



# COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS POLICY

## VERSION: 1.1

Version	By Author	Reason	Reviewed/ Modified	Date Ratified
1	HB/TS	New Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy and procedure	October 2019	14/12/2019
1.1	HB/TS	Clarity around complaint review stages	October 2020	09/12/2020

**This policy applies to participants of Make Some Noise programmes and their families, members of the public and all members of the Make Some Noise team including Trustees, members of staff, volunteers and freelance workers contracted to Make Some Noise.**

### Introduction

Make Some Noise is committed to providing high quality services.

A key element in improving services is through an effective complaints policy; one that is easily accessible, open, flexible and outcome based.

Complaints, together with comments and compliments provide a useful and challenging insight into what we do well and what we do less well. Receiving feedback, be it complaints, comments or compliments allow us to learn about what beneficiaries think about the services they receive and help us to identify areas for change.

### Policy Statement

Make Some Noise is committed to providing good quality services and continuous improvement throughout the organisation. Make Some Noise is committed to ensuring any Comments, Complaints and Compliments are dealt with promptly.

Make Some Noise will deal with all complaints in confidence as it is recognised that people can be fearful of making complaints and people need to be reassured that making a complaint will have no adverse consequences.

The Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures are an essential part of putting this commitment into practice, Make Some Noise staff will promote these feedback mechanisms.

At Make Some Noise our approach to dealing with complaints will be one based on empathy. Our staff will take time to listen and understand the complaint and how it has affected the person. Our staff will always acknowledge the complaint might be distressing for the person so will deal with it sensitively.

This policy will be displayed appropriately within our services so beneficiaries know how to complain and how we deal with complaints.

### **Our Policy Aims**

The aims of this policy are to provide:

- a) A consistent procedure. We want to provide a consistent and accessible way of making comments, complaints and compliments
- b) A positive procedure. We want to achieve a positive resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant and to use the outcome of any comment, complaint and compliment as a way of improving our services
- c) A fair procedure. We want to enable all our beneficiaries to have a say in how our services are delivered and to seek a remedy if they are dissatisfied with our services
- d) A procedure that improves the quality of our services. We want these procedures to improve the quality of the services we provide and improve our relationships with our beneficiaries and promote best practice with staff
- e) A procedure that is efficient. We want complaints to be dealt with promptly and efficiently and apply any learning across the organisation so that all our beneficiaries may benefit from any changes made.

### **The Law and Regulatory Requirements**

This policy conforms to Charity Commission guidance.

### **Who can make a complaint under this Policy?**

- 1) Complaints will only be dealt with through this Policy
- 2) Any beneficiary or member of the public can use this policy to make a complaint, comment or compliment.

Beneficiaries may decide to ask someone to help them make their complaint. This person is known as their 'advocate'. The advocate must have the complainants' written permission to make the complaint and we must receive a copy of this before we can discuss the complaint with the advocate. The advocate may be a friend, partner, relative, or a member of Make Some Noise.

If there may be a conflict of interest between the advocate's role and their job role, the staff member should discuss this with their line manager before agreeing to act as an advocate. The line manager should be confident that the staff advocate can manage any conflict of interest before agreeing. The decision rests with the line manager, who must in all cases - ensure that the staff advocate is being supported throughout the process.

### Limitations

This complaint procedure may not be used in the following circumstances:

- a) Complaints that relate to issues that are over 6 months old will not be accepted and dealt with as part of the complaints process
- b) Employees, students, trainees and volunteers of Make Some Noise cannot use these procedures to complain. They should use the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- c) Where the complaint relates directly or indirectly to legal proceedings being taken by the complainant against Make Some Noise, in which case the complaint will be referred to the Make Some Noise Board of Trustees and legal representatives and addressed as part of the legal proceedings
- d) In all instances where actual or inferred personal injury is an issue, Make Some Noise staff will not comment or discuss the case with the claimant. All personal injury claims and allegations of physical damage to a claimant's property or possessions will in all cases be referred directly to the Make Some Noise Board of Trustees and Insurers.

