



Mercy Ministry
Companions

G3A – Complaints Handling Procedures

1. Context

In accordance with its Complaints Policy, Mercy Ministry Companions responds to complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner.

The MMC Complaints Handling Procedure aims to operate with: fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency, to ensure a fair outcome and to reinforce a positive organisational culture.

MMC aims to welcome all comments and complaints as an opportunity to reflect on its activities and, where necessary, make improvements.

2. Scope

This procedure is applicable to the Trustee Directors, staff, contractors and volunteers of Mercy Ministry Companions, Mercy Ministry Companions Ltd and McAuley Property Ltd.

3. Procedure

Any incidents reportable to Police or regulatory authorities will be reported immediately.

a) Allegations of or actual harm to children or adults at risk

Refer to the MMC Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy (S4) for details of prevention, reporting, investigation and response to allegations of or actual harm to children or adults at risk.

b) Complaints Regarding Safeguarding Policy or Practice

All such complaints will follow the procedure set out below at section d).

c) Principles underpinning this complaint handling process

MMC will take all reasonable steps to:

- ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf;
- inform potential complainants about how and where complaints can be made to, or about, MMC e.g., via the MMC website;

- ensure that MMC systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible, particularly to people who may require assistance;
- enable any person to have another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/or resolution of their complaint
- resolve complaints at first contact, if possible
- assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.
- manage people's expectations, and inform them as soon as possible of the details of the MMC Complaints Handling Procedure;
- address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner;
- ensure that the person handling a complaint is different from any person whose conduct or service is being complained about;
- resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as practicable;
- assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible; and/or
- protect the identity of people making complaints where this is practical and appropriate. Where the identity of the complainant or their agent cannot be kept confidential, inform the complainant/agent of this before proceeding.

d) The MMC Complaints Handling Process

1. Receiving a complaint

MMC may receive feedback, comment or complaint from any person, including from anonymous persons, and via any means, e.g.:

- face-to-face;
- phone: +61 3 9448 1880;
- letter: MMC, 1 Dawson Street, Brunswick 3056;
- email: welcome@mercyministrycompanions.org.au;
- contact page of website:
<https://www.mercyministrycompanions.org.au/contact-us/>

Any feedback, comment or complaint does not have to be submitted in writing or on a proforma.

Where the complaint is about the Executive Officer or a Trustee Director or their conduct it should be referred to the Board Chair:

Margaret.Bounader@mercyministrycompanions.org.au

Where the complaint is about the Board Chair or their conduct the Executive Officer will direct the matter to the Deputy Chair:
Carmel.Ross@mercyministrycompanions.org.au.

The Executive Officer will record the complaint and its supporting information. A unique identifier/number will be assigned to the complaint file.

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received;
- To whom the complaint relates;
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they seek;
- Any other relevant information; and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

2. Acknowledging the complaint

The Executive Officer will acknowledge, via email or letter, receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When the Executive Officer begins the Assessment and Investigation stage within a few days of receiving the complaint, no further acknowledgement is required.

When appropriate, the Executive Officer may offer an immediate explanation or apology. A record of this will be made in the Complaints Register, including whether the apology has been accepted and is the close of the matter.

3. Assessing and Investigating

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the Executive Officer will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within MMC control. If not, the Executive Officer will inform the complainant of the appropriate organisation with which to lodge the complaint.

The Executive Officer will also clarify the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, the Executive Officer will consider:

1. How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is;
2. Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety;
3. How the person making the complaint is being affected;
4. The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed; and

5. Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations or persons.

The Executive Officer will investigate and respond to any feedback, comment or complaint unless the complainant says they want another person to do so or if the Executive Officer believes s/he is too close to the issues to be objective. If the Executive Officer is not able to investigate and respond to the feedback, comment or complaint, the Trustee Director Chair will decide who will do so.

The Executive Officer may:

1. Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation, including a copy of the MMC Complaints Policy and Complaints Handling Procedure;
2. Gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about; and/or
3. Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

The Executive Officer will keep the person making the complaint up-to-date on MMC 's progress in responding to their complaint, particularly if there are any delays.

