

Complaints and Grievance Policy

Version 1.0 – Effective from 3rd November 2026
Next review due: 3rd November 2027
Approved by: Mama2Mama Board of Trustees

Mama2Mama Baby Essentials CIO | Café 51 Community Hub | Shurgard Donation Warehouse Unit

Status	Approved by Board of Trustees
Version	1.0 – Effective from 3rd November 2026
Next review	3rd November 2027, or sooner after a serious incident or legal change
Policy owner and primary contact	Zuzana Fratrikova, Founder & CEO
Contact	info@mama2mama.org.uk
Independent escalation	Miroslava Zverbikova, Chair of Trustees – zverbikovam@yahoo.com

This is an organisational procedure approved by the Board of Trustees. Timescales are organisational service standards, not statutory deadlines; statutory rights are unaffected.

1. Purpose and commitment

At Mama2Mama, every family, volunteer, employee, donor and visitor deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. We welcome feedback and take complaints seriously. Raising a concern must not result in retaliation, poorer service or unfair treatment. We aim to resolve issues promptly, proportionately, confidentially and fairly, learn from mistakes and make improvements. This policy provides clear routes for service complaints, volunteer concerns and employee grievances, recognising that different legal and procedural protections apply.

2. Scope and the correct route

This policy applies to complaints concerning Mama2Mama baby-bank support, professional referrals, Café 51 activities and bookings, donation collections, staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors and organisational conduct. Service users, customers, referral partners, donors, volunteers and members of the public may use the complaints procedure in sections 5–10. Employees raising concerns about their own employment use the grievance procedure in sections 11–14. Volunteers are not automatically employees and do not acquire employee grievance rights solely through volunteering; their concerns will be handled fairly under the volunteer route. Safeguarding disclosures, emergencies, suspected criminal conduct, whistleblowing and data protection breaches must be escalated under the relevant specialist procedures without waiting for this process.

3. Principles

We will listen without prejudice; provide accessible ways to complain; explain the process and realistic timescales; consider evidence from all sides; manage conflicts of interest; protect privacy on a need-to-know basis; keep an audit trail; and prohibit victimisation. No person will be required to confront an alleged perpetrator. Mediation is optional and inappropriate where safety, coercion or serious misconduct concerns make it unsuitable. A complaint may be upheld, partly upheld or not upheld; outcomes will be explained as far as confidentiality allows.

4. Responsibilities and contact

Zuzana Fratrikova, Founder & CEO, is the primary contact and policy lead and will coordinate receipt, acknowledgement, investigation and follow-up, delegating fact-finding to a suitable impartial person when appropriate. Staff and volunteers must promptly pass complaints to her, protect records and avoid promises about outcomes. Trustees oversee serious, repeated or systemic issues, approve independent routes and review anonymised trends. Miroslava Zverbikova, Chair of Trustees, is the independent trustee contact for matters involving the CEO. Complaints about the CEO should be sent confidentially and directly to her at zverbikovam@yahoo.com (not through the info@ mailbox), clearly marked "Private – Trustees only"; the CEO must not investigate such complaints. If the Chair has a conflict, the Board will nominate an alternative unconflicted trustee.

5. How to make a complaint

A complaint may be made verbally, by telephone, in writing or by email to info@mama2mama.org.uk, addressed to Zuzana Fratrikova, Founder & CEO. A complainant can ask a supporter or advocate to help, and we will consider reasonable adjustments, accessible formats, language assistance and alternative methods. Anonymous complaints will be considered to the extent possible, although investigation and feedback may be limited. We ask for the date, what happened, people involved, the impact, relevant evidence and preferred outcome, but will not reject a complaint simply because these details are incomplete. For matters involving the CEO, use the independent trustee route described in section 4.

6. Informal resolution

Where safe and appropriate, we may offer an early discussion, explanation, apology, correction or practical remedy. Informal resolution is optional and should not be used to delay a formal complaint or to pressure a complainant to withdraw it. If unresolved or unsuitable, the concern moves to the formal stage.

