

# Complaints Procedure



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## Part 1 Complaints - Clients and other Service Users

## Part 2 Complaints on behalf of Clients and other Service Users to external organisations

## Part 1 Complaints - Clients and other Service Users

### Introduction

Money Advice Plus (MAP) is committed to continuously improving our services and therefore we welcome all feedback and complaints about the services we provide. Our approach to complaints is set out in the Policy and should be read in conjunction with this Procedure.

### Communication

- Clients are notified of the Complaints Procedure at the start of a case in the most appropriate format: either by providing the client care letter, referring to the procedure in a Support Plan letter, or if none of these is appropriate, then through a verbal explanation of the procedure. This must be case noted.
- The complaints leaflet is also available on our website

### Continuous Improvement

- Complaints and issues are logged and discussed at regular staff meetings and managers meetings
- The Complaints and Problems Monitoring log informs the Annual Service Review

### Responsibilities

What	Who	How
Managing	Project Manager whom the client is funded by, or if no clear funder, the Operations Manager	Following procedure, documenting complaints accurately,
Reporting	All staff and volunteers Project Manager or Operations Manager as appropriate  Chief Executive (CE)	To the appropriate Project Manager To manager meetings and anonymised to staff meetings Anonymised to Board meetings



Investigation	Stage 1: Project Manager or Operations Manager as appropriate Stage 2: CE or nominee Stage 3: Chair of Trustees or nominee	Following procedure, investigating and communicating with all relevant parties
Record Keeping	Project Manager or Operations Managers as appropriate	Complaints folder and Complaints and Problems Monitoring log Kept in confidential complaints file in Managers TEAM, papers scanned, saved in the folder and original documents returned to the sender or disposed of confidentially
Changes and improvements	CE and management team	Changes to policies and procedures Communicating changes

### **How to make a complaint – for Clients and other Service Users**

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing. If help is needed from an appropriate person, service or organisation MAP will make every effort to provide contact details.

We will always provide a copy of our complaints procedure to anyone making a complaint.

Anyone who is using our service/ or someone on behalf of a service user is able to complain to external organisations if they do not want to talk to us directly. If someone wishes to use a third party organisation to make a complaint, we will help them identify the most relevant organisation. (see stage 4 below).

### **How we investigate complaints**

We will conduct an investigation into the complaint and follow the stages set out below.

- We start by trying to make sure we have understood the detail of the complaint. We will look at the letter/email of complaint, or the notes of the verbal complaint. We may need to contact the person who made the complaint to clarify any points if we are at all unclear.
- We will talk to any MAP workers referred to in the complaint and read the complainant's case notes
- We will review all information we have and may contact the complainant if further clarification is needed.

After investigation, a decision will be made. The complaint will either be:

- Justified, and if we need to make changes and take further action as required.
- Not upheld. This means we do not feel we have done anything wrong.

### **Confidentiality**

The identity of the complainant will be kept confidential and restricted to those involved in investigating the complaint. All those involved in an investigation will abide by our Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

If a third party has made a complaint on behalf of a client, we must be satisfied that we have permission to speak with them.

Details of any complaint and our investigation are covered by the same confidentiality that applies to all our work. This means that during investigations, and when looking at how we can improve our services, details of the complaint may be shared with appropriate members of the MAP team.

Data will not be shared outside MAP unless the complainant gives their permission.

### **Timescales for dealing with complaints**

MAP is keen to deal with complaints thoroughly and speedily.

The stages below refer to timescales in which we aim to respond. However, sometimes there are unavoidable circumstances which may mean it takes longer than planned (for example, absence of people relevant to the investigation, or difficulty making contact with the person raising the complaint if clarification is needed), or the nature of the complaint involves complex issues that take longer to investigate. If we cannot respond within the stated time scales, we will inform the complainant and tell them when we hope to reply.

