



# **MHW Foundation CIO**

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

We aim to resolve complaints swiftly, fairly, and informally wherever possible, ensuring that everyone who interacts with MHW Foundation CIO is treated with dignity and respect.

### **MHW Foundation CIO**

Date Adopted: 12/10/2025

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

This policy sets out how MHW Foundation CIO manages and resolves complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. It applies to all service users, staff, trustees, volunteers, partners, and members of the public who wish to raise concerns about any aspect of the charity's work, conduct, or service delivery.

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

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to providing high-quality services and maintaining trust with those we support and work alongside. We recognise that sometimes things may go wrong, and we value feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve. All complaints will be handled professionally, respectfully, and without prejudice, in line with the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and accountability.

#### **3. Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether verbal or written, about the charity's services, staff, volunteers, or activities, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

#### **4. Principles of the Policy**

The complaints procedure is founded on the following principles:

- Accessibility - complaints can be made verbally, in writing, or via email.
- Fairness - complaints are treated with respect, impartiality, and without discrimination.
- Confidentiality - information is handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Responsiveness - all complaints are acknowledged promptly and investigated thoroughly.
- Improvement - learning from complaints helps strengthen the charity's services and governance.



## 5. Who Can Make a Complaint

Any individual, group, or organisation who has been affected by the charity's actions, omissions, or decisions may make a complaint. This includes service users, volunteers, staff, trustees, contractors, and members of the public.

## 6. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints may be made in person, by phone, email, or in writing. Verbal complaints will be recorded by the staff member receiving them to ensure accuracy. Individuals may also nominate a representative to make a complaint on their behalf.

Complaints should be directed to:

**Anthony Young - Complaints Lead**

**MHW Foundation CIO**

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

## 7. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

MHW Foundation CIO operates a three stage process for handling complaints:

- Stage 1 - Informal Resolution: Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved informally and quickly by the staff member or volunteer most directly involved. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the complainant may proceed to Stage 2.
- Stage 2 - Formal Complaint: A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Complaints Lead. An acknowledgement will be sent within five working days, and a full response will be provided within 30 working days following an investigation. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason and updated on progress.
- Stage 3 - Trustee Review / Appeal: If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by an independent trustee (Lisa Vieyra). The review will assess whether the complaint was handled fairly and in accordance with policy. A final written decision will be issued within 20 working days of the review request.

## 8. Timescales for Response

The following timescales will normally apply:

- Acknowledgement of complaint - within 5 working days
- Full response - within 30 working days
- Appeal review - within 20 working days of request

Extensions may be necessary for complex cases, in which case the complainant will be informed of revised timescales.



## **9. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All complaints will be handled in confidence. Personal information will be used only for investigating and resolving the complaint, and will be retained in line with the charity's Data Protection and Privacy Policy. Records of complaints will be stored securely and accessible only to authorised personnel.

## **10. Anonymous or Vexatious Complaints**

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered where sufficient information is provided to investigate. Vexatious or malicious complaints may not be pursued if they are deemed to lack merit or are intended to cause harm.

## **11. Learning from Complaints**

MHW Foundation CIO views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve. All complaints will be logged and reviewed regularly to identify trends, recurring issues, or areas for training and development. Lessons learned will be reported to the Board of Trustees.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

The Board of Trustees will review complaints data annually to ensure effective handling and compliance with this policy. This policy will also be reviewed annually or sooner if required by regulatory or operational changes.

## **13. Links to Other Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Code of Conduct

## **14. Trustee Sign-Off**

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

Signed:  (Anthony Young, Chair of Trustees)

Date: 12 October 2025