



# Regulation 5.3 – Complaints Policy & Procedure.

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Effective date: June 2025

## **Acknowledgements**

MUSC CIC would like to express our thanks to the following organisations who have assisted in the development of this policy

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Mariners United Sporting Club CIC (MUSC CIC) is committed to providing high-quality, inclusive and safe services across all its activities. The organisation recognises that from time to time individuals may feel dissatisfied with aspects of its services, decisions or conduct. MUSC CIC welcomes feedback and complaints as an opportunity to learn, improve and maintain trust with participants, staff, volunteers, partners and the wider community.

This policy sets out how complaints can be raised, how they will be handled, and the standards that MUSC CIC will apply when responding.

### **1. INTERPRETATION**

For the purposes of this regulation, a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action, decision, behaviour or service provided by or on behalf of MUSC CIC. Complainants may include participants, parents or guardians, volunteers, staff, partners, funders or members of the public. This policy applies to complaints relating to MUSC CIC activities, events, programmes, governance or conduct. It does not apply to whistleblowing matters, which should be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy, or safeguarding concerns, which must be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. Employment-related grievances should be raised through the appropriate internal procedures unless they raise issues in the public interest.

### **2. PRINCIPLES**

MUSC CIC is committed to handling complaints in a manner that is fair, transparent, proportionate and respectful. Complaints will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and responded to within reasonable timescales. Individuals raising complaints will not be treated unfairly or disadvantaged as a result of doing so.

All complaints will be handled with due regard to confidentiality and data protection requirements.

### **3. INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

Where appropriate, MUSC CIC encourages complaints to be raised informally in the first instance, as many issues can be resolved quickly through open discussion. Informal complaints may be raised with the relevant staff member, volunteer, event lead or manager responsible for the activity concerned.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if the complainant does not feel comfortable raising it in this way, the formal complaints procedure may be used.

### **4. FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing, either by email or letter, and should include sufficient detail to allow the complaint to be understood and investigated. This should include the nature of the complaint, relevant dates, individuals involved and the outcome sought, where known.

Complaints should normally be submitted within a reasonable period of the issue arising. MUSC CIC reserves the right to decline to investigate complaints that are made an unreasonable length of time after the event, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Formal complaints will be acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe and allocated to an

appropriate person for investigation. Where a complaint concerns a staff member or volunteer, it will be handled by a senior representative not directly involved in the matter. Where a complaint concerns a senior officer or director, it will be handled by the Chair or another nominated director.

## **5. INVESTIGATION AND RESPONSE**

MUSC CIC will investigate complaints in a fair and proportionate manner, taking into account the seriousness and complexity of the issues raised. This may include reviewing relevant records, speaking with those involved and seeking additional information as required. Once the investigation is complete, MUSC CIC will provide a written response outlining the findings, any actions taken or proposed, and the reasons for the decision. While MUSC CIC aims to resolve complaints promptly, some cases may take longer due to their nature or the need for confidentiality.

## **6. SAFEGUARDING AND SERIOUS CONCERNS**

If a complaint raises safeguarding concerns involving a child, young person or vulnerable adult, MUSC CIC will treat the matter as a safeguarding issue and act immediately in accordance with its Safeguarding Policy. In such cases, the complaints procedure may be paused while safeguarding actions are undertaken.

Where a complaint indicates potential criminal activity or serious misconduct, MUSC CIC may refer the matter to external authorities or regulators as appropriate.

## **7. APPEALS AND REVIEW**

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint, they may request a review of the decision. Requests for review should be submitted in writing and will be considered by a person not previously involved in the investigation, where possible.

The outcome of the review will be communicated in writing and will represent MUSC CIC's final response.

## **8. UNREASONABLE OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

While MUSC CIC is committed to addressing genuine concerns, it reserves the right to manage complaints that are repetitive, abusive, vexatious or unreasonable. In such cases, MUSC CIC may limit further correspondence or take appropriate steps to protect staff and volunteers, while ensuring that legitimate issues are not disregarded.

## **9. RECORD KEEPING**

MUSC CIC shall maintain appropriate records of complaints received, investigations undertaken and outcomes reached. Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Information from complaints may be used, in anonymised form, to support organisational learning and improvement.

## **10. REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE**

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the MUSC CIC Board to ensure that it remains effective, accessible and aligned with legal and governance requirements. Failure to comply with this policy may be treated as a breach of MUSC CIC policies and codes of conduct.