

MAN&BOY Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy owner: Board of Trustees

Operational responsibility: Executive Director

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Date approved: August 2026

Next review due: August 2028

1. Purpose

MAN&BOY welcomes feedback and takes complaints seriously. We view a complaint as an opportunity to listen, put things right where appropriate, learn from what has happened and improve our services.

We aim to deal with complaints fairly, consistently, promptly and respectfully, while ensuring that anyone raising a complaint is treated with dignity and is not disadvantaged as a result.

This policy applies to complaints about any aspect of MAN&BOY's work, services, activities, staff, volunteers, trustees or representatives. Where a concern falls more appropriately under another MAN&BOY policy or statutory procedure, it will be managed under that procedure rather than, or alongside, this complaints process as appropriate.

2. Our approach

MAN&BOY is committed to:

- making it straightforward for anyone to raise a complaint
- listening carefully and taking complaints seriously
- treating complainants fairly and respectfully
- investigating complaints objectively and proportionately
- resolving complaints as quickly as reasonably possible
- keeping complainants informed throughout the process
- providing clear explanations for decisions and actions taken
- learning from complaints and using them to improve our work
- handling complaint information sensitively and in accordance with data protection requirements
- ensuring that complaints do not adversely affect a person's access to MAN&BOY's services or activities.

We recognise that people may have different communication needs. We will make reasonable efforts to support anyone who may have difficulty making or pursuing a complaint. Children and young people may raise a complaint themselves and will be supported to do so in a way appropriate to their age and communication needs.

3. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about MAN&BOY's work, services, activities, conduct or the actions of someone representing MAN&BOY, where the person raising the concern expects a response or resolution.

Complaints may be made by participants, parents or carers, donors, referrers, partner organisations, volunteers, staff or other stakeholders.

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing, including by telephone, email, letter or in person.

Where someone raises a concern that can be resolved immediately and they are satisfied with the response, it may not be necessary to treat this as a formal complaint. However, any concern that raises a safeguarding, serious incident, financial, legal or other significant issue must be recorded and escalated appropriately regardless of whether the person wishes to make a formal complaint.

4. How to make a complaint

Complaints can be made:

By email: office@manandboy.org

By post:

MAN&BOY
Richard Mayo Centre
11 Eden Street
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT1 1HZ

By telephone: 07894084234

In person: to a member of staff, volunteer or trustee.

A complaint does not need to be made in writing. Anyone receiving a verbal complaint should listen carefully, make a written record of the key details and pass the complaint to the Executive Director or another appropriate person as soon as possible.

Where appropriate, the complainant may be asked to provide further information in writing, but this should not prevent someone from making a complaint where they are unable to do so.

A complainant may ask someone else to support or represent them during the complaints process. MAN&BOY may need the complainant's consent before discussing their personal information with that person.

5. What happens when we receive a complaint?

5.1 Initial response

Where possible, the person receiving a complaint should try to understand what has happened, what the complainant is concerned about and what they would like MAN&BOY to do to resolve the issue.

If the matter can be resolved immediately and the complainant is satisfied, this may be appropriate.

If it cannot be resolved immediately, the complaint should be passed to the Executive Director, or to another appropriate person where the Executive Director has a conflict of interest or is otherwise unable to deal with it.

The complaint should normally be acknowledged within 7 calendar days. The acknowledgement will:

- confirm that the complaint has been received
- explain who is dealing with it
- explain what will happen next
- provide an expected timescale for a response
- explain the opportunity to request a review if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

6. Stage One – Investigation and response

The Executive Director, or another appropriate person appointed to handle the complaint, will assess the complaint and decide how it should be investigated.

The investigation will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the complaint and may involve:

- reviewing relevant records or correspondence
- speaking with the complainant
- speaking with staff, volunteers, trustees or other people involved
- reviewing relevant policies, procedures or decisions
- seeking further information where necessary.

Anyone whose actions or conduct are the subject of a complaint will be given a fair opportunity to respond before a decision is reached.

The person investigating the complaint should not investigate a matter where they have a conflict of interest or are directly involved in the issue being complained about.

MAN&BOY will aim to provide a full written response within 28 calendar days of receiving the complaint.

Where this is not possible because the matter is complex or requires further investigation, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and given a revised timescale. The complainant should receive reasonable updates where an investigation is taking longer than expected.

The Stage One response will, where appropriate:

- summarise the complaint
- explain how it has been investigated
- set out the findings
- explain whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld
- apologise where MAN&BOY has made a mistake or where an apology is appropriate
- explain any action MAN&BOY will take as a result
- explain how the complainant can request a Stage Two review if they remain dissatisfied.

7. Stage Two – Review

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage One response, they may request a review.

A request for a Stage Two review should normally be made within 28 days of the Stage One response and should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The review will normally be undertaken by the Chair of Trustees or another trustee appointed by the Board.

The person conducting the review should be independent of the original investigation and should have no conflict of interest.

The review may consider:

- whether the complaint was investigated fairly and appropriately
- whether all relevant issues were considered
- whether the evidence supports the conclusions reached
- whether the response was reasonable
- whether any further action is required.

The review may involve examining the original complaint and investigation, reviewing relevant records and speaking with those involved.

The complainant will normally receive a written response within 28 calendar days of the Stage Two request. If more time is required, the complainant will be informed and given an updated timescale.

