

Complaints Policy

This document is relevant to:	
Service users	✓
Members of public	✓
External organisations	✓
Volunteers	✓
Trustees	✓
Members	✓

Purpose

Dorset Mind is committed to continuously improving our services and as such we welcome all feedback and complaints about the services we provide. We take complaints seriously and all complaints and comments will be considered in the annual strategic planning and improvement of the organisation and its services.

This policy deals with complaints made against Dorset Mind staff, trustees and volunteers from our service users, volunteers, trustees, members and people external to the organisation.

Policy

Dorset Mind's complaints process is intended to be speedy, effective and easily understandable. To ensure fairness, any investigation required will be carried out by someone who was not directly involved with the incident relating to the complaint.

Dorset Mind recognises that making a complaint can be difficult and stressful for the person making the complaint. Appropriate assistance will be offered to the complainant. At any stage a complainant may seek the help of an independent advocate and Dorset Mind will provide information on this on request.

A complaint can also be stressful for a person against whom a complaint is made and that person may also need assistance and support. Any member of staff, trustee or volunteer against whom a complaint is made will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms.

Every effort will be made to try and resolve any problem as soon as possible with the person concerned. If it is necessary to take the matter further it will be done in line with the Complaints Procedure.

Some complaints have or may have financial or legal consequences for Dorset Mind. In such cases its insurers may require Dorset Mind to cease direct contact with the complainant. It may then be necessary in the interests of the complainant to refer them to another agency both for assistance with the complaint and to ensure that their service needs are met.

The confidentiality of any complaint will be given high priority in so far as this is consistent with the need to investigate the complaint. Dorset Mind will respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and any person complained about, subject to the provisions of Dorset Mind's Confidentiality Policy. However, if a complaint is to be properly investigated and action taken as a result of the complaint, it may not always be possible to avoid a breach of confidentiality. The permission of the complainant will be sought for this but when the welfare of the complainant or other people is seriously at risk it may be necessary to breach confidentiality even if that permission is withheld.

The outcome of all complaints and investigations will be reported in confidence to the Executive Committee and in writing to the complainant. A report on Complaints will also be made available to funders of Dorset Mind services as part of the evaluation of these services.

Dorset Mind will make efforts to ensure that every user of its services is aware that this policy, and its accompanying Complaints Procedure, exists. Copies of this policy and the Complaints Procedure will be available on request at all Dorset Mind services.

There will be no adverse implications for anyone who makes a complaint or allegation through this policy.

The Complaints Procedure details the procedure to be followed to make and manage a complaint.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive is responsible for the efficient operation of the complaints policy and procedure. Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers in Dorset Mind, under the authority of the Chief Executive.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

The equality impact of this policy has been considered and Dorset Mind believes that it complies with its commitment to equality as stated in its Equality Policy

Policy Ownership

Policy Name	Version	Doc ref
Complaints Policy	2.0	Complaints Policy

Policy Owner	Chair of Trustees
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Approval Status

Date adopted by Trustees	April 2016		
Date published	Reviewed March 2016	Date for next review	April 2018

Consult the Dorset Mind website for the latest version of this policy.

Document Control

Reviewers

Name	Position
Chris Price	Chair of Trustees
Anna Windett	Chair of Trustee Quality Sub-Group
Mandy Nicholson	Service Delivery Manager
Ken Heap	Trustee

Change History

Issue	Date	Author	Reason
1.0	Mar 15	Jackie Lillywhite	
1.0	Jun 15	Jackie Lillywhite	
2.0	Mar 16	Chris Price	Reviewed and updated