



# **MHW Foundation CIO**

## **Allegations and Complaints Policy**

### **MHW Foundation CIO**

Date Adopted: 12/10/2025

#### **1. Purpose and Scope**

This policy outlines the procedures for managing allegations or complaints made against staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors, or anyone acting on behalf of MHW Foundation CIO. It covers both current and historic allegations relating to behaviour, misconduct, or safeguarding concerns that may pose a risk to children, young people, or adults at risk.

#### **2. Policy Statement**

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to creating and maintaining the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. We take all allegations and complaints seriously, ensuring they are handled fairly, promptly, and transparently. All allegations, regardless of when they occurred, will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with this policy, relevant legislation, and safeguarding procedures.

#### **3. Definitions**

- Allegation: A claim or concern that a member of staff, trustee, volunteer, or contractor has behaved in a way that could cause harm, abuse, neglect, or risk to another person, or has breached the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about the charity's actions, decisions, or service delivery that does not necessarily involve safeguarding or misconduct issues.

#### **4. Principles**

The handling of allegations and complaints will be based on the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality for all parties involved.
- Confidentiality and data protection in accordance with UK GDPR.
- Protection for whistleblowers who raise concerns in good faith.
- Adherence to safeguarding, legal, and ethical obligations.
- Accountability and learning to improve organisational practice.



## **5. Who the Policy Applies To**

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors, and partner organisations working on behalf of MHW Foundation CIO.

## **6. Types of Allegations Covered**

This policy covers allegations relating to:

- Physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse.
- Neglect or failure to safeguard.
- Breaches of confidentiality or data protection.
- Discriminatory or oppressive behaviour.
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct.
- Misuse of power, position, or trust.
- Criminal behaviour, or behaviour incompatible with charity values.

## **7. Reporting Allegations or Concerns**

Anyone can raise an allegation or concern, including staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, or members of the public. Concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Allegations Lead (DAL).

**Designated Allegations Lead (DAL): Anthony Young**

**Independent Trustee Reviewer: Lisa Vieyra (to act if the allegation concerns the DAL)**

**Email: [info@mhwfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@mhwfoundation.org.uk)**

## **8. Initial Response and Notification**

Upon receiving an allegation, the DAL will:

1. Record details immediately, including the date, nature of allegation, and people involved.
2. Assess whether the allegation involves a safeguarding concern.
3. Inform the Chair of Trustees within 24 hours.
4. If the allegation involves safeguarding, report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), or the Police as appropriate.
5. Notify the Charity Commission if the allegation meets the threshold for a Serious Incident Report. Initial assessment should normally begin within 48 hours of receipt of an allegation.

## **9. Investigation Procedure**

The DAL will oversee all investigations. An independent investigator may be appointed if required. The following steps will normally apply:

- Stage 1 - Initial Assessment: Establish whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed



and assess immediate risks.

- Stage 2 - Formal Investigation: Conduct interviews, collect evidence, and document findings.
- Stage 3 - Decision and Outcome: Determine whether the allegation is substantiated,

unsubstantiated, unfounded, or malicious.

- Stage 4 - Action: Take disciplinary, safeguarding, or legal action as appropriate. The complainant will be informed of the outcome within 30 working days.

## **10. Involvement of External Agencies**

MHW Foundation CIO will work closely with statutory and regulatory bodies, including:

- Milton Keynes Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01908 253169 / 253170
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01908 254307
- Police (non-emergency): 101 | Emergency: 999
- Charity Commission (Serious Incident Reporting)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for referrals where necessary.

## **11. Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

All records relating to allegations will be kept confidential and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information will only be shared with those who need to know. Records will be retained for a minimum of seven years or as required by law. Where allegations meet the threshold for referral, information will be shared with statutory partners even without consent, where legally required to protect others.

## **12. Support for All Parties**

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to supporting both the person making the allegation and the person against whom it is made. No action will be taken against anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith. The person subject to an allegation will be treated fairly, informed of the process, and given the opportunity to respond.

## **13. Learning and Continuous Improvement**

The Board of Trustees will review all allegations and complaints to identify patterns, risks, or lessons for improvement. Findings will inform training, supervision, and policy development to strengthen safeguarding and organisational integrity.

## **14. Links to Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy



### **15. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees or sooner if legislation or best practice changes. The review will ensure ongoing compliance with Charity Commission, Local Authority, and safeguarding standards.

### **16. Trustee Sign-Off**

This Allegations and Complaints Policy was approved and adopted by the Trustees of MHW Foundation CIO on 12 October 2025.

Signed: *A Young* (Anthony Young, Chair of Trustees)

Dated: 12 October 2025