MAP is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for some of the money handling work we do, specifically debt counselling. If the complaint is about this work, clients are entitled to use the Financial Ombudsman's complaints procedure if we do not give a final response to the complaint within 8 weeks of receiving it. If this happens, we will tell the client and provide a copy of the Financial Ombudsman's complaints leaflet.

There are 3 stages to our complaints process. If not satisfied with the decision after exhausting our procedure, then the complainant may decide to take their complaint to an external organisation.

### **Potential complaints and complaints log**

All potential complaints or complaints formal or informal, must be recorded on the Complaints and Problems Monitoring log.

### **Stage 1: Informal investigation**

There are 2 ways to informally investigate a complaint

- i. Complaint handled by a caseworker

We hope that in most cases the complaint may be easily resolved at the time by the caseworker.

The caseworker may be asked by the complainant to put the outcome of the complaint in writing. If you are unsure how to do this, please speak to the Project Manager of the service

whom the client is funded by. If it is unclear who the funder is, then contact the Operations Manager.

Caseworkers must record the details of the complaint in the clients case file and send a copy of the complaint to the Project Manager.

If a client is not satisfied with the way a complaint has been handled by the caseworker or with the outcome, or if they want to complain about MAP's service in general and prefer to raise it directly with a manager, they can:

- ask the caseworker to pass the complaint to a manager or
- contact a manager directly, either by phone, letter or email to
- The caseworker should follow the lines of responsibility highlighted in the table above to allocate to the appropriate person/ manager

#### ii Complaint handled by a manager

If a client isn't happy with the way their complaint has been managed by their caseworker or wants their complaint to be dealt with by a manager directly

Please provide them with these contact details

Hove office 08081 963699 or  
Eastbourne Office on 01323 635999  
and ask to speak to a Manager or the Chief Executive or

write to:

Chief Executive, Money Advice Plus, Tisbury Road Office, Hove Town Hall, Tisbury Road, Hove BN3 3BQ (mark the envelope Private and Confidential)

Email to [info@moneyadviceplus.org.uk](mailto:info@moneyadviceplus.org.uk) with the subject heading [FAO Chief Executive – Private and Confidential](#)

The time frame for Stage 1 - after the complaint has been passed to a manager

We will **acknowledge** that a complaint has been received and is being looked into by a manager **within 5 working days from the date the complaint is received**.

We will **respond** to the complaint **within 28 days** from the date the complaint is received. If the response/outcome is made within 5 days, then this correspondence may also include the acknowledgement of receipt.

If the client is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 then they are entitled to **appeal against** this decision. This must be done **within 14 days** of the date of the response/outcome. The complaint will then be referred to Stage 2.

## **Stage 2: Formal investigation**

The complaint will be passed to the CE of MAP, who can choose to delegate investigation of the complaint. The investigation will always be overseen by someone who was not involved at Stage 1. The objective is to review and investigate further and where possible, resolve.

### Time Frame for Stage 2

We will provide **written acknowledgement** with an outline of what we will be doing and who will be involved **within 14 days** of receipt of the 1<sup>st</sup> appeal.

We will **respond in writing within 28 days of receipt of the 1<sup>st</sup> appeal**. The response will be from the Chief Executive.

If the response/outcome is made within 14 days, then this correspondence may also include the acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response/outcome at Stage 2 then they are entitled to a **2nd appeal**. This must be done in writing **within 14 days of the date of our response/outcome letter**.

The complaint will then be referred to Stage 3.

## **Stage 3: Review by Trustees**

If an appeal against the decision made in Stage 2 is made, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who may investigate themselves or appoint a different person to review and investigate further and where possible resolve.

### Time Frame for Stage 3

We will provide **written acknowledgement** with an outline of what we will be doing and who will be involved **within 14 days** of receipt of the 2<sup>nd</sup> appeal

We will **respond in writing with 28 days of receipt of the 2nd appeal**. The response will be from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

If the response/outcome is made within 14 days, then this correspondence may also include the acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal.

