MacIntyre
Providing support...your way

MacIntyre Complaints Policy

This MacIntyre policy is formally reviewed by the Policy Owner and Lead Reviewer every three years, or earlier where there are changes to relevant legislation, regulation, or organisational requirements.

- For the date of, or evidence of, the most recent review, please see *'MacIntyre policy and associated guidance list'*.
- Link: Policies and Resources | MacIntyre (macintyrecharity.org)

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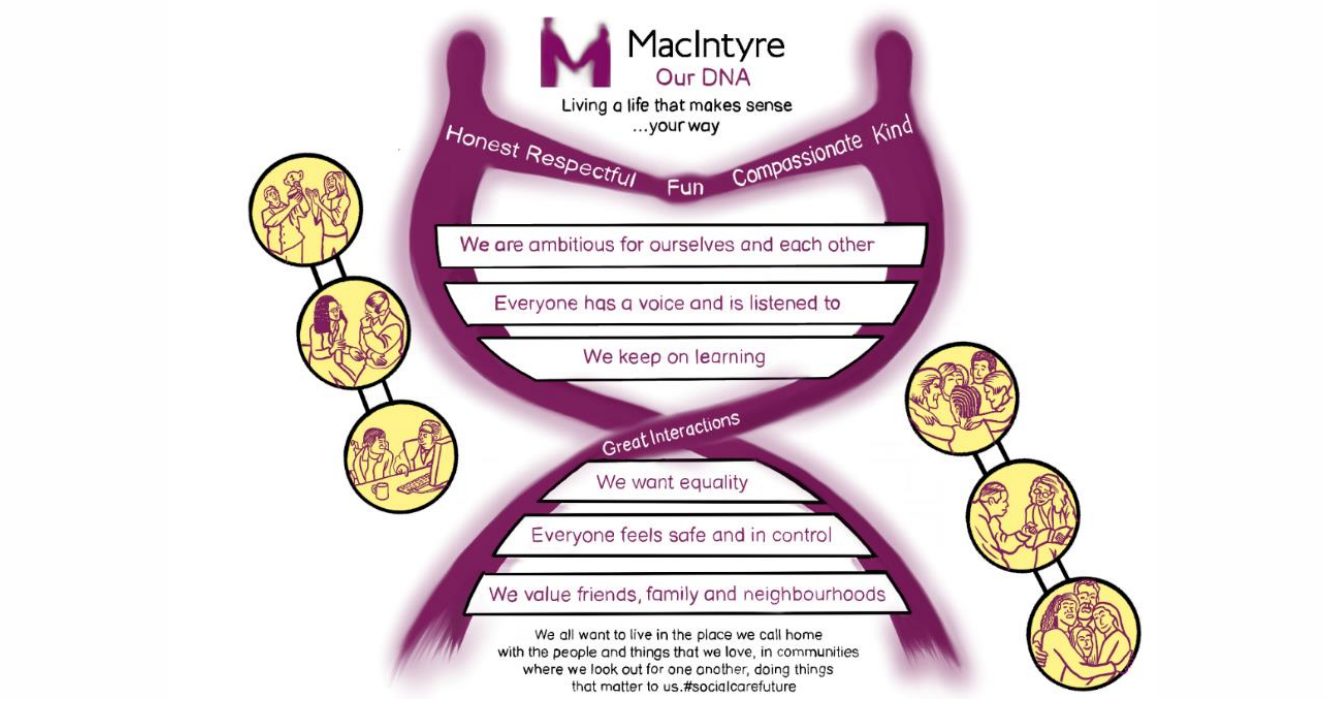
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Underpinning Principles

MacIntyre's DNA shows the importance we put on ensuring each person is at the centre of their support. People who draw on MacIntyre's support have gloriously ordinary lives, living the life they choose, using their gifts, skills and passions to contribute and connect to the people in their local neighbourhood. MacIntyre invests in, and helps shape, neighbourhoods to be inclusive and welcoming spaces for everyone.

