



The Milestone Society

COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Guidance

Guidance on complaint handling is provided by the Charity Commission in its publication [CC47](#).

In most cases concerns should be raised with the Society before making any approach to the Charity Commission

Issues that should be taken up with the Society include:

- policies for running the charity or decisions taken by the trustees that are within their powers and within charity law
- instances of poor service from a charity
- employment issues, for example, unfair dismissal
- contractual disputes
- internal charity disputes where there are properly appointed trustees

2. Procedure

All complaints by members of the Society and the public should be raised in the first instance with the Hon Secretary, who will direct the complaint to the most appropriate person. If the complaint is about the Hon Secretary, then it should be directed to the Chairperson. The complaint should be submitted in writing, by post or by email, stating the reason for the complaint and setting out the issues clearly.

The Hon Secretary will acknowledge receipt within fourteen calendar days, indicating where possible to the complainant the next stage of investigation or resolution.

The recipient(s) of the complaint from Hon Secretary will investigate the matters raised and will revert to the Hon Secretary with a response for the complainant within fourteen calendar days or will explain any extended time scale for resolving the complaint.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the primary recipient, it should be referred to a member (or members) of the Executive Officers for assessment and resolution. If it cannot be resolved by them, it should be referred to the Chairperson and if not resolved by the Chairperson it should be referred to the Trustees. At each stage the complainant should be notified of the process and progress and likely timescale for resolution. Independent mediation may be invoked if appropriate at any stage to facilitate resolution of the complaint.

If the complaint is regarding one of the Executive Officers, the Hon Secretary should refer it direct to the Chairperson; the next stage would be to the Trustees, whose decision is final.

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Where the complainant considers that he or she still has an outstanding complaint, the complaint may be referred to the Charity Commission. However, in practical terms, the Commission will not take forward complaints:

- where you disagree with decisions made by the trustees and those decisions have been properly made within the law and the provisions of the charity's governing document
- to resolve internal disagreements over a charity's policy or strategy because those involved are responsible for settling the issues themselves
- about incidents of poor service from a charity where there is no general risk to its services, its clients or its resources
- where the complaint arises from a charity dispute and there are properly appointed trustees whose responsibility it is to deal with the issues reported
- where the issue reported does not pose a serious risk to the charity, its assets or beneficiaries
- where the issue is being dealt with by, or is the responsibility of, another statutory or supervisory body
- where there is a disagreement about the terms or delivery of a contract
- where legal proceedings are being taken by another party against a charity, including those for the collection of debts

3. Review

This policy and procedure shall be reviewed as required and at least every three years.

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