

## **M13 YOUTH PROJECT Complaints Policy and Procedure**

1.1 M13 Youth Project ("M13") is committed to providing a high quality, transparent and accessible service to everyone we deal with. In order to do this we need the young people with whom we work and their families to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help resolve any complaints as quickly as possible.

1.2 We treat as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction with our work that calls for a response. We listen to complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our work.

### **2 Our policy covers complaints about:**

- a) the standard of service young people and their families should expect from us
- b) the behaviour of our staff in delivering that service
- c) any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged by M13 to provide activities

We refer to these complaints as "service complaints".

### **3 Our complaints policy does not cover:**

- a) comments about our policies or policy decisions
- b) dissatisfaction or complaints expressed with our policies or decisions about individual cases, funding, or requests for legal advice and assistance
- c) matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure
- d) anonymous complaints

3.1 We refer to these types of comments or complaints as 'non-service complaints'. These are handled differently, as set out in the 'Comments and non-service complaints' in Section 13, page 6.

### **4 Our standards for handling complaints**

4.1 We can receive complaints by letter or email. We treat all complaints seriously.

4.3 You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times.

4.4 We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with the complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

4.5 We will treat your complaint in confidence within M13.

4.6 We will deal with any service complaints promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days where we have a return address; you can expect to have a full reply within 20 working days. In a few cases we will not be able to send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt, for example if the complaint is very

complex. If this happens, we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full, keeping you fully informed of progress.

- 4.7 We will not treat your complainant less favourably than anyone else because of your:
- a) sex or legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)
  - b) sexual orientation
  - c) ethnicity, nationality or national origin
  - d) ability / disability
  - e) religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation
  - f) any other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties, age, pregnancy and maternity.

## **5 Third Party Reporting**

- 5.1 You may wish to have a third party act on your behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for you in regards to your complaint. For example, third parties may include:
- a) advice organisations
  - b) professionals such as social workers, community psychiatric nurses, doctors or solicitors
  - c) family members or friends.

- 5.2 Where a third party is helping you with a particular complaint, we need written consent from you to that effect. Where we have this authority, we will endeavour to take all possible steps to keep the third party informed of progress on your complaint.

- 5.3 We do not need written consent if an MP or elected Councillor is helping you as a constituent with a complaint, and we can disclose information to them in response to their enquiries. Also, some lawyers and attorneys are legally empowered in certain circumstances to act on behalf of a complainant, and consent to disclose information is not required.

## **6 Confidentiality**

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities, and/or as a result of statutory, legal or parliamentary obligations placed on M13.

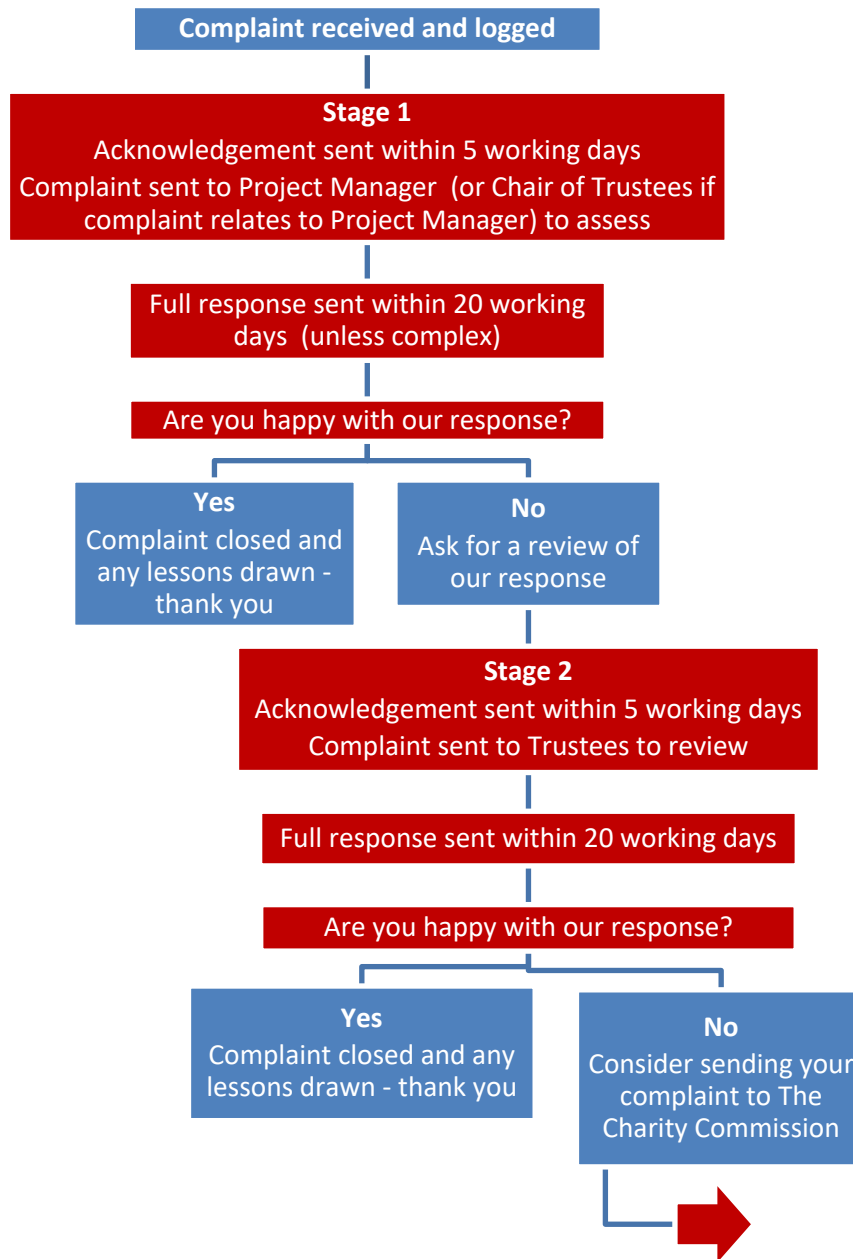
## **7 How to complain to us**

- 7.1 If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by email or letter.
- 7.2 If you are disabled and need a reasonable adjustment to ensure you can register your complaint, you can contact us alternatively by:
- a) telephone (one of our workers will help you by writing out your complaint)

b) asking a member of staff to help you in writing out your complaint.