This is evident in our distinctive philosophy and way of working that underpins all our activities. It is the very essence of what we do, and that is why we refer to it as our DNA.

Our approach to complaints reflects MacIntyre's DNA, ensuring every person's voice and lived experience informs how we learn and improve.



1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out MacIntyre's commitment to managing concerns and complaints in a fair, transparent, and person-centred way. It establishes a consistent approach across all MacIntyre provisions and locations, Adult Social Care, No Limits, MacIntyre School, and Children's Homes, ensuring that everyone has the right to express dissatisfaction, raise concerns, and give feedback without fear of reprisal. This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of openness and continuous improvement, where feedback is valued as a vital source of learning.
- Ensure that concerns and complaints are addressed promptly, respectfully, and fairly, in line with relevant legislation and best practice standards.
- Provide clarity and consistency so that all stakeholders understand how to raise concerns and what to expect from MacIntyre's response.
- Strengthen accountability and quality, ensuring all complaints contribute to improvements in practice, service delivery, and organisational learning.
- Safeguard the rights, safety, and wellbeing of people who draw on our support, students, children, families, members of staff, and the public.

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By establishing clear expectations and a standardised framework, this policy supports MacIntyre's mission to deliver high-quality, person-centred services where everyone feels heard, respected, and empowered to speak up.

Detailed operational requirements, including timescales, complaint stages, and documentation standards, are set out in the MacIntyre Complaints Procedure.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all parts of MacIntyre and sets out how concerns and complaints will be managed consistently across the organisation.

Complaints may be raised through a variety of methods, including verbally, in writing, electronically, via advocates or third parties, and anonymously where appropriate.

This policy applies to:

People and groups who may raise concerns or complaints

- People who draw on MacIntyre's support
- Students and young people
- Children living in MacIntyre Children's Homes
- Parents, families, carers, and advocates
- Employees and volunteers
- Professionals from external agencies
- Members of the public
- Contractors, commissioning bodies, and partner organisations

People required to follow this policy

- All MacIntyre employees
- Volunteers
- Agency workers
- Students and trainees
- Contractors or third parties delivering services on behalf of MacIntyre
- Managers and leaders at all levels
- Trustees and Local Advisory Board members (for duties relevant to their governance role)

Provisions and locations included

This policy covers all MacIntyre operations, including:

- Adult Social Care
- No Limits
- MacIntyre School
- MacIntyre Children's Homes
- On-site and off-site educational and residential locations
- Community-based support
- Corporate and administrative functions

Out of scope

Certain issues follow separate procedures and are **not** covered by this policy:

- Safeguarding concerns involving adults or children
- Employee grievances

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- Whistleblowing
- Issues related to disciplinary procedures
- Criminal allegations

Where a concern falls within these categories, it must be redirected to the appropriate process without delay. Where complaints and these processes overlap, the complaints process may be paused or adapted to avoid prejudice, in line with the Complaints Procedure. Where a complaint raises a **safeguarding concern**, statutory timescales and safeguarding procedures take precedence.

3. Definitions

To ensure consistency and avoid ambiguity, the following terms are defined for the purpose of this policy:

Concern
An expression of worry, issue, or uncertainty raised with the intention of seeking reassurance or clarification. Concerns are often best resolved informally, quickly, and at a local level.

Complaint
An expression of dissatisfaction, however raised, about actions taken, a lack of action, or the quality of service or conduct. If there is any doubt, the issue should be treated and recorded as a complaint in line with the Complaints Procedure.

Formal Complaint
A complaint that has progressed beyond local resolution and is managed under the formal stages of the Complaints Procedure.

Complainant
Any person or representative raising a concern or complaint (e.g., person who draws on support, student, child, parent, family member, advocate, member of staff, member of the public, or professional).

Feedback
Any positive, neutral, or negative comment about MacIntyre's provisions, member(s) of staff, or processes, including compliments. Feedback may lead to learning but does not always require formal investigation.

Investigation
The structured process of gathering facts, speaking with relevant people, reviewing records, and reaching an evidence-based conclusion in response to a complaint.