The actions the Executive Officer decides to take will be tailored to each case and will consider any statutory requirements. These actions will be noted in the Complaints Register, with the date, who was involved, and what the steps taken were.

4. Determining outcome and providing reasons for decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, the Executive Officer will contact the person making the complaint and advise them:

1. The outcome of the complaint and any action MMC took;
2. The reason/s for the MMC's decision;
3. The remedy or resolution/s that MMC has proposed or put in place; and
4. Any options for review (determinations by the Executive Officer can be appealed to the MMC Trustee Directors via the Chair). If the matter relates to corporate governance the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission may decide it has a review role.

If possible, the Executive Officer will speak with the person making the complaint face-to-face or via phone. This discussion will be noted in the Complaints Register.

The Executive Officer will also email or send a letter with details regarding the outcome if the person requests this and/or the Executive Officer deems it necessary.

5. Documenting and closing the complaint: monitoring and review

The Executive Officer will keep records about:

- How MMC managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, whether the complainant said they were satisfied with the outcome or what would have been their preferred outcome), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes of the complaint.

The Executive Officer will report any recent complaints at each MMC Trustee Director Board meeting.

Each year, the Executive Officer will provide the MMC Trustee Directors with an annual complaint handling report for the previous financial year which will include:

- the number of complaints received;
- the type of issue leading to the complaint;
- the outcome of complaints, including whether the claim was substantiated;
- issues arising from complaints;
- the number of requests for internal and/or external review of the MMC complaint handling outcome;
- whether the complainant said they were satisfied with the outcome or what would have been their preferred outcome;
- any deficiencies in the operation of the process;
- need for further investigation, e.g., audits and satisfaction surveys; and
- improvements required to the complaints handling process.

4. Compliance

Compliance with this policy is being measured by:

- a) The minutes of all regular MMC Trustee Director meetings including a report on all feedback, comments or complaints, including a complainant's comments on the outcome; and
- b) An annual complaints handling report tabled at a meeting of the MMC Trustee Directors.

5. References

Civil law	a) Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act, 2012 (Cth) b) Corporations Act, 2001 (Cth)
Church teaching	a) Holy See (1983) Code of Canon Law b) ASCL (2022) National Response Framework

	c) ACSL (2022) Our Common Mission, endorsed by ACBC (2023) Integrity in Our Common Mission
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6. Review Date

In line with the MMC Complaints Policy Review date: June 2027.

Related Policies and Procedures

S4 – Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy

G3 – Complaints Policy

Appendix 1. Complaints assessment and outcome record

Name: **Address:**

Phone: **Email:**

Date complaint received: **Date complaint acknowledged:**

How complaint was communicated:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face | <input type="checkbox"/> email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> phone | <input type="checkbox"/> contact page of website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> letter | <input type="checkbox"/> other..... |

Issues raised by the person making a complaint:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mismanagement of information/data | <input type="checkbox"/> provision/quality of services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> misuse of resources | <input type="checkbox"/> timeliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cost of services | <input type="checkbox"/> other..... |

Outcome/s requested by the person making a complaint

Any other relevant information

Support person/advocate the person making a complaint has requested

Name: **Address:**

Phone: **Email:**

Any additional support the person making a complaint has requested

Is the issue/s raised in the complaint within MMC control? " Yes " No

MMC appointed person to investigate the complaint:

Is there more than one issue raised in the complaint within MMC control? " Yes " No

Date MMC Complaints Policy was given to the complainant

How was complaint investigated, information collected and from whom and what was uncovered?

How was the complainant kept informed on the progress of the complaint investigation?

Was the complaint or any aspect of it substantiated? Yes No

Details:

The reason/s for the MMC's decision:

Any recommendations made to address problems identified?

Any remedy or resolution/s that MMC has proposed or put in place:

Was the complainant satisfied with the outcome? Yes No

If applicable what did the complainant say would have been their preferred outcome?

What options for review were offered to the complainant?

- appeal to the MMC Trustee Directors (via the Chair)
- the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- other:

How was the outcome initially communicated to the complainant: face-to-face or phone.

Date that email or letter was sent to the complainant confirming the outcome:

Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes of the complaint.