveness:** the effectiveness of this policy will be assessed using the following performance criteria:
  - 100% of complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt;
  - 80% of complaints will be investigated and responded to within 20 working days;
  - 100% of complaints will be investigated and responded to within 35 working days;

<sup>1</sup> The Privacy Officer for MSA is the Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee or his Nominee; The Privacy Officer for an MMO is the Manager.

<sup>2</sup> MSA privacy policy is published on our national website.

**APPENDIX ONE: COMPLAINTS INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

**[NAME OF ORGANISATION]**

All complaints are treated as confidential information and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the identity of complainants and those complained against.

Complainant Information	Full Name	
	Organisation	If appropriate
	Address	
	Contact: Phone : Email	

Complaint Information	Nature of Complaint	Lack of action	Decision made	Service standard
	Incident location & date			
	Person involved			
	Organisation			
Complaint Details				

OFFICE USE ONLY

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