Resolution
The outcome of a concern or complaint, including actions agreed or taken to address the issue raised.

Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaint
A complaint that is pursued in a way that is persistent, abusive, lacks reasonable grounds, or where the desired outcome is unrealistic. Such complaints will be managed proportionately and fairly and will not prevent legitimate concerns from being considered or investigated.

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Advocate
A person (formal or informal) who supports someone to express their views or raise a concern or complaint.

Local Resolution
The first stage of the complaints process, where issues are addressed as close as possible to where the concern occurred (e.g., with front-line staff members, teachers, class leads, or managers).

Appeal
A review conducted by a senior leader who has had no prior involvement in the matter, or an independent panel where required by regulation.

Concurrent Process
A situation where a complaint overlaps with safeguarding, disciplinary, legal, or criminal proceedings, which may require the complaints process to be paused or adapted.

Record of Complaint
A summary record placed on a staff or personal file where a complaint relates to a member of staff or a person who draws on our support. This does not replace the full Complaint Management Form.

4. Policy Statement

MacIntyre is committed to ensuring that everyone who draws on our support, across Adult Social Care, No Limits, MacIntyre School, and Children's Homes, is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. We recognise the right of all individuals to express concerns, raise complaints, and provide feedback about their experience of MacIntyre's provision, members of staff, or decisions.

MacIntyre will:

- Take all concerns and complaints seriously, responding with openness, transparency, and a genuinely listening approach.
- Provide clear, accessible, and person-centred ways for people to raise concerns, ensuring communication needs and preferences are respected at all times. Information about how to access advocacy will be offered where appropriate.
- Ensure that no person is disadvantaged or subject to any form of reprisal for raising a complaint or supporting someone else to do so.
- Investigate complaints fairly, consistently, and in line with relevant legislation, regulatory standards, and best practice guidance for each service.
- Keep complainants informed throughout the process, communicating expected timescales, progress updates, and outcomes.
- Ensure that learning from complaints is identified, recorded, tracked, and embedded at both local and organisational level.
- Record concerns and complaints accurately, ensuring that documentation meets the standards required by regulators including CQC, CIW, Ofsted, DfE, and Children's Homes Regulations.
- Resolve issues at the earliest opportunity, using a clear escalation pathway where informal resolution is not possible.
- All complaints will be recorded, including those resolved informally at an early stage.
- Where complaints relate to incidents involving harm, MacIntyre will act in line with the Duty of Candour.

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This policy ensures that MacIntyre responds to concerns and complaints in a manner that promotes trust, safeguards the people who draw on our support, and strengthens the quality of our provision. It establishes a shared organisational framework, supported by provision-specific procedures where required by regulation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The allocation of responsibilities across Stage 1 (local resolution), Stage 2 (formal investigation), and Stage 3 (appeal) is defined within the Complaints Procedure and must be followed.

Role	Responsibility
Trustees	• Ratify this policy and any subsequent revisions. • Receive organisational-level data and assurance about complaint trends, outcomes, and learning. • Ensure that MacIntyre maintains a culture that values openness, accountability, and continuous improvement.
CEO	• Provide strategic oversight of complaints across MacIntyre. • Report organisational themes, risks, and learning from complaints to Trustees. • Ensure that MacIntyre has adequate systems and resources in place to manage complaints effectively.
Directors (Adult Social Care and CYP)	• Implement and oversee the complaints framework within their areas of responsibility. • Ensure provision specific regulatory requirements (e.g., CQC, CIW, DfE, Ofsted, and Children's Homes Regulations) are met. • Monitor complaint trends and outcomes to identify areas for improvement. • Escalate high-risk, serious, or sensitive complaints appropriately. • Support the consistent application of the policy across all provisions.
Head of Compliance & Safeguarding / Compliance Team	• Provide advice and support on all Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints. • Maintain oversight of complaints across the organisation, including monitoring compliance with required timescales and regulatory standards. • Produce an organisational annual complaints report, analysing themes, trends, and learning on request. • Maintain and update the associated procedures, guidance, and good practice tools.
Senior Leadership Teams / Senior Managers / Heads of Education / Operations / Managers (Line Managers, Area Managers, Programme Coordinators, Teachers, Team Leads)	• Ensure that members of staff have access to the resources and training needed to carry out complaints management effectively. • Ensure all complaints within their area are managed in line with this policy and the relevant specific procedures. • Appoint appropriate investigators for formal complaints. • Oversee completion and quality of complaint investigations. • Ensure accurate, timely completion of complaints logs and records. • Ensure complainants receive clear communication and timely updates. • Promote a culture of openness and support people to raise concerns or complaints. • Resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity wherever possible. • Conduct investigations when delegated to do so. • Ensure accurate recording of complaints in the appropriate system