The Stage Two response will explain the outcome of the review and any further action MAN&BOY intends to take.

The Stage Two decision is MAN&BOY's final internal response to the complaint.

8. Complaints involving safeguarding or serious concerns

A complaint may raise issues that require action outside the normal complaints procedure.

Where a complaint raises a concern about the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk, it must be immediately referred and dealt with in accordance with MAN&BOY's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The complaints process must not delay any safeguarding action.

Similarly, where a complaint indicates a potentially serious incident, criminal activity, significant financial loss, serious misconduct, significant data breach or other significant risk to MAN&BOY or the people it supports, the matter must be escalated appropriately.

The Board of Trustees will consider whether a serious incident should be reported to the Charity Commission or another relevant authority.

Where a matter is subject to a police investigation, safeguarding investigation, regulatory investigation or legal proceedings, MAN&BOY may pause or adapt the complaints process where continuing could interfere with that process.

9. Complaints about staff, volunteers or trustees

A complaint about a member of staff or volunteer will normally be managed by someone who is independent of the matter and appropriately senior.

Where a complaint concerns the Executive Director, the Chair of Trustees will normally oversee the complaint.

Where a complaint concerns the Chair of Trustees, or another trustee appointed by the Board will oversee the complaint.

Where a complaint concerns a trustee, the Board will ensure that the person complained about does not participate in decisions relating to the investigation or outcome.

Where necessary, MAN&BOY may appoint an appropriately independent person outside the organisation to investigate a complaint.

10. Confidentiality and data protection

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those who need it for the purposes of investigating, managing or resolving the complaint, or where disclosure is required by law or necessary to protect someone from harm.

MAN&BOY will process personal information in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and its Privacy Policy.

Records relating to complaints will be kept securely and only for as long as necessary in accordance with MAN&BOY's data retention arrangements.

11. Unreasonable or persistent complaints

MAN&BOY recognises that someone who is dissatisfied may contact us more than once. This does not, in itself, make a complaint unreasonable.

However, in exceptional circumstances, MAN&BOY may need to place reasonable limits on further contact where a person is repeatedly pursuing the same issue after the complaints process has been completed, or where their behaviour is abusive, threatening or otherwise unreasonable. Any restriction must be proportionate and documented. Restrictions would:

- take account of disability and reasonable adjustments;
- not prevent genuinely new issues being raised; and
- be periodically reviewed where they remain in place.

Any such decision will be proportionate, documented and approved by the Executive Director or, where the Executive Director is involved in the complaint, the Chair of Trustees.

This does not prevent a person from raising a genuinely new concern.

12. Recording and monitoring complaints

All formal complaints will be recorded, including:

- the date the complaint was received
- the complainant's details and relationship with MAN&BOY, where appropriate
- the nature of the complaint
- the person responsible for handling it
- relevant actions and correspondence
- the outcome
- any actions or improvements identified as a result.

The Executive Director will maintain an appropriate complaints record.

Complaints will be reviewed at least annually to identify recurring issues, trends, risks and opportunities for improvement. Significant complaints may be reported to the Board of Trustees sooner where appropriate.

The purpose of monitoring is not simply to count complaints, but to ensure MAN&BOY learns from them and takes action where improvements are needed.

13. External escalation

MAN&BOY encourages anyone with a concern to raise it with us first so that we have an opportunity to put things right.

If someone remains concerned about a charity after its internal complaints process has been completed, they may be able to raise the matter with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Charity Commission does not generally investigate individual complaints about the service provided by a charity, but it can consider serious concerns about a charity's governance, conduct or compliance with its legal duties.

Other types of complaint may need to be directed to the relevant organisation or regulator, for example the Fundraising Regulator for complaints about fundraising.

Information about raising concerns with the Charity Commission is available through GOV.UK.

14. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that MAN&BOY has an effective complaints process and that significant complaints and lessons arising from complaints are appropriately considered.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring complaints are appropriately recorded and investigated, and reporting significant issues and learning to the Board.

Staff, volunteers and trustees

Everyone acting on behalf of MAN&BOY is responsible for listening respectfully to concerns, recording complaints appropriately and ensuring they are passed to the appropriate person without unnecessary delay.

15. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner where there are significant changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, MAN&BOY's activities or

organisational structure, or where learning from complaints indicates that changes are required.

Appendix 1 – Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

When receiving a complaint verbally, staff, volunteers and trustees should:

- remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- listen and allow the person to explain the complaint in their own words
- avoid debating or challenging the facts during the initial conversation
- show an interest in what is being said
- obtain the key details of the complaint
- ask for clarification where necessary
- make a clear written record of the key points
- reflect back what has been understood to check that the complaint has been accurately recorded
- acknowledge the person's feelings without necessarily agreeing with their interpretation of events or admitting fault
- apologise where an apology is appropriate, without making an admission of liability
- ask what the person would like MAN&BOY to do to resolve the issue, where appropriate
- be clear about what can be done, what will happen next and the likely timescale
- never promise an outcome that cannot be delivered
- explain clearly and respectfully where a request cannot be met
- make sure the person understands what they have been told
- explain how the complaint will be progressed and, where appropriate, the available review process
- pass the complaint to the appropriate person without unnecessary delay.

Example:

"I understand that this situation has been frustrating for you. I will make sure your concerns are recorded and passed to the appropriate person so that they can be considered properly."