

OVERCOMING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

COMPLAINTS POLICY (Corporate/ Website version)

Date of Issue: December 2020	Issued by: Chief Executive Officer	Approved by: The Board
Date of Latest review: Feb 2023	Date of Next review: Feb 2024	
OMS Complaints Policy. This is a controlled document. This document is for internal use only and may not be relied upon by third parties for any purpose whatsoever ©		

What do you need to do if you have a complaint?

At Overcoming MS we are committed to working to a high professional standard and maintaining positive working relationships with our supporters, community members, donors, volunteers and members of the public. However, sometimes things can go wrong, and mistakes can be made.

If you wish to express dissatisfaction with how we provide our services, you have the right to make a complaint. So please take the time to tell us about it. If we are not getting something right, it is important to us that we know about it, so we can improve.

What do we aim to achieve in the way we handle complaints?

We will always aim, to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use
- publicise our complaints procedure so that you know how to make a complaint
- make sure that all complaints are responded to in a timely manner
- make sure that all serious complaints are investigated in full, in a timely way
- ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- gather information which helps the organisation to improve on an ongoing basis.

What can I expect from you?

You can expect that we will:

- treat your complaint seriously and respond within target timeframes set out below
- treat you with courtesy and fairness in your dealings with us at all times
- handle your complaint with sensitivity and discretion.

What things can I complain about?

- If you are unhappy with the expected standard of any service provided by Overcoming MS, for example, how we have used your data, the quality of information provided or how we have handled a request for information from you
- If Overcoming MS has failed to do something it should have done
- If Overcoming MS has done something that is not up to the expected standard
- If Overcoming MS staff, Trustees or volunteers have been unhelpful or have treated someone unfairly
- If Overcoming MS hasn't followed its own policies, rules or procedures correctly
- If Overcoming MS hasn't followed required regulations or standards.

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If you have the evidence of an illegal activity taking place or that people or property are at risk of harm, this is an emergency situation. Please contact the relevant emergency service – police, fire service or ambulance – by phoning 999 in the UK or a different number depending on your geographical location. Then, contact Overcoming MS as soon as possible.

We would appreciate it if you did not use the complaints process to make a general enquiry, to request a service, report a fault or to ask for an explanation of a situation. An e-mail or a phone call to us will probably help you with this kind of general enquiry.

If you have any concerns about an individual’s wellbeing relating to Overcoming MS, then please contact our Safeguarding Lead on contact@overcomingms.org. You can also request to see our Safeguarding Policy.

How do I make a complaint?

The first step is to contact Overcoming MS and ask to speak to the person concerned. If you would prefer not to use the phone, you can either write to us at our registered address – Overcoming MS, c/o Critchleys LLP, Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 2EP or e- mail contact@overcomingms.org

What information do we need?

For all complaints, we will require the following information from you:

- The date of the situation that you are complaining about
- The nature of your complaint
- The reason you are complaining
- Any other information that may help us to investigate the complaint, for example, details of any other people involved in the situation or who witnessed it
- The best way to contact you.

Will my details be kept confidential?

We will take every reasonable step to keep your identity confidential. However, in order to investigate and respond to a complaint appropriately, it may be helpful to have full details of the incident which may include your identity. The individual at Overcoming MS responsible for dealing with the complaint will decide who involved receives this information. Those individuals will be required to keep any details confidential. If our employee treats this information inappropriately and this leads to a breach of confidentiality, they may face disciplinary action.

What happens next?

Your complaint will be recorded in writing on our Incidents Log, to make sure that it is followed up. Our goal is to acknowledge complaints within **two working days**.

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Some complaints can be dealt with very quickly, without the need for a formal investigation. If this is possible, Overcoming MS will do so. You will receive a letter and our response within **10 working days**. If you are not happy with our response, you can refer your complaint directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

What if my complaint needs to be investigated?

More serious complaints may need to be investigated. As part of the investigation, it may be necessary to talk to other individuals, e.g. members of the public who may have further information.

Overcoming MS will investigate all serious complaints if received within **1 month** of the situation that triggered the complaint.

If a complaint is about an Overcoming MS employee or volunteer, a meeting will be held with that individual. If external parties were involved, they will also have an opportunity to attend this meeting and supply evidence.

Within **15 working days** of receiving a complaint we will write to you informing you about the results of the investigation. If there are difficulties with the investigation, or employee disciplinary action is to be taken before completion of investigation, you will receive a letter explaining this. If this is the case, this may need to be dealt with before the investigation can continue.

If your complaint has highlighted changes that need to be made to the way we work, Overcoming MS will take the necessary steps to make these improvements.

If your complaint is about our fundraising activities, you have **8 weeks** to refer your complaint to the [Fundraising Regulator \(UK\)](#). The Fundraising Regulator will review your complaint and advise you within 4 weeks whether any action will be taken.

If your complaint is about how your data has been handled, you can contact [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (see Information Governance Framework).

What happens if I'm unhappy with the result of your investigation?

If you are unhappy with the results of our investigation, you have **1 month** to write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, asking them to review your complaint. Contact details will be provided to you. You will receive a response within **15 working days**, providing you with the final decision.

If you remain unhappy after these steps have been taken, you can refer your complaint to the [Charity Commission](#), which regulates charities in England & Wales. You will need to provide them with our charity registration number, which is 1157579.

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If your complaint is with regards our charitable work in Australia, then please contact the regulator [ACNC](#) quoting our charity registration number which is 50603488508.

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