

## **MS-CAS COMPLAINTS POLICY**

MS-CAS views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person 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
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To ensure everyone at MS-CAS knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired and reconciliation explored
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of MS-CAS

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from:

- a person who is dissatisfied with the service that they have received from a member of staff or volunteer at MS-CAS
- concern relating to policies for running MS-CAS or decisions taken by the employees / volunteers / trustees

It is our policy that we will not investigate anonymous complaints.

This policy does not cover:

- Matters relating to safeguarding which should be referred directly to the Safeguarding Lead- **Saffron Watkin**

## 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 is with **Saffron Watkin**

## Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

## Complaints Procedure

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints: Written complaints may be sent to Complaints - 39 Nicholson Avenue, Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 2BZ

## Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. 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 MS-CAS
- 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 email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

## Resolving Complaints

### Informal Approach

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. Most matters can and should be resolved informally and locally. If for example a person is dissatisfied with the service they have received, then in the first instance they should tell that person of their dissatisfaction. He or she should be willing to listen, to discuss the matter and seek to satisfy the concerns where justified. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to a MS-CAS Coordinating team member within five working days.

On receiving the complaint, the coordinating team member records it in the complaints Logbook. 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 an opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, 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.

## Formal Stage

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved during the informal process, they can escalate the complaint to the formal process. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the MS-CAS Trustees who will acknowledge and discuss the matter and provide a verdict at the next Trustee meeting after which the complainant can expect a reply.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at the informal stage should be kept informed of what is happening where appropriate.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 28 days. 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.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, 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.

Where disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, the reply to the complainant will not include details relating to individual staff member's employment record

It should be recognised that in some instances people will take positions where the matter cannot be resolved. However, the aim should be to ensure that the process respects those involved and is just in providing an active concern to those who are vulnerable, marginalised or oppressed.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless MS-CAS Trustees's decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution. A log of the complaint will be kept.

**POLICY DATED:** [16/11/2022]

**REVIEW DATE :** *2 years after date of policy*