



Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Policy sets out Malvern Hills Trust's (MHT's) commitment to handling any complaints received fairly, promptly and consistently. The associated Procedure explains how complaints may be made and how they will be investigated and resolved.
- 1.2. MHT welcomes complaints and compliments as valuable feedback that supports organisational learning and continuous improvement.
- 1.3. MHT will acknowledge complaints promptly and aim to resolve them as quickly as possible. We will listen carefully to understand the complaint and the remedy sought, investigate proportionately and explain our decisions clearly.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Policy applies to complaints about actions taken, or not taken, by MHT, its Trustees, employees and volunteers. It covers complaints about service standards, failure to follow procedures or to satisfy legal requirements, unfair treatment, complaints relating to data protection matters, and delays in responding to previous complaints.
- 2.2. Where it is unclear whether a communication received is a concern or a complaint, MHT will err on the side of caution and treat it as a complaint.
- 2.3. Where it is unclear whether or not the complaint is a data protection complaint, MHT will seek clarification from the complainant.
- 2.4. The Policy does not replace separate processes for employment matters, disciplinary procedures, safeguarding concerns or legal proceedings.

3. Principles

- 3.1. Complaints will be handled fairly, impartially, and as quickly as possible.
- 3.2. Complainants will be treated with respect, kept informed of progress, and told the outcome without undue delay.
- 3.3. MHT will consider the outcome sought and take proportionate action where something has gone wrong.
- 3.4. Complaints will be handled confidentially as far as possible, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- 3.5. Reasonable adjustments will be made where needed to help someone raise or pursue a complaint.



4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. Staff and volunteers, including Trustees, are responsible for responding appropriately to concerns and complaints, including recognising and referring data protection complaints promptly to the appropriate person.
- 4.2. Senior managers are responsible for ensuring that formal complaints are investigated and answered.
- 4.3. The CEO and the Board Panel are responsible for considering escalated complaints in line with the Complaints Procedure.
- 4.4. The MHT Governance Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of complaint trends and for organisational learning.

5. Learning and Reporting

- 5.1. MHT regards complaints as a source of learning and improvement.
- 5.2. We will keep records of complaints, investigations, outcomes, decisions reached and the reasons for those decisions. Complaint records will be retained and disposed of in line with MHT's Data Protection Policy and retention periods.
- 5.3. We will carry out regular reviews of complaint information to identify trends, risks and opportunities to improve services, policies or procedures.
- 5.4. The Governance Committee will receive regular reports on complaints to identify trends and wider learning. The Committee will be informed of any resulting improvements to services, policies or procedures.

Version Control - Approval and Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually, and earlier if required following changes in legislation, Charity Commission guidance, or other significant factors.

Version No	Date approved by Board	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	January 2018	Procedure for dealing with complaints approved by Board	Annually
2.0	September 2026	- Complete review. Procedure rewritten as a policy with associated procedure - Reformatted in MHT house style. - Specific reference to data protection complaints added as required by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.	Annually

Next review due: September 2027

Approved by the Board on 10 September 2026



Malvern Hills Trust

Regulatory Guidance

Charity Commission (England & Wales)

[Raising a concern with the Charity Commission \(CC47\) - GOV.UK](#)

Related MHT Policies & Procedures

Abusive, Persistent and Vexatious Complainants Policy

Data Protection Policy

Disciplinary Procedures

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Grievance Procedure

Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy



Complaints Procedure

This Procedure explains how to raise a complaint with Malvern Hills Trust and how the Trust will handle, investigate and respond to it.

1. How to make a complaint

Complaints may be made by telephone, in person during office hours, by letter to the address below, or by email to info@malvern hills.org.uk. Please tell us what happened, when it happened, who was involved, and what outcome you are seeking.

If you need help to make a complaint or require a reasonable adjustment, please let us know and we will try to assist.

2. Informal resolution

Where appropriate, the Trust will try to resolve concerns quickly and informally. If an informal approach does not resolve the matter, or if the issue is serious, you may make a formal complaint.

3. Formal complaints

Formal complaints will be referred without delay to an appropriate member of the senior management team. Data protection complaints will be handled in line with the Trust's data protection obligations as well as this procedure.

- We will aim to acknowledge a formal complaint within five working days¹.
- We will carry out a fair and proportionate investigation, including review of relevant information and, where needed, discussions with those involved. We will take appropriate steps to respond without undue delay and keep you informed of progress.
- Where practicable, the complaint will be investigated by someone who has had no prior involvement in the matter.
- Where a complaint concerns a member of staff, the Trust will act fairly to all parties and, where appropriate, give that person an opportunity to respond.
- We will aim to send a written response within 30 calendar days. If this is not possible, we will explain why, provide an update on when you can expect a response, and inform you of the outcome without undue delay once our investigation is complete.

4. Escalation

If you are dissatisfied with the formal response, you may ask for the complaint to be reviewed.

- **Stage 1:** referral to the CEO for further review. The CEO will aim to provide a written response within 15 working days.

¹ This target is within MHT's general complaints process and without prejudice to statutory data protection requirements.



- **Stage 2:** if you remain dissatisfied, or if the complaint concerns the CEO, you may ask the Secretary to the Board to refer the matter to a Board Panel comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board, and the relevant committee chair. The Panel will be convened within 21 working days and you will be informed of its decision within five working days of the Panel meeting.
- **Stage 3:** if you remain dissatisfied and, in exceptional circumstances, the matter may be referred to the full Board.

5. External routes and related matters

If it has not been possible to resolve your complaint through our internal processes, the following organisations may be able to assist you:

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), for complaints relating to data protection.

The Charity Commission, for serious regulatory concerns relating to charity governance, serious risk, misconduct, mismanagement, or risk to charitable assets or beneficiaries.

The Trust may decline to consider complaints that are abusive, repetitive, or where the issue is already being considered through another formal process.

6. How to contact Malvern Hills Trust

In person: during office hours: from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm and 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm, Monday to Thursday (closed Friday)

Telephone: 01684 892002

Email: info@malvernhills.org.uk

By Post: Malvern Hills Trust
Manor House
Grange Road
Malvern WR14 3EY