

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

We want to ensure that everyone dealing with the Trust is satisfied with the service that they receive and that everyone is treated fairly, equally, with respect and courtesy.

The procedure is intended for use by anyone receiving a service from the Marsh Farm Community Development Trust. Issues across all aspects of the organisation, including funding decisions will be dealt with through this procedure.

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to provide:

A simple and effective process to enable people to air their complaint and feel satisfied that it has been dealt with appropriately

A process, which recognises the right of the complainant to have their complaint, investigated

An approach that is honest, thorough and fair to all parties concerned

A way for the Trust to monitor and improve its relationships and interactions with the whole community

Complaint – definition

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is a verbal or written register of dissatisfaction by a person about:

Service provided by an authorised representative of MFCDT

Behaviour of persons acting on behalf of Marsh Farm Community Development Trust, in any capacity i.e. volunteer, paid or third party agents

Use or misuse of the Trust's resources i.e. premises, equipment, other assets, grants etc.

A complaint should be lodged within one month of an incident occurring to ensure that there is a reasonable chance that the matter can be investigated as fully as possible. Beyond this time period it may be more difficult to identify suitable evidence to review the complaint and draw any meaningful conclusions.

All complaints must be communicated formally in writing. If anyone needs help and support in making a complaint contact should be made with the Citizens Advice Bureau or another local agency offering a similar service.

Complaints Against Staff

All complaints will be dealt with within the procedures outlined below. In the event that the investigation reveals issues related to staff and their performance this matter will then be referred to the line manager to take appropriate action under personnel procedures.

Making a complaint

Step 1

Complainants should be addressed to the person dealing with the issue in the first instance to provide an opportunity to address the concerns raised wherever possible.

Step 2

Where the complaint is not satisfied, a request for the complaint to be further considered should be addressed to the Finance and Operations Manager who oversees the administration of the Complaints Procedure on behalf of the Trust.

Step 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Finance and Operations Managers response the complainant may request that the matter is considered by the General Purposes Committee.

Step 4

If the complainant is not satisfied with the General Purposes Committees' response the complainant may make a final appeal to the MFCDT Board

In exceptional circumstances, the Board **may** seek a second opinion before deciding by referring the matter to an Independent Review Panel.

Operation of the Procedure

The timetable for implementing the various stages in the Complaints Procedure is set out below.

All points raised by the complainant will be fully investigated at each stage of the procedure and then responded to in writing.

The letter will aim to satisfy the complainant that the complaint has been fully investigated, with an appropriate apology where things were wrong, and information on steps, which have been/will be taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

The Finance and Operations Manager will inform the Board of all complaints through a quarterly Board report.

Complaints Procedure Timetable

Event
Time allowed
Who is responsible

Step 1

Complaint received
Within one month of issue arising
Complainant
Written Complaint acknowledgement
5 working days
Officer dealing with the issue
Written Complaint Response
10 working days of the acknowledgement unless there are exceptional circumstances
Officer dealing with the issue

Step 2

If complainant feels issue unresolved written request for further consideration
Within 10 working days of receipt of MFCDT response
Complainant
Complaint Response
10 working days of receipt unless there are exceptional circumstances
Finance and Operations Manager

Step 3

If complainant feels issue unresolved written request for further consideration
Within 10 working days of receipt of MFCDT response
Complainant
Complaint Response
Issue to be raised at the next General Purposes Committee for decision. Response within 5 working days following Committee
NDC Programme Director

Event
Time Allowed
Who is Responsible

Step 4

If complainant feels issue unresolved written request for final appeal
Within 10 working days of receipt of MFCDT response
Complainant
Written Complaint Response
Appeal to be raised at the next MFCDT Board meeting. Response within 5 working days following MFCDT Board

MFCDT Board **may** consider referring the matter to an Independent Standards Panel

MFCDT Chair

Independent Standards Panel

Decision of the panel
5 working days from the panel meeting
Independent Chair
Consideration of recommendation by the Board

Panel recommendation to be considered at the next MFCDT Board meeting.
MFCDT Chair
MFCDT Board decision
Response to complainant within 5 working days following MFCDT Board
MFCDT Chair