

MANCHESTER AND LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Charity Registration No 515599

Policy Statement – [Adopted by E.C. 16 Sep 2015]

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society is committed to providing an excellent service to its members and other stakeholders. The Society is managed entirely by the voluntary effort of some of its members and has no paid or permanent administration staff. It is inevitable therefore that the efficiency of its activities is constrained by the voluntary resources available and may at times fall short of professional or business standards. In the event that this, or any other circumstance, leads to a complaint being made it is important that any such complaint is recognised as an expression of dissatisfaction with our service calling for an immediate response.

Where through its error the Society has caused the complainant to incur a material loss, any remedy should ensure that the complainant is left in no worse position than would have been the case had the Society transacted the matter correctly.

Complaints must be dealt with promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially.

Response to complaints must be appropriate, e.g. an explanation, an apology or details of corrective action taken.

Complaints must be fully reviewed by the Executive Committee in order that lessons can be learned and improvements made.

Verbal Complaints

Concerns may be raised informally and may sometimes be able to be dealt with immediately. However, where this is not possible, the complainant should be politely asked to put full details of their grievance in writing addressed to the Society's General Secretary in order that the matter can be dealt with formally. MLFHS volunteers are discouraged from entering into verbal disputes, whether in person or via the telephone.

Written Complaints

Receipt of any complaint letter, including email, should be immediately be brought to the attention of the Chairman and General Secretary or in their absence to another Officer of the Society.

It is the responsibility of the appropriate Officer to ensure that a written acknowledgment is sent immediately stating a reasonable period of time within which a full response will be made. If appropriate the acknowledgment should request further details or clarification of the complaint. If at the end of the stated period of time a full response is not able to be made a written explanation of the delaying factors should be sent setting out a revised period of time for resolution.

The complaint should be dealt with reasonably and sensitively and the written response should be sufficiently explicit to enable us to state that we believe the matter has been concluded. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint they should be invited to address the matter directly to the Chairman of the Society stating why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.

If at any time it becomes apparent that the complainant is suggesting any activity that would warrant a criminal investigation or is seeking legal redress this procedure should be suspended and the matter passed immediately to the Chairman of the Society.

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A complete record of all documentation, transcripts of interviews and any other relevant information should be kept.