



MINISTRY OF STORIES

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Last updated November 2021

COMPLAINTS POLICY STATEMENT

We do our very best to offer a high-quality service to the children and young people we are here to support, as well as provide a positive experience for the families, schools, donors, volunteers and partners who in turn support us. We are always looking for ways we can improve.

We recognise the importance of all complaints and welcome them as they provide valuable feedback about our work and programmes. We are committed to using the information we receive to help drive forward improvements.

This policy outlines the aims of the Ministry of Stories in dealing with complaints and sets out what you can expect when making a complaint regarding our charity, services or programmes.

So please let us know if:

- you think we have done something wrong
- we have not done something that we said we would do
- you are not satisfied with a particular service or set of services that we provide

It's all part of us being accountable to you.

1. Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of this procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint, including on the Ministry of Stories website at <https://ministryofstories.org/about/contact-us/>
- To ensure that everyone at the Ministry of Stories knows what to do if a complaint is received.

- To ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps us to learn and improve what we do.

2. Who may make a complaint?

Complaints may be made by volunteers, children and young people, parents and carers, learners and placements, freelance contractors, donors and supporters, partners and members of our local community.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the appropriate procedures in the Ministry of Stories Staff Handbook and Policies folder (e.g. Harassment, Grievance, Capacity, Safeguarding etc.).

A complaint is encouraged to be received in writing.

Please note that any specific data protection complaint or query needs to be submitted to the Ministry of Stories' Deputy Director (Data Protection Officer) by email on hello@ministryofstories.org or in writing to DPO, Ministry of Stories, 159 Hoxton Street, London N1 6PJ.

3. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, shared only with those relevant for the investigation of the complaint, and following our Privacy Policy.

4. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Senior Management Team (Director and Deputy Director).

5. Procedure

If the issue is unable to be resolved informally, the following complaints procedure should be used.

Stage One – Making and receiving complaints

We encourage complaints to be sent in writing to the Deputy Director, Ministry of Stories, 159 Hoxton Street, London N1 6PJ or by email (hello@ministryofstories.org). This can be done using the Stage One Form that can be obtained from any of the Ministry of Stories staff team (in person, by post or email).

Complainants who make their complaints via telephone or in person are encouraged, where possible, to confirm their complaint in writing.

The person receiving a complaint via a phone or in person should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint as they are provided, or as soon as possible after the event;
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Ministry of Stories;
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure;
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take;
- Where possible or 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.

Stage One – Resolving complaints

Complaints will be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint **within one week** of receiving the complaint. The acknowledgement will state who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. The complaint information will also be passed to a member of the Senior Management team **within one week** of receiving the complaint.

Complaints will be investigated by a person who, wherever possible, was not directly involved in the matter. Ideally, complainants will receive a final response **within two**

weeks. Sometimes we are not in a position to make a final response because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed. If so, a progress report will be sent, stating the reason(s) for the delay and indicating when a final response will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant will 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 problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at a higher level. For this, complainants are encouraged to use the Stage Two form. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Director.

The Director may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate 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, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

Ideally, complainants should receive a response **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.

8. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed quarterly by the Senior Management team to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

An anonymised summary of complaints will be reported to the trustees of the Ministry of Stories every quarter.

This policy was last reviewed in November 2021

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

Updated policy approved by the Board and signed by:

Rob Smith	Mina Patria
Director	Trustee

Signed: 13/12/21

To be reviewed every 2 years

Date of next review: November 2023