7. Formal complaint stages and timescales

1. **Stage 1 – Receipt and acknowledgement:** log the complaint securely and acknowledge within five working days, normally naming the case handler and explaining next steps.
2. **Stage 2 – Assessment:** check urgency, safeguarding implications, conflicts of interest and any immediate protective measures.
3. **Stage 3 – Investigation:** obtain relevant accounts and records, allow the person complained about a fair opportunity to respond, and avoid unnecessary sharing.
4. **Stage 4 – Outcome:** aim to provide a written decision within 20 working days of acknowledgement. If more time is needed, explain the reason and revised target date. The decision will state the issues considered, findings, reasons, any remedy or service improvement and how to request review.

These are service standards, not absolute guarantees.

8. Review or appeal of a complaint outcome

A complainant dissatisfied with the formal outcome may request a review within 15 working days of receiving it, explaining what they believe was overlooked or procedurally unfair. A trustee or other impartial person who was not involved in the original decision should review the matter. Acknowledgement should be sent within five working days and a review outcome normally within 20 working days; any delay will be explained. The review may uphold, vary or return the decision for further investigation. This is normally the final internal stage. External statutory rights and regulator routes remain unaffected.

9. Complaints about volunteers, staff, contractors or trustees

Concerns about behaviour are assessed proportionately and may involve safeguarding, disciplinary, volunteer management or contract procedures. Immediate protective measures, including temporary changes to duties or contact, may be needed without implying guilt. Volunteers should be given the substance of concerns, a fair chance to respond and a proportionate decision; they may bring a supporter to meetings where practicable. Employee disciplinary issues must be managed separately under applicable employment procedures and ACAS principles. Complaints about trustees go to an unconflicted trustee or the Board; complaints involving the CEO must bypass the CEO.

10. Safeguarding, serious incidents and external reporting

If a child or adult is at immediate risk, contact emergency services (999) and follow the Safeguarding Policy without delay. Allegations of abuse, exploitation, serious misconduct or criminal acts are escalated promptly to the designated safeguarding arrangements and appropriate statutory agencies. A person must not be promised absolute confidentiality. Suspected personal-data breaches must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Lead for risk assessment and any legally required ICO notification. Trustees assess whether a serious incident report to the Charity Commission or other external notification is required. A complaint does not replace these routes.

11. Employee grievance procedure – scope

Employees may raise concerns about their employment, treatment, working relationships, discrimination, bullying, harassment, contract issues or management decisions. This procedure is intended to follow the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Employees may seek informal resolution where suitable but retain the right to submit a formal written grievance. Where the grievance concerns the CEO, it must go directly to the nominated independent trustee or Board.

12. Employee formal grievance – meeting and decision

An employee should describe the grievance, relevant facts and desired resolution in writing. An impartial manager or trustee will acknowledge it promptly, investigate as necessary and arrange a meeting without unreasonable delay. Employees have the statutory right to be accompanied at a qualifying grievance meeting by a fellow worker or trade union representative; reasonable adjustments and other support will be considered. The employee may explain their case and evidence. Following the meeting and any further investigation, a written outcome will set out findings, reasons, action and appeal rights. Any service timescales in section 7 are targets only and must not undermine the duty to proceed without unreasonable delay.

13. Employee grievance appeal

An employee may appeal a formal grievance decision in writing, normally within five working days of receiving it, giving their grounds. The appeal should be heard without unreasonable delay by someone not previously involved and, wherever practicable, more senior or independent. The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at a qualifying appeal meeting. A written final decision will follow. Statutory employment rights and time limits are unaffected by internal procedures.

14. Grievance and disciplinary overlap

Where a grievance arises during a disciplinary process, the organisation will assess whether to pause, run processes concurrently or appoint separate decision-makers, following ACAS guidance and the circumstances. Allegations of discrimination, sexual harassment, whistleblowing retaliation or serious safeguarding failures require careful independent handling. No person should investigate allegations about their own conduct.

15. Volunteer concerns and fair resolution

Volunteers may raise concerns about supervision, unsafe tasks, disrespect, bullying, exclusion, expenses or unfair treatment. They may contact Zuzana Fratrikova directly or the independent trustee route where necessary. We will listen, record the issue, seek an informal solution where appropriate and use the formal complaints stages for unresolved matters. Volunteers should not be treated as employees solely by reason of their role, and the volunteer agreement remains distinct from an employment contract. Concerns about volunteer conduct are handled consistently with the Volunteer Policy and Handbook.