### Compliments and Comments

Make Some Noise will welcome compliments and comments. All compliments and comments will be recorded by the CEO and/or Administrators and an acknowledgement letter will be sent. Compliments and Comments will be recorded along with complaints and used to identify trends in service delivery.

When we receive a comment we will consider how we can use it to improve our services. Comments should be shared and discussed with the relevant team members. This may for example, include sharing the 'comment' at the next available team meeting for discussion, at a meeting or making a recommendation to the Trustees.

### Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action or lack of action resulting in service failure or a routine follow up request for service. Complaints will be investigated and could result in service improvement if required.

### Anonymous, Offensive and Discriminatory Complaints

If we receive an anonymous complaint, we will still record and investigate it as far as possible. A complaint may be considered offensive if it includes inappropriate language or views which discriminate against anyone. If an offensive complaint is received, it should be logged and then immediately forwarded to the CEO and/or Chair of Trustees to deal with.

The CEO and/or Chair of Trustees will decide if the complaint should be investigated or closed. In such case, a complaint which may be 'closed' for purposes of offensiveness/discrimination – should be done so by signing off by Trustees of Make Some Noise.

### **Comments, Complaints and Compliments received through Social Media**

Because social media influences others, it is important to treat a complaint via these means as seriously as you would a face-to-face complaint. Follow this guide to deal with complaints on social media.

- a) Respond quickly. Staff have access to Social Media platforms. Check these regularly and respond to postings as soon as possible.
- b) If the post is a complaint then allow the complainant to move away from the public eye. We want to get to the bottom of the complaint but away from the public eye.

When there is an initial complaint, acknowledge it by replying “Thank you for your feedback. Please send us a private message with contact details so we can investigate the nature of this experience, get to the bottom of it and prevent it from happening again.” This allows the person to message you in private and share the details. When other people read the complaint, it shows we care about complaints and take action. Taking no action erodes trust. Doing something over nothing retains trust

Respond to positive feedback. Social media allows Make Some Noise to build trust with an audience before a complaint is even made. By interacting – retweet, mentioning and asking questions there will be a positive image communicated. Also, by building this relationship, if something does go wrong, the audience will be more trusting and let us know in a nicer way

We will acknowledge a complaint on the next working day. Any complaints will be acted on as set out in The Procedure below.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints, comments and compliments can be made in a variety of ways including by letter, by telephone, in person, email, text, forms, at meetings, through Board members, other agencies etc.

We will welcome complaints that are made on behalf of a beneficiary by external agencies in an advocacy role. We will need consent from our beneficiary to deal with the advocate. Once beneficiary have given consent for us to deal with the advocate all correspondence regarding the complaint will be dealt with through the advocate. The CEO and/or Chair of Trustees will oversee the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

### **Skipping Stages**

No complaint can ‘skip’ a stage – including the informal resolution - regardless of the nature of the complaint. Therefore, complaint stages do not reflect the severity of the nature of the complaint. In the event that a complaint (at any stage) is regarding any form of abuse (as defined by Make Some Noise’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, or regarding a risk to a person’s health and safety, the person receiving the complaint must immediately notify the Make Some Noise CEO or if unavailable any of the Trustees.

### **Conflict of Interest**

No member of Make Some Noise staff should investigate a complaint which has been made against them. This would constitute a 'conflict of interest'. To do so will be considered Gross Misconduct. Investigation is defined as holding meetings or discussions regarding the matter with anyone involved in the complaint, questioning the beneficiary who made the complaint, or making enquiries after the beneficiary who made the complaint.

### **The Procedure**

#### Stages

The stages of resolution are:

- 1) Informal resolution
- 2) Formal Complaint Stage 1 – Complaint investigation by an Investigating Officer
- 3) Formal Complaint Stage 2 - First review by Chief Executive Officer, if not the Investigating Officer (or in absence an Officer)
- 4) Formal Complaint Stage 3 - Second review by Chair of Trustees (Comment: Trustees may opt for a panel)
- 5) External Stage 4 – Complaint is passed to external body to which the complaint is about.