7.3 Our contact details are [info@m13youthproject.org.uk](mailto:info@m13youthproject.org.uk) or M13 Youth Project, 35 Portland Crescent, Longsight, Manchester, M13 0BU; telephone number 0161 225 0201. If you require different adjustments, please let us know and we will try and put those arrangements in place where we can.

## 8 How we will respond to your complaint



## **9 Service complaints procedure**

9.1 We have a two-stage service complaints handling procedure, explained above. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clarity and detail as possible, including providing any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint. If we do not have all the details required to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask you for further information.

9.2 Our Project Manager is responsible for managing the handling of service complaints including notifying you of the outcome.

### **9.3 Stage 1**

This is the first opportunity for us to resolve your dissatisfaction. We expect the majority of complaints to be resolved at this stage. On receipt of your complaint we will ask the Project Manager to respond to your complaint. If your complaint relates to the Project Manager, your complaint will be sent to the Chair of Trustees who will respond to your complaint.

### **9.4 Stage 2**

If you are dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1, you may request a review. This will be carried out by the Chair of Trustees (or another Trustee if the Chair of Trustees responded to your complaint at Stage 1). Your request together with all subsequent correspondence relating to it should be sent to the Project Manager, who will forward your request to the relevant Trustee to be reviewed.

### **9.5 If you are still dissatisfied**

If having followed the two internal stages of our service complaints procedure you remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed by the Charity Commission.

### **9.6 Extending time limits**

We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received about our service within the timescales set out above. However, in a limited number of cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex or requires further breakdown, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case we will keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform you of next steps.

## **10 Remedies**

10.1 When we get things wrong we will act to:

- a) accept responsibility and apologise
- b) explain what went wrong and why, and
- c) put things right by making any changes required
- d) learn lessons from mistakes and change policies and practices where proportionate and sensible to do so.

10.2 The action we take to put matters right (i.e. redress) in response to a service complaint can include any combination of the remedies set out in the list below. The general principle we follow is that complainants should, so far as possible, be put in the position they would have been in, had things not gone wrong.

10.3 The remedy applied needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service, and take into account what redress people seek when they complain. An apology is generally the most appropriate action, but other action may also be necessary in some circumstances.

**10.4 List of remedies**

- a) A full apology, explaining what happened and/or what went wrong. (An apology is not an acceptance of liability under Section 2 of the Compensation Act 2006)
- b) Remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant
- c) Provide the service required in first instance (immediately, if appropriate)
- d) Putting things right (for example a change of procedure to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others)
- e) Training or supervising staff; or a combination of both
- f) Financial compensation.

**11 Compensation**

11.1 In the majority of cases, remedies other than financial compensation will satisfy the complainant. Financial compensation is a final option, and will only apply in cases where the loss or suffering is considered to warrant such a payment i.e. in cases of actual direct or indirect financial loss.

11.2 In circumstances where it is decided that our action or lack of action has resulted in maladministration, if the complainant has suffered direct or indirect financial loss, compensation may be payable.

11.3 Where it is decided, following investigation of a complaint, that a complainant has suffered an injustice and or hardship resulting in direct or indirect financial loss due to maladministration, we will determine whether compensation is an appropriate remedy by looking at all the evidence, including how much the complainant can demonstrate they have lost, or what extra costs they have incurred as a result of our maladministration.

11.4 The reason for our decision will be recorded by the decision maker and included in our response.

**12 Recording complaints**

12.1 Complaint details, outcomes and actions taken are recorded by us and used for service improvement. We record all complaints we receive and collate data from them to help us understand what types of problems are most prevalent, and how well we are doing to resolve them.

12.2 We value your feedback and expect to use it to help us to:

- a) get things right in the future if we have not done so already
- b) be more open and accountable
- c) act fairly and proportionately
- d) seek continuous improvement.

- 12.3 We will handle your information so that it is only processed and retained appropriately and legally, in line with data protection legislation.

### **13 Comments and non-service complaints**

- 13.1 Quality of service is an important measure for us of our effectiveness. Learning from complaints, including non-service complaints (complaints not covered by this policy), is a powerful way of helping continuous improvement at M13 and enable us to better deliver to our values and standards. All non-service complaints will be looked at by the Project Manager, and a response, if required, sent to you directly within 20 working days where possible. Non-service complaints should be sent to the Project Office address above.
- 13.2 As well as learning from your complaints we are also interested in ideas you may have on how we might do things better. We would also like you to tell us when we do things well.
- 13.3 Your comments will be passed on to the team and we will use them to help improve our service and the way we do things. You can make your comments by contacting any members of our staff, or you can e-mail [info@m13youthproject.org.uk](mailto:info@m13youthproject.org.uk).

This policy was adopted by M13 Trustees on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 and updated in Jul 2023. It is due for review in Jul 2024.