



## **Mediation Helps** **Compliments & Complaints Policy**

At Mediation Helps, we welcome all feedback from our clients, colleagues, and service users. We recognise that feedback allows to learn and grow our service.

### **1.0 Policy Statement**

The purpose of this procedure is to maintain and improve the quality of service provided by Mediation Helps by ensuring that effective and appropriate action is taken upon receipt of compliments and complaints.

A key consideration is to make arrangements flexible within the parameters of these procedures; treating each complaint according to its individual nature, with a focus on satisfactory outcomes, organisational learning, and those lessons leading to service improvement.

### **2.0 Compliments**

This policy encourages all kinds of feedback. Anyone who has a relationship with Mediation Helps can compliment a member of staff, a team, or the organisation. Compliments are passed on to staff, their line manager, the Directors and are used to identify areas of good practice Mediation Helps can learn from.

Compliments can be submitted verbally to any member of staff or emailed to [serena@mediationhelps.co.uk](mailto:serena@mediationhelps.co.uk).

### **3.0 Complaints**

A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about any aspect of Mediation Helps.

If you are making a complaint about a Mediator, it must relate to breached in accordance with the FMC's Code of practice or Standards Framework, this issue must have occurred within the last three months. The three-month time period runs from the last joint/shuttle mediation session.

#### **3.1 Confidentiality**

At Mediation Helps, we handle your complaint with confidentiality and sensitivity. We will only notify individuals who we need to, and we do so in order to carry out a thorough investigation. We take all complaints seriously.

### **3.2 Contact details for a complaint**

If you wish to make a complaint in the first instance you should contact our Directors at the following email addresses:

[Serena@mediationhelps.co.uk](mailto:Serena@mediationhelps.co.uk)

[Sharlene@mediationhelps.co.uk](mailto:Sharlene@mediationhelps.co.uk)

Or by calling:

07958 323 525 or 07415 27 3337

Verbal complaints can be made to any member of staff.

### **3.3 Receiving complaints**

Mediation Helps will investigate a complaint in a manner appropriate to resolve it as efficiently as possible, proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint.

If we receive a complaint by telephone or in person, the complaint will need to be recorded. The individual who receives an in person/telephone complaint should do the following:

- Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number
- Record the relationship of the complainant to Mediation Helps
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Inform the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- If appropriate, request the complainant send a written account via email so that the complaint is recorded in their own words.

### **3.4 The complainant can expect that**

- They will be kept up to date.
- Their complaint will be investigated and, where appropriate, they will receive an explanation based on facts.
- Assurance that the matter has been investigated and, if relevant, action has been taken to prevent a re-occurrence.
- To be informed of any learning for the organisation.
- The Management will be flexible and will take best approach to resolve the issue.
- A remedy will be made where appropriate.

### **3.5 The Complaint Process**

#### **3.5.1 Complaint Stage 1**

All complaints must be recorded in the complaints log.

The first stage will be to establish if the person complaining would like to resolve the complaint by speaking with the person who they are making the complaint about. If this is something they are happy to do, then the issue should be resolved in an appropriate fashion and as soon as possible. If the person complaining does not feel comfortable to raise their complaint with the person they are complaining about, then the matter should be escalated to one of the Directors either Serena or Sharlene.

Irrespective of whether the complaint has been closed or not, all complaints should be sent to both Directors Serena and Sharlene within 3 working days of the complaint being made.

When a complaint is received, a response should be sent to the complainant within 5 working days. When acknowledging the complaint, the following should be done:

- a) Inform the Complainant who is dealing with the complaint;
- b) When the Complainant can expect a response;
- c) Attach/Include a copy of this policy.

If the complaint is not resolved at that point, then an investigation will begin. If the complaint is pertaining to a specific person and/or their conduct, then they will have a fair opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Mediation Helps aims to send a final reply within 30 working days. If this is not achievable due to the investigation taking longer than anticipated, then the Complainant should be informed of when they can expect the final response and the Directors should be notified.

The final response should outline:

- The outcomes from the investigation; and
- An explanation of how the complaint has been considered;
- The actions taken to resolve the complaint;
- An apology, if appropriate;
- An explanation based on facts, detailing how the conclusion(s) were reached;
- Whether the complaint is upheld – in full or in part;
- The conclusions reached in relation to the complaint include any remedial action that the organisation considers being appropriate or lessons learned;
- Confirmation that the organisation is satisfied any action has been or will be actioned.

### **3.5.2 Complaint Stage 2**

If Stage 1 of the complaint procedure has been exhausted and the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they can request that their complaint is escalated to Director level. At this stage, the board of directors will review the complaint, the stage 1 outcome, and the reasons why the Complainant was not satisfied with the outcome.

The request for a stage 2 review should be acknowledged within 7 working days of receiving the request. The acknowledgement should state the following:

- a) Acknowledge receipt of the request
- b) State who will be reviewing the complaint
- c) State when the Complainant will receive a response.

A senior member of staff will investigate the facts, this will include reviewing all documents from stage 1 and speaking to the person who made the decision on the stage 1 outcome.

If the complaint is pertaining to a specific person, they should be informed and given an additional opportunity to respond. All people involved from stage 1 of the complaint should be kept updated.

Stage 2 complaints should be dealt with within 30 working days. If this is not achievable due to the investigation taking longer than anticipated, then the Complainant should be informed of when they can expect the final response and the Directors should be notified.

The final response at Stage 2 should outline:

- The outcomes from the investigation; and
- An explanation of how the complaint has been considered;
- The actions taken to resolve the complaint;
- An apology, if appropriate;
- An explanation based on facts, detailing how the conclusion(s) were reached;
- Whether the complaint is upheld – in full or in part;
- The conclusions reached in relation to the complaint include any remedial action that the organisation considers being appropriate or lessons learned;
- Confirmation that the organisation is satisfied any action has been or will be actioned.

The decision at stage 2 of this procedure is final. In some circumstances the Directors may try to resolve the issue by seeking third party assistance with finding a resolution.

#### **4.0 Resolving the complaint through Mediation**

If appropriate and agreed by all parties and Directors, the complaint may be resolved through use of an impartial Mediator.

#### **5.0 Escalating the Complaint to Standards Boards**

If the Complainant has exhausted stage 1 and stage 2 of the complaints procedure and remains dissatisfied, then they may refer the matter to the relevant body. This may be the FMSB, the COM or the CMC. Please liaise with Mediation Helps to provide you on information as how you can take this step.

## **6.0 Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

In certain circumstances and where appropriate, the Directors may vary the Complaints Procedure. This may be for various reasons, such as conflict of interest, if someone away and unable to respond in the timeframe etc.

## **7.0 Monitoring and Review of this Procedure**

This procedure is part of Mediation Helps quality standards. Compliance with the policy and procedures laid down in this document will be monitored by the Managing Director on a periodic basis.

The Managing Director is responsible for the monitoring, revision, and updating of this document.

This policy will be kept under review in light of operational experience and national guidance. The first review will take place one year from adoption, and positive action will be taken to resolve any issues.

## **8.0 After reading this Policy, you should be able to**

- Understand what Compliments and Complaints Procedure is and how the Compliments and Complaints Procedure operates;
- Understand how Compliments and Complaints Procedure operates at Mediation Helps and have an awareness of the actions we take in preventing, identifying and reporting concerns;
- Understand the role you play in Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

## **9.0 Policy Review**

A Director will review this policy at least once a year to make any updates needed.

## **10.0 Authorisation**

This Policy is the authorised version agreed by the Directors Mediation Helps.

All employees are expected to follow this policy and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.