

## Compliments & Complaints Procedure

The Mary Frances Trust (MFT) is committed to delivering the very highest standards of service to all our stakeholders, with the people using our service at the forefront of our concern. We acknowledge however that both compliments and complaints will result from any activity we are a part of. It is crucial therefore, for our own performance management, that we hear about what we could do better, as well as what we excel at.

This policy starts from the position that all feedback is useful, and that both complaints and compliments, are an opportunity to proactively resolve any issues, and improve our service.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick Wolter, *Chief Executive*

**Last Reviewed** January 2023

**Review Date:** January 2025

## **Compliments**

1. On receiving a compliment about the organisation or an employee, MFT will acknowledge it either verbally or in writing and thank the person making it. They will also be asked where appropriate, if any of their quotes can be used to promote MFT.
2. Compliments and/or positive feedback will be shared with the staff team, so that good practice can be identified and be continued.
3. The compliment will be entered in the compliment log found at:

Mary Frances Trust\Mary Frances Trust Team Site - Documents\Mary Frances Trust\Compliments and Complaints

## **Complaints**

The complaints procedure has three stages:

- Stage 1** is where the emphasis is on informal resolution and proactive problem solving.
- Stage 2** is a formal process and involves the investigation of the complaint
- Stage 3** is a review stage, where someone not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation, usually a Management Board Member, examines unresolved issues, appeals and the processes.

**Anyone can make a complaint initially**, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else. The Chief Executive Officer will decide who takes the complaint forward. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive it can be made to the Chair of Trustees. The chair's contact details can be obtained on request by emailing [info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk), or by calling MFT 01372 375400

## **Stage 1 Problem Solving**

### Process

- The complaint should be submitted in writing.
- It can be submitted to any member of staff, but then will be forwarded to the CEO or Head of Operations.
- It will be acknowledged within 7 days (this may take longer due to circumstances such as periods of sickness or bank holidays, as examples).
- The complaint procedure is sent to the complainant.
- If appropriate the issue will be discussed and resolved in an informal meeting.

- The process should be dealt with where possible within 28 working days of the complaint being made.
- Once the issue has been resolved, the process and any actions taken should be recorded in the Complaints Log
- If the issue has not been resolved, another attempt will be made to see if a third party might help resolve the situation, before moving onto Stage 2.

## **Stage 2 Investigations**

### Process

- Depending on the seriousness of the complaint the process may go directly to stage 2.
- The complaint must be in writing, either by the complainant themselves or with support. In either case the complainant must sign it, this may be by electronic signature if submitting the complaint by email.
- It must be passed to the Chief Executive, or Head of Operations and recorded in the Complaints Log. Where the complaint regards the CEO, it may be submitted to the Chair of Trustees who will follow the same procedure detailed in this policy.
- It will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days.
- The Chief Executive will designate an Investigative Officer to investigate the complaint.
- Where appropriate, this will involve meeting with any individuals involved, although this may not always be possible.
- The Investigation Officers report will then be sent to the Chief Executive for a decision.
- The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing.
- The process should be completed within 28 days of commencing stage 2, however this may not always be possible.
- The outcome and process will be recorded in the Complaints Log.
- The complainant will have 10 days to appeal the decision.

## **Stage 3 Reviews and Appeals**

### Process

- Appeals and requests for a review of an investigation into a complaint must be made within 10 days of receiving the outcome.
- The complaint, investigation report, statements from stage 2, and any other documentation relating to the complaint, will be passed to a member of the Management Board as the reviewing officer.
- This complainant will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days of receipt.

- This may or may not involve a face-to-face meeting with the complainant, but whatever action is to be taken will be conveyed in writing within 14 days of receiving the complaint.
- Wherever possible, the Reviewing Officer will contact the complainant within 28 days with their conclusions.
- The process will be recorded in the Complaints Log.

## **Matters arising**

### **1. When the complaint places restrictions on how the complaint is to be dealt with**

When, for example, a complaint is anonymous, or the complainant wants to remain anonymous during any actions, this can make it difficult to investigate. We will, however, do our best to support people, and meet with their wishes. In a very small number of cases where there is, for example, criminal activity, the option to protect anonymity may become beyond our control.

### **2. When the complaint involves confidential information, a third party or other service users.**

In some cases, information, which is gathered as a part of the process to resolve the complaint, may need to be kept confidential because of UK GDPR and confidentiality/privacy issues. In these cases, the complainant should expect to have an explanation as to why this is the case.

### **3. When the complainant needs support to make a complaint, needs other advocacy, or does not want to/cannot use services whilst the complaint is being resolved.**

We acknowledge that complaints can be a stressful and difficult time for everyone involved. We will endeavor to take all reasonable steps to ensure someone remains supported throughout the process – connecting people with other advocacy organisation as necessary.

### **4. When the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by this procedure**

The Mary Frances Trust receives its funding from a variety of sources, each of which may have its own complaints procedures. These sources are published in our annual report and available on the website. Contact details for these sources can be obtained through local directories. We are also a company and registered charity, which also means we are subject to a series of their laws

and regulations. Again, our company and charity numbers are available on the website and details of Companies' House and the Charities Commission are widely available through local directories.

## **5. Monitoring of this procedure**

Responsibility for monitoring this procedure rests with the Chief Executive and ultimately with the Trustees. If you have any comments on its working or effectiveness, then please let the Chief Executive or a Trustee know.

## **6. Contacts details:**

The Mary Frances Trust and Chief Executive: 01372 375 400  
[info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk)