

## 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 (written) 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, contractors 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. The expectation is that the submission of a formal complaint will follow, wherever practicable, a genuine attempt by the complainant to resolve the issue or concern that forms the basis of the complaint.

### OBJECTIVES

Applying this Policy will ensure that:

- The public at large is aware of, and properly informed about MSA and MMO complaints policy and the associated complaints procedures.
- 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

<b>Board of Trustees</b>	Means the duly appointed group of Trustees who form the Board of MSA or an MMO.
<b>Complaint</b>	<p>A complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction and/or concern 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.</p> <p>A complaint is NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a request for routine services, but a complaint may result in a request for service;</li> <li>- a request for readily available information;</li> <li>- matters for which there is a right of appeal and/or legal remedy; and</li> <li>- feedback as part of a formal consultation process.</li> </ul>
<b>Complainant</b>	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, which is chaired by a suitably qualified and independent external party.
<b>Complaints Investigator</b>	Will be the organisational Privacy Officer or another suitably qualified person appointed by the Complaints Review Panel.
<b>Male survivor</b>	Is a person who identifies as male and who has been affected by physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and/or family abuse, violence or harm
<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, advocacy and representation for MMO's.
<b>Staff</b>	Means an individual engaged as an employee, contractor or volunteer by MSA or an MMO to enable and/or provide services to male survivors.
<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 or concerns that have resulted 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 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 practicable, 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 a suitably qualified and 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 staff (including employees, contractors and volunteers), including, as required, 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 suitably qualified person appointed by the CRP, who reports to the Chair of

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

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 formalise the complaint and to ensure that the level of information provided is adequate to assess and investigate the complaint<sup>2</sup>.
- **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>3</sup>
- **Complaints management:** All complaints received will be managed as follows:

### Amicable resolution:

- In the first instance the complaint will be referred to the Complaints Investigator who will communicate with the complainant to:
  - Confirm the complaint information; and
  - Endeavour to facilitate an amicable resolution of the complaint issue or concern to the satisfaction of the complainant;
- If the complaint has not been resolved by the Complaints Investigator to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint will then be forwarded to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the organisation receiving the complaint;

### Formal resolution:

- The Chair will review the complaint and decide whether it falls within the scope of this policy or requires 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;

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<sup>2</sup> Where, due to the particular circumstances and/or disabilities, the complainant is not able to present their complaint in writing, then MSA or the MMO will take all reasonable steps to receive and register the complaint by other means

<sup>3</sup> MSA privacy policy is published on our national website.

- 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, having regard to the nature and/or 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 dissatisfied 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 dissatisfied with the outcome, they may choose to refer the matter to another appropriate authority for review.

**Reporting:**

- All complaints received by the organisation will be reported to the Board, including those amicably resolved, in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the parties involved but informs the Board as to the nature of the complaint, the resolution pathway and any organisational policy or process improvements that have resulted from the complaints resolution process.
- **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;

## APPENDIX ONE: COMPLAINTS INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

### MSA † MMO:

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	<i>(If appropriate)</i>
	Address	
	Contact: Phone : Email	

Complaint Information	Nature of Complaint	Action taken	Lack of action	Decision made	Service standard
	Incident location & date				
	Person(s) involved				
	Organisation				

**Complaint Summary** *(Summary description; attach additional information as necessary)*

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*Complaint Summary continued*

OFFICE USE ONLY

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