This is the last stage of MAP's internal complaints procedure.

## **Stage 4: External**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome after exhausting MAP's complaint's procedure, they will be assisted to initiate the complaints procedure of the organisation which funds the service they have received.

We will also advise the complainant on how to contact their local Councillor, Member of Parliament, local authority or anyone else that may be considered appropriate.

### Brighton and Hove City Council

For information on how to make a complaint

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/feedback-about-council-services/how-make-complaint>

### West Sussex County Council

For information on how to make a complaint

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/have-your-say/comments-suggestions-compliments-and-complaints/>

email [socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk) Tel: 01243 642121

### East Sussex County Council

For information on how to make a complaint

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/getting-help-from-us/asc-complaints-feedback>

email [Adult Social Care Complaints](mailto:Adult Social Care Complaints) Tel: Switchboard – 0345 608 0190

The Financial Conduct Authority regulates MAP for some of the work we do (in respect of Debt advice and debt counselling Cass11 cases only). Because of this, service users who are advised under either of these pieces of work are entitled to use the Financial Ombudsman's complaints procedure after they have a final outcome from Money Advice Plus.

For information on how to make a complaint

<https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/how-complain> Tel: 0800 111 6768 (freephone)

Clients who have been advised on immigration matters can contact

The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, Complaints Team, OISC, PO Box 567, Dartford, DA1 9XW

More information about the complaints scheme is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser/complain-about-an-adviser>

email [complaints@oisc.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@oisc.gov.uk) Tel: 0345 000 0046

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

For complaints about adult social care services.

For more information <https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

Phone 0300 061 0614

The current complaints leaflet can be found in Marketing/Materials/Leaflets

[https://moneyadviceplus.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/organization/Em221D9a-exlormSVRuY\\_IYBQWnP54yCqfz7g6M3OKKaew?e=6cqZ93](https://moneyadviceplus.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/organization/Em221D9a-exlormSVRuY_IYBQWnP54yCqfz7g6M3OKKaew?e=6cqZ93)

A shortcut can be found in the office manual

[https://moneyadviceplus.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/EmployeeResources/EpqVWSY\\_NuOIPOWJW05yuEBvnKSRjVia4nY-wbmEMuuhg?e=ZRjVqe](https://moneyadviceplus.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/EmployeeResources/EpqVWSY_NuOIPOWJW05yuEBvnKSRjVia4nY-wbmEMuuhg?e=ZRjVqe)

A summary of this procedure is also contained in the client care letter which is given to all new clients

<https://moneyadviceplus.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/EmployeeResources/EnZpLzXmb5AjzNPdAdhdNEBvg7GRsW9SxmCirS3dXymLg?e=EOqXeV> And on our website

<https://www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk/client-information/>

## **Part 2 MAP making a complaint on behalf of Clients and other Service Users to external organisations**

If a client has received a poor service from another organisation it may be appropriate to assist the client to make a complaint or make a complaint on their behalf.

1. Before taking action, discuss the issue with your Project Lead or Project Manager who oversees the work the client is funded by. If it is unclear, then contact the Operations Manager.
2. Wherever possible clients should be supported to make the complaint themselves. Support can be in any form which is of most help to the client such as finding contact details or drafting a letter.
3. If you do not agree that the client has grounds for a complaint, you can still support them to make the complaint but you must not complain on their behalf. The reasons why you do not agree must be case noted and explained to the client.
4. If after discussing with your Project Lead or Project Manager and it is appropriate to make a complaint on behalf of the client, you must follow the complaints procedures of the external organisation. The content of the complaint must be approved by the Project Manager before submission.

Other relevant documents

Complaints Policy

Complaints leaflet

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Procedure

Ownership:	Client Service Managers
Date Issued:	Mar 23
Review Date of procedure:	April 21, April 23
Review frequency	1 year
Reason for frequency	AQS