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Role	Responsibility
	or log. • Ensure members of staff understand and follow the policy. • Implement local learning and improvements based on complaint outcomes. • Ensure investigators are independent of the matters being investigated.
All Employees and Volunteers	• Be aware of and follow this policy and related procedures. • Listen respectfully and respond supportively when a concern or complaint is raised. • Support people to express their views in their preferred method of communication. • Record complaints or concerns appropriately and pass them on without delay. • Reflect on feedback and complaints to improve their own practice.
Local Advisory Board (LAB) – Schools and Children's Homes only	• Review reports on complaints, including themes and actions taken. • Provide appeal panels where required under the complaints procedure. • Ensure compliance with DfE and Children's Homes Regulations.

6. Procedures

The procedure defines:

- how complaints can be raised and recorded
- required response and resolution timescales
- the three-stage process (local resolution, formal investigation, and appeal)
- roles and responsibilities at each stage
- communication standards and documentation requirements
- how complaints interact with safeguarding, disciplinary, or legal processes

All members of staff, volunteers, leaders and managers must follow the Complaints Procedure in full. All timescales, including acknowledgement and resolution expectations, are set out within the Complaints Procedure and are mandatory unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Procedural Reference
For full procedural guidance, including flowcharts, templates, forms, and provision-specific requirements, refer to:

MacIntyre Complaints Procedure
Available on the MacIntyre Intranet: Policies & Resources → Complaints.

This includes:

- Three-stage complaints process
- Easy Read materials
- Complaint Management Forms
- Recording and logging requirements
- Guidance on safeguarding links, concurrent processes, and escalation
- Record of Complaint forms for a Member of Staff and for a Person Who Draws on Our Support

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7. Compliance and Monitoring

MacIntyre is committed to ensuring that all concerns and complaints are managed in line with this policy, the Complaints Procedure, and all relevant regulatory requirements. Effective monitoring enables us to ensure fairness, consistency, and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Compliance Expectations
All employees, volunteers, managers, and leaders must:

- Follow this policy and the organisation-wide Complaints Procedure.
- Record complaints accurately and promptly using the required forms and systems.
- Meet expected response and resolution timescales.
- Escalate complaints appropriately and in line with regulatory or safeguarding requirements.
- Ensure all complaints are logged, tracked, and retained in accordance with organisational requirements.

Provision/location-specific requirements (e.g., CQC, CIW, Ofsted, DfE, and Children's Homes Regulations) must also be met at all times, as reflected within the procedure.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance
MacIntyre monitors compliance through a structured framework, including:

- **Local oversight:** Managers review recording, handling, and resolution of complaints within their service.
- **Area/Programme/equivalent Manager review:** Ensuring complaints are logged, investigated, and signed off appropriately.
- **Central oversight:** The Compliance Team reviews organisation-wide trends, identifies risks, and monitors timescales and procedural adherence.
- **Organisational report:** Compiled by the Compliance Team for Directors and Trustees, analysing themes, patterns, learning, and recommendations for improvement.
- **Review of complaint handling** against required timescales and quality standards
- **Tracking completion of actions** arising from complaints.

