

## Complaints & Grievances Policy

### OBJECTIVE

Complaints, and other forms of feedback, provide valuable information on levels of satisfaction with DMCC and can provide DMCC with an opportunity to improve upon all aspects of service. All forms of feedback are to be taken seriously and an opportunity for improvement.

Feedback that is recorded and handled effectively will provide valuable information in identifying areas for improvement, coordinating a consistent approach for resolution, reducing the potential for future complaints and allow for reporting and efficient allocation of resources.

Resolving complaints and grievances at the earliest opportunity and in a way that respects and values the person's feedback can be one of the most important factors in recovering the person's confidence in the DMCC. It can also help prevent further escalation of the complaint. A responsive, efficient, effective and fair complaint management system can assist the DMCC to achieve this.

Anyone associated with DMCC has the right to present a complaint and to be treated fairly in the process. We will treat all complaints, grievances and appeals in confidence, involving only those who need to know, and only with your permission.

### POLICY

#### ***Confidentiality***

- Only people directly involved in a complaint, or in resolving it, can have access to information about it.
- Everyone involved in resolving a complaint will be told about the importance of confidentiality.
- Information will be kept securely and will only go on an employee's file if they are disciplined as part of the complaint resolution.

#### ***Fairness/impartiality***

- Both sides will get a chance to tell their side of the story. Both sides have the right to be treated fairly, and to have the complaint decided by someone who acts fairly and in good faith.
- No one will make any assumptions or take any action until all relevant information has been collected and considered. Any person who has been complained about has a right to know details of any allegations against them.
- Both sides will have access to support or representation if they want or need it.
- Formal complaints must be substantiated before disciplinary action is taken.
- DMCC will investigate all allegations before making a decision 'on the balance of probabilities'. This means that we will find a complaint substantiated and take action if we believe, on the basis of the available evidence.

#### ***Protection against unfair repercussions or victimisation***

- DMCC will take all necessary steps to make sure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised by anyone for coming forward with the complaint, or for helping to resolve it.

- Any victimisation will be disciplined. Anyone who uses this complaint procedure maliciously or in bad faith (e.g. to lie about someone) can be disciplined. If DMCC decide that we need to take disciplinary action against someone for breaching any of our policies or standards, then we will do so. DMCC will aim to do this fairly and consistently.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Lodging a complaint or grievance**

1. If you have a complaint or grievance you should contact the Coordinator to discuss the issue
2. If you are unhappy with the response, or you wish to make a formal complaint, do so by filling in the attached feedback form and forwarding it to the Coordinator or Chair of the CoM.
3. You should provide exact details of your concerns or allegations.
4. You will have your complaint acknowledged within 5 working days
5. Your complaint will then be investigated and you will be advised of the outcome of the investigation within 10 – 60 days depending on how complicated your issue is.
6. If you don't agree with the outcome, you may choose to take your complaint further and request an internal review by contacting the Committee of Management.
7. If you continue to be unhappy with the response you may request that a third party mediator be engaged.

### **Investigating a Complaint – step by step**

8. Wherever practical, the Coordinator should:
  1. Get full information about the complaint and how the complainant would like to see it resolved.
  2. Decide if you are the appropriate person to handle the complaint or appoint someone to investigate.
  3. Speak to witnesses very carefully, so as not to breach confidentiality. Speak to only as many witnesses as necessary.
  4. Determine whether there is enough information to know if the matter(s) alleged in the complaint did or did not happen or the allegation warrants action.
  5. If the complaint is about a DMCC service or policy consider if changes need to be made to the service or policy to improve the quality of service, access or equity.
  6. If the complaint is about a volunteer or staff member put the information received to the person/people involved and get their side of the story.
  7. Work out whether the alleged matter(s) is/are serious enough to warrant disciplinary action. If so initiate disciplinary action as per the relevant policy.
  8. If relevant, attempt to mediate between the people in dispute. This means coming to a mutually satisfactory agreement with the people involved about how the complaint should be resolved.
  9. Follow up with all parties in a timely manner to ensure a satisfactory outcome has been achieved.

Related: Complaint Form

# Complaint Form

Name: .....

Postal address: .....  
.....

Telephone No: ..... Email address: .....

Is this a complaint about a DMCC service or policy? YES NO

If yes Program/Event/Policy Name: .....

Is this a complaint about the actions of a DMCC staff member or volunteer? YES NO

When did the incident occur? Date: ..... Time: ..... am/pm

Where did it occur? .....

Who was Involved? .....

.....

Description of Incident (What Happened?) .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Were there any witnesses?  Yes  No

If "Yes", please [provide details below

Name: ..... Contact: .....

Name: ..... Contact: .....

**What outcome would you like to see?** .....

.....

.....

.....  
Name (please print)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date