

COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

The Male Survivors Taranaki ('MST') Complaints Policy ('Policy') provides a guideline for the public, and users of MST services as well as trustees, employees, contractors, consultants, advisors and volunteers ('MST people').

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that any complaint made by a member of the public or any user of an MST service ('client'), in relation to their public or personal interaction with MST or any MST people 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 MST and requires compliance from all MST people.

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 MST.

OBJECTIVES

Applying this Policy will ensure that:

- MST people 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 MST about an action or lack of action, a decision, or the standard of service provided by or on behalf of MST, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Complainant	Means any person or persons that have communicated a complaint to MST.
Complaints Review Panel	Is a group of MST Trustees appointed by the MST Board to assume responsibility for the management of complaints.

	This panel should be chaired by an independent external party appointed by the Board.
Complaints Investigator	Will be the organisational Privacy Officer or another person appointed by the Complaints Review Panel.
MSA	Is the national organisation Male Survivors Aotearoa, which provides national governance, coordination and representation for Member Organisations.
MST people	Means an individual engaged as a trustee, employee, contractor, advisor, consultant or volunteer by MST to enable and/or provide services to male survivors of sexual abuse.
Trustee	Means a duly appointed trustee of MST.

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** 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 should be 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 MST people, 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 Officer¹ 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 preferably 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 Policy²
- **Complaints management:** All complaints received will be managed as follows:
 - The Chair of the Board of Trustees of the organisation will be advised of all complaints received and advise whether they fall within the scope of this policy or require referral to another authority for resolution;
 - Where complaints received by MSA involve MST, or vice versa, the two Chairs of the respective organisations will confer and decide whether MSA or MST 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

¹ The Privacy Officer for MST is the Manager.

² MST privacy policy is published on our website.

- 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 10 working days of receipt;
 - 80% of complaints will be investigated and responded to within 40 working days;
 - 100% of complaints will be investigated and responded to within 60 working days;

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	Other
	Incident location & date				
	Person(s) involved				
	Organisation				
Complaint Details					
[Attach additional relevant information as necessary]					

OFFICE USE ONLY

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