

Policy Direction – Resolving Stakeholder Concerns

Rationale and Relationship to Vision, Mission, and Values

MS Canada adheres to the highest standards of quality, transparency and accountability. We are committed to providing our stakeholders – such as donors, clients, event participants, and the general public - with a high level of service in the act of carrying out our mission. We value and welcome comments, suggestions and complaints from those persons with respect to their interactions with our organization. Such feedback contributes to the ongoing improvement of our services and operations.

Moreover, as a learning organization, we actively solicit feedback on our programs and services through program evaluation, and we use the constructive feedback received to enhance our offering.

A concern - or complaint - is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by MS Canada as an organization, or by a staff or volunteer acting on behalf of MS Canada. Complaints may come from anyone who interacts with MS Canada, be it the general public, donors, event participants, clients or else.

Policy Objective

This policy provides an avenue for external individuals to communicate with MS Canada in the event that they wish to register a concern or complaint. This policy is intended to ensure that issues raised by any of our stakeholders are heard, recorded and resolved in a professional manner.

Policy Application

This policy applies to staff and volunteers at all levels and locations of MS Canada.

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025

Authorization

The policy was approved by the board of directors of the MS Society of Canada on December 13, 2014.

Policy Details

1. Guiding Principles

- It is in the interest of all parties that concerns are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Review of concerns is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their concern to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- Updates are provided to complainants during review processes.
- Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.
- All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.
- The existence this policy will be publicized so that people know how to contact MS Canada to raise a concern.

2. Registering a Concern

MS Canada has a two-step process to raise concerns:

Sharing a concern

Many concerns can be resolved easily and quickly, often at the time they arise, by speaking with a contact at MS Canada. Call our toll free number 1-800-268-7582 and you will be connected with staff in your local office. You can also contact the Office of Stakeholder Relations and Donor Service by email at info@mscanada.ca

Concerns include but are not limited to:

- Failure to do something agreed upon
- Errors made by a staff /volunteer
- Unfair or discourteous actions or statements by staff /volunteer
- Service not delivered properly, on time, in my preferred language
- Educational programs cancelled, not done well, or poorly developed

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025

- Requests for tax receipts
- Request to tailor the frequency of communications received per year to the wishes of the individual
- Request for removal of from mailing lists and/or discontinuing any form of communication

Escalating a concern

If a concern is not satisfactorily resolved, or if a member of the public wishes to make a formal complaint, they may do so in writing to the vice president, philanthropy, by email at feedback@mscanada.ca or by mail to:

Privileged & Strictly Confidential
 MS Canada Office of Stakeholder Relations and Donor Service
 Attention: Vice President, Philanthropy
 250 Dundas Street West, Suite 500
 Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2Z5

Escalated concerns may include but are not limited to:

- Repeated requests for tax receipts
- Repeated requests for removal of from mailing lists and/or discontinuing any form of communication
- Repeated errors made by a staff / volunteer
- Repeated unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff/volunteer

The written complaint should include:

- the exact dissatisfaction or problem;
- phone number and other contact details of the complainant (email, mail) (however if there are protection concerns these details may not need to be provided);
- date of the alleged incident; and
- details of the issue or problem.

3. Handling of escalated concerns

After being received by email or mail, written concerns will be recorded in a log by the Office of Stakeholder Relations and Donor Service and will be directed to the proper person to handle it. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem.

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025

It is the responsibility of the person who receives the concern, as delegated by the Vice President, Philanthropy, to either resolve it or transfer it to another person who can resolve it.

4. Responding to an escalated concern

The Office of Stakeholder Relations and Donor Service shall acknowledge the receipt of the escalated concern within 3 business days of receipt that the complaint has been received and will identify the staff person who will be responding.

The person designated to respond to the concern will respond to within 10 business days of the original receipt of the complaint. If a timeframe for action can be determined, the acknowledgement shall say so. In the event that the process takes longer, the complainant will be notified. If for any reason the timeline may differ the complainant will be notified.

5. Resolving an escalated concern

In the spirit of continuous improvement, MS Canada will work diligently to fix problems, correct mistakes and address concerns. We will always treat complainants with courtesy and respect, listen to what they have to say, keep them informed about our progress, and finally provide them with a response.

Every effort should be made to resolve concerns received in a timely fashion. Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it should be escalated to the next line of supervision. Once a matter is considered resolved, or has been deemed to be non-resolvable, in the opinion of MS Canada, the complainant shall be informed accordingly.

The complainant shall receive a written response that describes the action taken to investigate the concern, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

6. Exemptions to the Policy

There may be rare occasions when MS Canada may not respond to a concern. These include:

- When a complaint is about something that MS Canada has no direct connection to something that we are responsible for.

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025

- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to. They will be given escalation points, but we may choose not to reply again and we will always inform them of our decision to do this.
- When a complainant is being obviously abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When a complaint is illegible.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organizations as part of a bulk mailing or email.
- MS Canada will not respond to complaints made anonymously. However, we will investigate the concern and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

7. No Retaliation

Under no circumstances shall any member of MS Canada discriminate or retaliate against any persons filing a concern under the provisions of this policy.

8. Reporting

On an annual basis the Vice President, Philanthropy must submit a Complaints Report to the board of directors of MS Canada. The report shall include at a minimum, the number of complaints in the reporting period, the type and nature of the complaints received, and status of the complaints.

Executive Champion

MS Canada’s Vice President, Philanthropy is the Executive Champion for the Resolving Stakeholder Concerns policy.

Monitoring and Compliance

The Executive Champion is responsible for:

- Leading the monitoring of the application of and compliance with this policy direction in conjunction with other members of the executive team.
- Reviewing concerns annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025

The Executive Champion will:

- Work with appropriate staff to ensure compliance.
- Provide regular reports (at least annually) to the board of directors regarding the number, types and nature of the concerns received and their resolution.
- Advise the Executive Team of all unresolved or significant issues and complaints.

Related Policies, Legislation

Other MS Canada policies that complement and support this policy direction include:

- [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#)

Policy Review

The policy is to be reviewed at a minimum every three (3) years following its approval on December 13, 2014.

- Reviewed and approved by Executive Team on January 13, 2020

Definitions:

Executive Team - The most senior level of staff leadership within MS Canada comprised of the president and chief executive officer; division presidents; senior vice-president(s) and vice-president(s). One person may hold more than one position. The president and chief executive officer may alter the composition of the executive team as required from time-to-time.

Concern – A concern - or complaint - is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by MS Canada as an organization, or by a staff or volunteer acting on behalf of MS Canada.

Complainant – Any person submitting a written concern to MS Canada (general public, donors, participants, patients, researchers, and/or volunteers.)

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All volunteers and staff at all levels
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Three years or less
<i>First approved:</i>	December 13, 2014 by Board of Directors
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	January 13, 2020
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	January 2025