External Assurance
MacIntyre will provide information where required to external bodies including:

- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
- Ofsted
- Local Authorities and commissioning bodies
- Department for Education (DfE)

These bodies may also review or inspect complaint handling processes as part of their regulatory activity.

Addressing Non-Compliance
Failure to comply with this policy or the associated Complaints Procedure may result in:

- Additional training or supervision
- Formal management action where required
- Review of practice within the team or service
- Escalation to senior leaders where non-compliance poses risk to people who draw on our

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support, members of staff, or MacIntyre

Any intentional suppression, mishandling, or obstruction of complaints will be treated as a serious matter.

8. Related Policies / References

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure and the Complaints Best Practice & Guidance. The Complaints Procedure must be followed in all cases.

This policy should be read alongside other MacIntyre policies, procedures, and statutory guidance that interact with the management of concerns, feedback, and complaints.

MacIntyre Policies

- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- MacIntyre School and Children's Homes Safeguarding of Children and Young People Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Employee Grievance Policy
- Best Practice Policy
- Accessible Information and Communication Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy (where relevant)

These documents support consistent, safe, and accountable practice when responding to concerns or complaints.

MacIntyre Procedures and Guidance
MacIntyre Complaints Procedure referenced in Section 6.
Includes:

- 3 stages of the complaint process instruction
- Flowcharts
- Logging and reporting requirements
- Guidance relating to concurrent processes (safeguarding / disciplinary)
- MacIntyre Complaints Best Practice and Guidance - how we can bring our DNA to life: through empathy, curiosity, communication, and reflective practice, when someone raises a complaint.

Statutory and Regulatory Framework
MacIntyre complies with relevant legislation, national standards, and regulatory expectations, including:

- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations Reg. 16 (receiving and acting on complaints).
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
- NHS England "Ask, Listen, Do" guidance
- Department for Education (DfE) Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures
- Education Act 2011

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- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2019
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 Regulation 39. (Complaints and Representations)
- Ofsted expectations for children's residential provision
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Local Authority and Commissioning Bodies' requirements
- Public Services Ombudsman (England/Wales) expectations

Records will be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR Article 30 requirements. MacIntyre complies with the NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS), ensuring that people receive information in formats that meet their communication needs when raising or responding to concerns or complaints.

External Agencies
MacIntyre will provide information to, or collaborate with:

- CQC and CIW
- Ofsted
- DfE
- ICO
- Local Authorities
- Public Services Ombudsman (where applicable)

These bodies may review aspects of complaints handling during inspection or regulatory activity.

9. Review and Revision

MacIntyre is committed to ensuring that this policy remains accurate, up-to-date, and effective in supporting high-quality complaint handling across all services. The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated when necessary to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, organisational structure, or best practice.

Review Cycle
This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, in line with MacIntyre's standard policy review timetable.

The policy will be reviewed earlier where:

- legislation or regulatory guidance changes (e.g., CQC, CIW, Ofsted, DfE, Children's Homes Regulations)
- significant organisational changes occur
- learning from complaints indicates improvements are needed
- internal or external audit findings highlight required revisions

Responsibility for Review
The Policy Owner (Director with responsibility for complaints) is accountable for ensuring timely review.
The Lead Reviewer will coordinate the review, draft revisions, and incorporate organisational learning.
Relevant senior leaders, managers, and regulatory leads will be consulted as part of the review process.

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Approval of Changes

All amendments to this policy must be approved by the CEO and Director Team and subsequently ratified by Trustees, ensuring proper governance and organisational oversight.

For areas governed by Local Advisory Boards (LABs), such as Schools and Children's Homes, the LAB may also approve service-specific procedural appendices where required by regulation.

Communication of Changes

Once approved:

- Updates will be published on the MacIntyre Intranet and made accessible to all members of staff and volunteers.
- Key changes will be communicated through organisational briefings, leadership updates, and training resources where appropriate.
- All provisions/locations are responsible for ensuring members of staff are aware of updates and understand their responsibilities within the revised policy and procedures.

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