



Working in partnership to improve maternity & neonatal services

National Maternity Voices Complaints Policy

This Policy sets out the approach of National Maternity Voices CIC (NMV) to dealing with complaints and concerns regarding our work or our people. It provides a framework for how we will handle, respond to and learn from the complaints and concerns we receive.

The purpose of this document is to set out our approach to complaint handling. The primary objective of this policy is to provide a high quality investigation and resolution of a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

Our aim is to listen to the complaint or concern, reassure the complainant that we are taking their concerns seriously and resolve the concern or complaint as quickly as possible. Wherever possible, we will endeavour to provide on the spot resolution of queries and concerns raised.

NMV is committed to equality of opportunity. No one involved in the investigation and resolution of a complaint will receive unfair treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

All complaints are handled in strict confidence.

Our Approach

NMV is a listening and learning organisation and aims always to act in line with its [purpose and values](#). We hope therefore that most concerns that arise can be addressed by direct conversation with the relevant members of the workforce. We will endeavour to respond to electronic messages raising a concern within a fortnight but cannot guarantee this at busy times. This policy addresses only those situations where something else is felt by the complainant to be necessary.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) (2009) guidance sets out the Principles of Good Complaint Handling. Whilst NMV is not a public body, the work that we undertake is for public bodies and we are involved within the transformation of the NHS Maternity Service. Therefore, we believe we should adopt the six themes detailed within the Principles for Good Complaint Handling.

<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/sites/default/files/page/0188-Principles-of-Good-Complaint-Handling-bookletweb.pdf>

Good complaint handling means:

1. Getting it right (having appropriate governance/systems and ensuring they are effective)
2. Being customer focused (clear procedures, listening, prompt + flexible response)
3. Being open and accountable (give reasons for decisions, keep records of complaints)
4. Acting fairly and proportionately (independent thorough investigation, fair to all parties)
5. Putting things right (prompt, appropriate + proportionate remedies)
6. Seeking continuous improvement (record + act on learning from complaints)

Whilst we aim to follow the ethos behind the PHSO 2009 guidance, we are not governed by, nor accountable to the NHS, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or any other statutory body associated with the NHS or the governance of any Public Body. Should you not be happy with the outcome of your complaint, you will not be entitled to go to the PHSO for review.

If you wish to complain about the conduct of NMV, you can see if your complaint falls under the remit of the Office of the Regulator for Community Interest Companies by looking at the [complaints about community interest companies](#) document.

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a formal response. It is usually a problem that has not yet been resolved; regarding a current or historical event. Complaints must be submitted by email to the Chair of Council (or other point of contact see 'roles & responsibilities' below). If approaches to complain are made via other media or verbally the complainant will be given this policy and asked to email. We will keep you up to date and write a summary to you upon closure of the investigation.

Scope of Policy

The following may be investigated as a formal complaint under this policy:

- a) Concerns about the priorities or policies of NMV
- b) Concerns about acts or omissions of one or more members of the NMV workforce acting for NMV,

The following will not be investigated....

- a) Concerns about local MVP chairs, except where they are acting on behalf of NMV.
- b) Disputes between two or more members of MVPs where neither party is acting on behalf of NMV.
- c) Events unrelated to any action or inaction of NMV.

See [Resolving issues in MVPs v2](#) for information on how to deal with local issues. NMV may be able to offer support to help resolve issues that arise locally via our email helpdesk, mentoring or consultancy.

Disputes that arise on NMV's social media groups will be dealt with by the administrators of the group in accordance with the agreed rules of the group. Complaints about the way an issue on a group is handled may fall within the scope of this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair of Council will be the primary point of contact for complaints. If the complaint relates to the Chair of Council, then the point of contact will be the workforce lead or another Director.

Action required in different circumstances:

Acknowledge the complaint within 3 days of receipt (may be delayed in holidays).

a) complaint about the organisation's **priorities or policies**

Action: collate with other feedback and consider at a directors meeting and/or table the issue for discussion at a Council meeting. The issue should be put on the agenda of the relevant body/bodies at the earliest meeting(s) where it can practically be considered. The findings will be reported in the minutes of the meeting(s) concerned. The complainant will be updated about any conclusions within 2 weeks of the discussion taking place.

b) complaint about an **individual** acting (or believed to be acting) as an agent of NMV

Within 1 week of acknowledging receipt of a complaint, ask 2 members of the directors or workforce who are as independent as possible of the complainant and individual complained of to investigate. They need to consider whether the individual was acting for NMV and if so whether she or he acted in line with NMV values and policies. They will send their findings to both parties within 3 weeks of the acknowledgement of the complaint. Where an opportunity for individual or organisational learning is identified as a result of a complaint, NMV will seek to address this, e.g. through training, mentoring, or policy and systems development. Should any instance of misconduct be found to have occurred, a disciplinary process will be followed in accordance with any relevant legislation and good practice.

Useful references

[Dismissing staff: Dismissals for conduct or performance reasons - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/dismissing-staff)

[Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures | Acas](https://www.acas.org.uk/disputes-at-work/grievance)

Agreed by NMV Directors 14/6/23