#### Informal Resolution

At Make Some Noise we recognise that a beneficiary may want to raise a matter with a member of staff without having to make a formal complaint. All our beneficiaries can request to speak to any member of staff to raise a matter and have this resolved - prior to making a formal complaint. At any time, if the beneficiary is still not satisfied with the response or outcome, they reserve the right to make the matter formal – by letting us know they wish to make a formal complaint. At this point, the matter would be recognised as a Stage 1 formal complaint.

#### Formal Complaint Stage 1

All complaints will be acknowledged by the CEO and/or the Chair of Trustees appointed as Investigating Officer, by the Board within 3 working days and information will be provided on who is dealing with the complaint and the process to be followed including timescales. Complaints that relate to members of staff will usually be investigated by their Line Manager. Complaints that relate to external organisations must be raised via their Complaints Policy.

An independent person who has not previously been involved in the complaint will carry out the initial complaint investigation and aim to respond to the complainant in writing within 7 working days.

All complaint investigations will involve personal contact with the complainant. Any extension to this timescale will be agreed with the complainant and will normally be influenced by the complexity of the complaint and availability of the complainant.

### Formal Complaint Stage 2

First Review will be received by the CEO and/or Chair of Trustees who will send an acknowledgement within 3 working days providing details on who is reviewing the complaint and the process to be followed including timescales.. The complainant will be requested to identify why they are not satisfied with the response. This must relate to the substantive nature of the complaint. Where other matters are introduced, these will be dealt with separately and the current complaint will be deemed as resolved. The CEO will review the complaint and will usually make personal contact with the complainant. The CEO will aim to respond in writing within 10 days.

### Formal Complaint Stage 3

Second review will be received by the CEO and/or Chair of Trustees who will send an acknowledgement providing details of who is reviewing the complaint and the approximate date of a decision.

The complainant will be requested to identify why they are not satisfied with the response. This must relate to the substantive nature of the complaint. Where other matters are introduced, these will be dealt with separately and the current complaint will be deemed as resolved. The CEO and/or Chair of Trustees (or a nominated Trustee)who undertook the Stage 2 First Review will write a Briefing Paper to include all relevant information about the complaint to the Chair of Trustee. The Chair of Trustees will aim to respond in writing within 10 days

The Stage 3 Second Review exhausts the internal complaints procedure.

### **Satisfaction and Follow-Up**

At Make Some Noise we do not want to make assumptions regarding beneficiaries satisfaction. For this reason, we periodically spot check whether beneficiaries are satisfied with how we have handled their complaint. We do this by writing to beneficiaries to ask them if they were satisfied with the way in which we have dealt with their complaint and the complaint outcome – at all stages.

Make Some Noise CEO and/or Chair of Trustees will send the complainant a satisfaction follow-up card to ask for their views and feedback. Complainants who do not respond within 14 working days will be considered as a 'closed complaint'.

### External Stage 4

If the beneficiary is not satisfied with the outcomes of our internal complaints procedure, they may wish to take their complaint further. Complaint is passed to external body experienced in dealing with specific complaints context. Make Some Noise staff should be open, transparent and supportive in advising beneficiaries of their right to escalate the matter further should they wish.

### **When Complaints are Closed**

Complaints will be closed when the complainant:

- a) Says or indicates that they are satisfied with the outcome
- b) Says or indicates that they do not wish to take the matter any further. This should be made in writing or a record kept by the member of staff receiving the complaint
- c) Has exhausted our internal 3 stage complaints procedure and the Chair of Trustees has notified the complainant in writing of the outcome and how the complainant may wish to pursue their complaint externally, but the complaint is closed from Make Some Noise's perspective
- d) Complainants who do not respond within 14 days of being sent a 'Satisfaction Follow-Up' letter/email
- e) Has received a legal judgment from a legal hearing
- f) Has not responded within the time frames at any stage of the process.

