

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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1.0 INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1.1 Definitions

- **Committee of Management**

Will be referred to as CoM in this document.

- **Complainant**

Person registering a complaint.

- **Complaint**

Any registration of dissatisfaction with the operation, facilities or personnel associated with MAINfm.

- **Complaints Form**

The MAINfm Complaints Form will be available on the MAINfm web site under MAINfm 'Policies and Reports'.

- **Complaints Officer**

Person appointed by the Committee of Management to manage a complaint to a resolution.

- **'Serious Allegations'**

A serious allegation applies when one or more of the following risks to the station relates to the allegation made:

- a financial risk
- a legal risk
- conflict of interest
- sexual harassment or assault
- physical assault

The Complaints Officer must make the CoM aware of any 'serious allegations' made.

1.2 Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

The following outlines the step-by-step process for dealing with complaints.

Step 1: Making the Complaint

Complainant is to be advised to complete the 'MAINfm Complaints Form', located on the website, and to send via email: info@mainfm.net. A response from the Complaints Officer will be sent within 7 days.

- If the complainant is unable to utilise the online form, they can be assisted by a member of staff
- Anonymous complaints are unable to be actioned

Step2: Receiving the Complaint.

Where a Complaint Form is received, the Complaints Officer is to inform the Complainant:

- that the complaint will be treated as confidential
- that the Complainant's name will not be revealed to anyone unless escalation to the CoM and/or law enforcement agencies is required and that permission will be requested from the Complainant before information is given to other parties.

Step 3: Complaints Officer Investigation of the Complaint

Depending on the severity of the complaint the Complaints Officer will contact the Complainant in writing immediately, or at least within 7 days.

The Complaints Officer will:

- elicit the details of the complaint
- elicit the details of the person or persons against whom the complaint is made
- when the alleged action/s occurred
- ensure support for the complainant continues during the process either internally or externally.

The Complaints Officer will inform the relevant person that a complaint has been made against them and seek their version of events.

The Complaints Officer will document:

- the nature of the complaint
- each person's version of events
- all action taken
- findings

The Complaints Officer will:

- attempt to resolve the issue
- where a resolution is not achieved, the Complaints Officer will:
 - escalate the complaint to the CoM
 - advise the parties to the complaint that the issue is under review by the CoM
 - advise the party of the complaint that they are temporarily relieved from 'on air' duties and/or volunteer duties (or all MAINfm duties if the CoM decrees) until a ruling is made.

The CoM:

- make a ruling

The CoM President:

- advises the Complaints Officer of the CoM ruling

The Complaints Officer:

- Advises both parties to the complaint of the CoM ruling

Step 4: Addressing Less Serious Allegations

If the complaint **does not involve a 'serious allegation'** the following procedure will be adhered to:

The Complaints Officer will:

- offer the person making the complaint the opportunity and support to discuss and resolve the matter with the person/s against whom the complaint has been made
- inform the person/persons that a complaint has been made against them
- inform both parties of their right to bring an advocate or support person to a meeting to discuss the complaint
- organise a meeting time and place that is agreeable to both parties.

If the Complainant elects to discuss the complaint with the person/s without a meeting including the Complaints Officer and if this produces a satisfactory resolution, the Complaints Officer will follow up the Complainant within an agreed timeframe to check the matter has been satisfactorily dealt with and resolved.

Step 5: Informing the Committee of Management

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first meeting to discuss the complaint they will be offered assistance to proceed to the next stage - a panel hearing.

The Committee of Management must be informed within 3 days of the decision to move to a panel hearing.

Step 6: Panel Hearing

- The Committee of Management will appoint a panel of at least two Management Committee Members (excluding any Committee Member related to the complaint). This Panel may include an external person agreed to by both parties.
- The Panel will investigate the complaint and consult with the complainant and their advocate to determine the means of resolving it.
- A decision of the Panel will be the final decision and the complainant will have no further internal mechanism for pursuing the complaint.
- The complainant will be informed in writing of the Panel's decision and asked for feedback on the complaints procedure.

1.3 Monitoring Complaints

The Complaints Officer will keep records and monitor complaints to:

- ensure complaints are resolved effectively and efficiently
- identify how services and systems can be improved
- identify changes required in any of the organisation's policy or procedures.

Where no complaints are received in a year, The Committee of Management will investigate to ensure this is due to satisfaction with the operation of the station rather than as a result of difficulty in making complaints or fear of reprisal.