



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy number	5	Version	5
Drafted by	Hanna Taylor	Approved by Council on	7 February 2024
Responsible person	Marc Evans	Scheduled review date	July 2026

The Council of Management (Trustees) of the Fishermen's Mission takes complaints very seriously and views them 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 ensure that there is a fair complaints procedure (Complaints Handling Procedures Version 1, appended below) which 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 everyone at the Fishermen's Mission knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fully, fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Fishermen's Mission.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Fishermen's Mission.

A complaint can be received by a number of routes, verbally, by phone, by email or in writing, via the website or through social media

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the Fishermen's Mission Grievance Policy.

Confidentiality

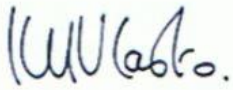
All complaint information will be handled sensitively, and on a 'need to know' basis and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Trustees.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MVlasto.", is positioned above the printed name.

MICHAEL VLASTO
CHAIR

Date 9 February 2024

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES

Procedures number	5	Version	4
Drafted by	Hanna Taylor	Approved by CEO on	05/02/2024
Responsible person	Marc Evans	Scheduled review date	July 2026

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to The Fishermen's Mission at Mather House, 4400 Parkway, Solent Business Park, Whiteley, PO15 7FJ or by e-mail at enquiries@fishermensmission.org.uk

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0800 6341020 or in person to any of the Fishermen's Mission's staff at Mather House, 4400 Parkway, Solent Business Park, Whiteley, PO15 7FJ or the individual Port Centres

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Fishermen's Mission (for example: client)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it informally and are encouraged to do so in the first instance before elevating the complaint to a higher level.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information will be passed to the Business Support Manager within 2 working days.

On receiving the complaint, the Business Support Manager will record it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, it will be assigned to an appropriate person to investigate and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, the individual concerned should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person assigned to handle the complaint within one week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining (the complainant) can expect a full response. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at a higher level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive. If the Chief Executive has been actively involved in Stage One of the resolution process then the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.

The request for Chief Executive level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chief Executive may investigate the facts of the case or assign a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, the individual should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chief Executive decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx.

If the complaint relates to donations or fundraising the complainant should contact the Fundraising Regulator. Details of how to raise a complaint can be found on their website at <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/make-a-complaint/complaints/>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint involving the Chief Executive should not also have the Chief Executive as the person leading a review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marc Evans', with a horizontal line above it.

Marc Evans
Chief Executive

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show you have an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved then apologise.
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.
- Explain our process, what will happen next and set expectations as to when they can expect to hear from us.

Guidance for Informal Complaint Handling

Complaints may vary in severity, complexity and whether any allegations are admitted or denied. If appropriate an informal resolution is always preferable. Informal procedures emphasise resolution rather than factual proof or substantiation of a complaint. They seek agreement and shared understanding of how to avoid problems in the future.

Informal action is usually appropriate when;

- The complainant wants to do it informally
- The allegations are less serious
- There is a chance of quickly stopping the problem before it develops
- The parties are likely to have ongoing contact with each other and the complainant wishes to pursue an informal resolution so the ongoing relationship can be sustained.

Informal ways of dealing with complaints are;

- An incident of unacceptable behaviour is observed and action is taken even though a complaint has not been made
- The person complaining speaks to the individual concerned directly and resolves the issue but may still raise awareness of a Fishermen's Mission member of staff
- The person complaining makes you aware of the situation and asks you to confidentially convey their concerns to the person being complained about without making any judgements. (It would also be appropriate to restate the relevant organisational policy for clarification)
- 2 parties negotiate to seek a resolution
- The 2 parties are brought together to conciliate and the issue is resolved without the need for formal investigation.

If none of these options resolve the complaint or it would not be appropriate to use an informal process you must undertake the formal procedures.