16. Café 51 customer and booking complaints

Café 51 complaints may concern service, accessibility, food, allergens, cleanliness, events, payments or bookings. Staff must promptly escalate food-safety, allergen and injury concerns, preserve relevant evidence and follow emergency procedures where necessary. Refunds, cancellations or other remedies must be assessed against booking terms and applicable consumer law; this policy does not override statutory rights. Payment-card details must not be copied into complaint records. Public reviews and social-media complaints should be invited into a private channel without revealing personal information publicly.

17. Confidentiality, records and data protection

Complaints and grievances will be recorded securely with date, category, responsible handler, steps taken, decision, communications, appeal and follow-up actions. Access will be limited to those who need it. Personal data will be processed under the GDPR & Data Protection Policy, with retention periods set by the approved retention schedule and any legal hold or safeguarding need. Records must not be altered or deleted to conceal an issue. Information may be shared with regulators or statutory agencies where required or justified by law.

18. Remedies, learning and oversight

Possible outcomes include explanation, apology, service correction, refund where appropriate, adjustment, training, supervision, procedural changes, disciplinary or volunteer management action, or referral to external authorities. Trustees should receive periodic anonymised summaries of complaint volumes, themes, overdue cases and actions, without unnecessary identifying information. The CEO will track agreed actions to completion and check for repeated barriers to access or discrimination.

19. Accessibility and protection from retaliation

No one will be denied a service, volunteer opportunity or fair employment treatment for raising a concern in good faith. Deliberately malicious allegations may be addressed proportionately, but an allegation that is unproven is not automatically malicious. We will provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people, support accessible communications and offer safe reporting routes for people affected by domestic abuse or coercion.

20. Related documents and review

Read alongside the Safeguarding Policy, Volunteer Policy and Handbook, GDPR & Data Protection Policy, Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy, Health and Safety Policy, any employee disciplinary procedure, whistleblowing arrangements, Café 51 booking terms and incident reporting procedures. This policy is operational from 3rd November 2026 and will be communicated to staff, trustees and volunteers. It will be reviewed annually, next by 3rd November 2027, and earlier if law, service arrangements or a significant incident requires it.

Appendix A – Complaint and grievance intake form

Case reference / date received

Complainant / contact / preferred communication

Complaint type and service/location

Details, dates, people involved and desired outcome

Immediate safeguarding, health and safety, data or conflict concerns

---

Assigned impartial handler / acknowledgement date

Investigation actions / evidence / response from person concerned

---

Decision / remedies / communication date

Appeal request / reviewer / final outcome

Actions owner / completion / closure date

Appendix B – Implementation and trustee approval checklist

- [ ] Publish the independent trustee complaints contact (Miroslava Zverbikova, zverbikovam@yahoo.com) to all staff, volunteers and families.
- [ ] Confirm an alternative reviewer for conflicts involving the CEO or trustees.
- [ ] Monitor performance against the 5/20 working-day complaints service standards and the appeal windows.
- [ ] Confirm the employee grievance process aligns with employment contracts and ACAS requirements.
- [ ] Create a restricted complaint register and define record-retention rules.
- [ ] Publish accessible instructions for families, volunteers, customers and staff.
- [ ] Brief staff and volunteers on urgent safeguarding and data-breach escalation.
- [ ] Confirm applicable Café 51 booking/refund terms and relevant complaints contacts.
- [ ] Set a schedule for anonymised trustee oversight and policy review.

Trustee approval record

Approved by the Board of Trustees on: 3rd November 2026

Chair / authorised trustee: Miroslava Zverbikova

Miroslava Zverbikova

Miroslava Zverbikova
Chair of Trustees
Signed electronically on 3rd November 2026

Agnieszka Derejska

Agnieszka Derejska
Trustee
Signed electronically on 3rd November 2026

Hazel Chawapiwa

Hazel Chawapiwa
Trustee
Signed electronically on 3rd November 2026

Roy Gopaul

Roy Gopaul
Trustee
Signed electronically on 3rd November 2026

Zuzana Fratrikova

Zuzana Fratrikova
Policy owner · Founder & CEO
Signed electronically on 3rd November 2026

We welcome feedback.
We take complaints seriously.

Every family, volunteer, employee, donor and visitor deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Raising a concern must not result in retaliation, poorer service or unfair treatment.

To make a complaint or share feedback, contact Zuzana Fratrikova, Founder & CEO, at info@mama2mama.org.uk.

We aim to resolve issues promptly, proportionately, confidentially and fairly, learn from mistakes and make improvements.