### **Monitoring, reporting and review**

The CEO will ensure that Make Some Noise monitors the effectiveness of this policy by reporting to the Board quarterly on the following: Number of complaints versus the number of interactions with clients, nature of complaints, if complaints were dealt with within policy timescales and changes made as a consequence of a complaint. This is all collected using the tools featured in the following appendices. This data shall provide the basis of Comments, Complaints and Compliments reports to the Board of Trustees and subsequent reviews of this policy.

### **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- None

### **FORMS REFERRED TO IN THIS POLICY**

- Comments, Complaints and Compliments form
- Complaint Investigation Lead Report form

### **LINKED POLICIES**

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT & Internet Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

- Charity Commission guidance
- [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

### Example Form 1

#### Make Some Noise Comments, Complaints and Compliments Form

##### **Policy Statement**

Make Some Noise is committed to providing good quality services and continuous improvement throughout the organisation. Make Some Noise is committed to ensuring beneficiaries' Comments, Complaints and Compliments are dealt with appropriately and efficiently.

Make Some Noise will deal with all complaints in confidence as it is recognised that people can be fearful of making complaints and people need to be reassured that making a complaint will have no repercussions or consequences on the person making the complaint.

The Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures are an essential part of putting this commitment into practice and Make Some Noise staff will promote these feedback mechanisms to beneficiaries.

##### **What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action or lack of action resulting in service failure or a routine follow up request for service. Complaints will be investigated and could result in service improvement if required.

##### **How to Complain**

Make Some Noise seeks to resolve complaints quickly and whenever possible informally. If you have a complaint, please speak to a member of staff who will do their best to resolve your complaint.

Sometimes it is not possible to resolve your complaint informally. It is necessary for a beneficiaries to use a formal complaint. A copy of our Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures is available from the main office.

##### **Compliments and Comments**

Make Some Noise welcomes all compliments and comments. When we receive a compliment and comment we will consider how we can use it to improve our services.

Please use the Comments, Complaints and Compliments Form on the reverse to submit a comments, complaint and compliment.

## COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

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### Comments, Complaints and Compliments Form

OFFICE USE ONLY Log tracking number (inserted by Administrator)

(Please write clearly and/or use block capitals)

Your name	
Contact telephone number:	
Contact email:	
Contact address:	

Please circle (*delete as required)		
Comment*	Compliment*	Complaint*

Date of incident/interaction
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Describe what you want to tell us about?
If this is a complaint what outcome do you want to see?

Official use only

Investigating officer nominated

Outcome

Date stage 1
Date stage 2
Date stage 3
Date stage 4

**Example Form 2**

**MAKE SOME NOISE  
COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OFFICER REPORT  
*THIS REPORT IS CONFIDENTIAL***

Upon completion of the investigation this report and all documentation (originals) must be put in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential' and immediately sent to the CEO and/or Chair of Trustees

**IF THE COMPLAINT IS REGARDING A SAFEGUARDING OR ABUSE MATTER, YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY BRING THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CEO AND FOLLOW THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY.**

Log Tracking Reference Number \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint Investigating Officer Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Related Project or Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Complaint Received: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Nature of Complaint:

Complaint Stage? (please circle to indicate)  
Stage 1    Stage 2    Stage 3    Stage 4

What is the complainants' desired outcome?

Key people contacted/ their response(s):  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Method: In person/ telephone/ email (circle or delete)

Key Questions/ Responses:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Method: In person/ telephone/ email (circle or delete)

Key Questions/ Responses:

## COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

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Other materials/documents considered as part of this investigation:

Other Policies/ Legislation relevant:

Your key findings:

Your recommendations<sup>1</sup>:

The outcome: Are you upholding the complaint? (please circle to indicate)

Yes No Partly

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Your overall recommendations from your investigation findings, i.e. what action will now be taken and by whom? Also state your specific recommendations in relation to the complainant's desired outcome. If your recommendations are regarding a member of Make Some Noise staff, and/ or a Make Some Noise service – you must discuss these with the relevant Officer prior to issuing the complainant with your outcome letter.