

## MS-UK complaints procedure

### Introduction

MS-UK treat complaints seriously and ensure that any complaint, concern or issue raised is properly investigated in an unbiased, non-judgemental, transparent, empathetic, timely and appropriate manner.

We view complaints, concerns and issues as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as putting things right for the complainant. When we get things wrong, we will act to

- Accept responsibility and apologise
- Explain what went wrong and why
- Put things right by making any changes required
- Learn lessons from mistakes and change practices where sensible to do so

MS-UK do not work with professional fundraising agency partners as part of our fundraising activities.

### Definition of a complaint or concern

A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission or decision of the Charity, or its staff and volunteers, either verbal or written, and whether justified or not, which requires a response.

It can be communicated to us via any channel, including telephone, letter, email, social media or in person.

### Procedure

Complaints may come from any volunteers, clients and individuals from the general public, or organisations if something is perceived to be improper.

Complainants may wish to have a third party act on their behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for someone who wishes to lodge a complaint.

These may include

- Family members or friends
- Professionals such as social workers, community nurses or doctors, solicitors
- Advice organisations

All concerns will be dealt with sensitively, professionally and handled in the strictest of confidence, informing only those who need to know whilst following any relevant data protection requirements in accordance with MS-UK's Data Protection policy. In

circumstances where it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

At all times we will treat you with understanding and respect. All we ask is that you do the same for our employees.

Complaints must not be made later than one month of the event leading to the issue, or of you becoming aware of a cause for complaint. However, MS-UK recognises that each case must be judged individually, and therefore it may be possible to investigate when there is good reason why the complaint was not made within this timeframe.

### 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 it will be passed to a member of our senior management who will record and respond to you within five working days.

Including the following details will help us to investigate your complaint effectively and quickly

- The specific service, resource or individual to which your complaint applies
- Your name and contact details, this is essential as we will not investigate anonymous complaints
- The nature of your complaint, as precisely as possible, as this will help us to investigate in detail

You can contact us by telephone on 01206 226500, by email to [info@ms-uk.org](mailto:info@ms-uk.org), via our contact us form on <https://ms-uk.org/contact/>, or by letter to our address

D3 Knowledge Gateway  
Nesfield Road  
Colchester  
CO4 3ZL

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.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month, if this is not possible, for example due to the investigation not being fully completed, any progress will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

### Stage 2

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved from stage 1 you can request a review. This will be conducted by our Chief Executive. Your request, together with all correspondence relating to your complaint, should be sent for the attention of the Chief Executive who will acknowledge and review your request within 10 working days. A full response to the investigation will be sent within 28 days.

### Stage 3

If you are still unhappy with the outcome you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed by our Board of Trustees. The Board have quarterly meetings and you will be informed when you can expect a response from them once your request for a further investigation is made.

For these internal stages we do aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received 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 the reasons for the delay and the progress of the investigation.

### Making a complaint to an external regulator

If, having followed the internal stages of our complaints procedure, you remain dissatisfied you can ask to have your complaint reviewed by one of two external relevant regulators.

If your complaint is regarding fundraising and we are unable to resolve it to your satisfaction, you can refer it to the Fundraising Regulator, the independent regulator of charitable fundraising of which MS-UK is a member. They can be contacted via their website <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints> or by telephone on 0300 999 3407.

If your complaint relates to any other aspect of our work, you may contact the Charity Commission via their online complaint form at <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>