



## MRS Independent Living

Policy and guidance topic	Formal complaints (from service users and other agencies)
Last updated	October 2018
Due for review	October 2020

### Appendix 1: MRS formal complaints form

#### Purpose

MRS Independent Living ('MRS') views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (or organisation) that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that 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 make sure all staff and volunteers at MRS know what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are dealt with fairly, proportionately and without undue delay
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps the organisation to improve its services.

MRS aims to provide a good quality service for all its users. It does this within an Equal Opportunities framework. It therefore takes seriously all concerns of its service users and those organisations working with them.

If service users or others are dissatisfied with any aspect of MRS' service, the organisation will benefit from hearing about it. All staff should encourage users to report concerns if they have them. This will enable MRS to be aware of the areas in which it can improve how it carries out its work.

## **Scope**

This policy covers complaints received from service users and others connected to the delivery of our services. It does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the organisation's Conduct and Discipline policy and Grievance policy.

## **Access to the complaints procedure**

If concerns are raised informally, staff should first work with the person reporting concerns to understand the problem and see if the concerns can be resolved informally. The staff member should inform the Senior Project Manager of the issue and ask for advice if necessary.

If it does not seem possible to resolve concerns informally, the person should be asked whether they wish to make a formal complaint. A formal complaint may be made verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

- If it is made verbally or by phone, the staff member should take down brief details of the complaint and contact details and email these to the Senior Project Manager.
- If it is made by email or in writing, the complaint should be marked 'FAO Senior Project Manager: private and confidential' and emailed to [services@mrsindependentliving.org](mailto:services@mrsindependentliving.org), or posted to MRS at the address below.

**MRS Independent Living  
Unit C1/C2  
3 Bradbury Street  
London  
N16 8JN**

The MRS complaint form can be used by staff or the complainant as a template. The form is attached as appendix 1.

The Senior Project Manager should enter the details of the complaint into the MRS complaint log. The complaint will then be dealt with following the stages outlined below.

Staff should continue to work with the complainant to attempt to resolve matters informally if this seems appropriate.

## **Access medium**

Where the complaints procedure asks for matters to be put in writing, the information may also be supplied as an audio recording, by email or any permanent medium, and in any language.

If the complainant requires help doing this, they can ask for support at an advice centre or an agency such as Age UK.

## **Formal complaints procedure**

### **Stage 1: Investigation and response**

Formal complaints will be investigated by the Senior Project Manager who will seek to understand the finer details of the complaint and what the complainant feels needs to be done to resolve it. They will look at computer and written records and ask staff for additional information.

The Senior Project Manager should acknowledge the complaint and start their investigation within 48 hours, working with the relevant staff member(s) to identify potential actions to resolve the complaint.

If the complaint concerns work done in the complainant's home, the Senior Project Manager should visit the complainant, ideally on the same day as the complaint is received, or as soon as possible thereafter. This has been shown to reduce significantly the stress experienced by the complainant and makes it much more likely that a resolution can be reached.

The Senior Project Manager should respond formally to the complaint within 10 working days of receipt, setting out his/her view of what has happened and what action, if any, MRS proposes to take. They will send a copy of their response to the Chair of Trustees or to another trustee to whom this role has been delegated.

If the complainant is unhappy with the response received, they may appeal through stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 2: Appeal to Chair of Trustees**

If users are not happy with the response received from the Senior Project Manager, they can appeal to the Chair of Trustees. The complainant should do this in writing (or other appropriate medium), and should set out any further points they wish to make. The appeal should be sent, marked 'Private and Confidential', to the Chair of Trustees using the email [trustees@mrsindependentliving.org](mailto:trustees@mrsindependentliving.org) or the address above.

The Chair will investigate the matter (or nominate a deputy), looking at all documents relating to the earlier investigation. A written response to the complainant will be provided within 15 working days.

If the complainant is still unhappy with the response received, they may progress to stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 3: Local Government Ombudsman**

If complainants feel they have suffered an injustice after they have exhausted the MRS complaints procedure, they can raise the matter with the Local Government Ombudsman.

This can be done by using their online form, ringing 0300 061 0614 or using their call back service by texting "call back" to 0762 481 1595. They have information in a wide range of languages and media.

The Ombudsman will generally only accept cases that have been through the complaints procedure of the organisation being complained about.

### **How complaints will be evaluated**

In judging complaints, managers and Trustees will generally be considering whether the organisation has met its own objectives in terms of service quality and efficiency.

Should they feel that the complaint requires the organisation to review general policy issues, they will raise these at a management committee meeting, informing the complainant that they are doing this.

### **Review of complaints**

On an annual basis, the Senior Project Manager should report the number of complaints received and how many of them were resolved to the Management Committee. In addition, they should report any significant increase in numbers, or change in types of, complaints at the next available Management Committee meeting.

### **Related policies**

This policy should be read, used and reviewed in conjunction with:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Conduct and Disciplinary policy
- Equal Opportunities policy

- Health and Safety policy
- Complaints procedure
- Lone Worker policy
- Serious Incident Reporting procedure
- London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

## Appendix 1: MRS formal complaints form



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Form	Formal complaints (from service users and other agencies)
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You can use the form below as a template. The complaint should be marked 'FAO Senior Project Manager: private and confidential' and emailed to [services@mrsindependentliving.org](mailto:services@mrsindependentliving.org), or posted to MRS at the address below.

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**Unit C1/C2**  
**3 Bradbury Street**  
**London**  
**N16 8JN**

You can also make a formal complaint by telephone or in person if you prefer. To do so, please contact the Senior Project Manager on 0330 380 1013 to make an appointment.

Complainant's name	
Complainant's address	
Complainant's phone number	
Complainant's email address (if available)	
Date complaint submitted to MRS	

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Please tell us about your complaint (please give as much information as you can).

Please tell us what you think MRS can do to resolve the complaint.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your complaint. We are sorry this situation has arisen and we look forward to working with you to resolve your concerns.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the complaint within 48 hours of submission, and a full response within 10 working days. Please contact us on 0330 380 1013 if you have any concerns in the meantime.

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Please note that making a formal complaint does not mean complainants cannot use MRS services – please continue to use them as you would normally, if you feel it is appropriate.