

1.0 The Policy Statement:

York Mind is committed to providing good quality services. We welcome feedback and suggestions to help us improve our services, and recognise that we sometimes get things wrong or make mistakes. This policy covers core procedures and best practice in dealing with complaints to any York Mind service.

We do not look on complaints as unwanted. In fact, they may help us to see where our services or procedures might be improved. To this end, we welcome information from people using our services, especially if they feel we have made a mistake or done something which they found unsatisfactory or unacceptable, whether this amounts to feedback or a formal complaint.

If a complaint alerts us to possible abuse or neglect we will notify the City of York Council's adult safeguarding team. The safeguarding team will decide how to investigate and monitor outcomes.

2.0 Scope

This complaints policy and procedure applies to all employees, trustees and service users involved in a complaint about a York Mind service.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to formally review this policy and procedure bi-annually or sooner in the event of changes to legislation and York Mind policy.

3.0 Who can make complaints?

Anyone affected by the way York Mind provides services can make a complaint. A representative may complain for the affected person if they:

- have died
- cannot make a complaint themselves, or
- have given consent for the representative to act on their behalf

If you are not happy about making a complaint yourself and you do not know someone who can talk or write to us on your behalf, we will be happy to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you. We will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the date on which the event occurred or came to your notice. If you complain more than twelve months later, we may not be able to investigate properly. But we shall also consider whether you had good

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reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure; however it is better if you can provide contact details so we can tell you the outcome of our investigation.

4.0 Complaints Procedure - How to complain

4.1 Step 1: Contacting us

The first step is to talk to a member of York Mind staff. This can be done quite informally, either directly or by telephone. All concerns and complaints we receive are treated in confidence.

Usually, the best staff member to talk to will be the person who dealt with the matter you are concerned about, as he/she will be in the best position to help you quickly and to put things right. If he/she is not available, or you would prefer to approach someone else, then ask for the relevant line manager.

We will try to resolve the problem on the spot if we can. If we cannot do this, for example, because information we need is not to hand, then we will take a record of your concern and arrange the best way and time for responding to you. This will normally be within five working days or we will make some other arrangement acceptable to you.

4.2 Step 2: Dealing with your complaint

We hope you will only feel the need to make a formal complaint as a last resort and that you will complain to the person dealing with the matter first to give him/her a chance to put things right. However, if you are still unhappy, the next step is to put your complaint in writing to the Project Manager at York Mind, setting out the details, explaining what you think went wrong and what you feel would put things right. If you are not happy about writing a letter, you can always ask a member of staff to take notes of your complaint. You should make sure you agree with what he/she has recorded and that he/she provides you with your own copy for reference. This record will be passed promptly to the Project Manager to deal with.

Once the Project Manager receives a written complaint, he/she will arrange for it to be fully investigated. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receiving it and the letter will say when you can expect a full response. This should normally be within three weeks unless the matter is very complicated, such as where other organisations need to be contacted. Where this is the case, we will still let you know what action is being taken and tell you when we expect to provide you with a full response.

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4.3 Step 3: Taking your complaint further

If you feel your complaint has not been effectively dealt with by the Project Manager, the next step is to put your complaint in writing to the CEO at York Mind, setting out the details, explaining what you think went wrong and what you feel would put things right. At this point it would also be useful to detail action already taken at the previous stages and why you felt the complaint was not adequately dealt with. If you are not happy about writing a letter, you can always ask a member of staff to take notes of your complaint. You should make sure you agree with what he/she have recorded and that he/she provides you with your own copy for reference. This record will be passed promptly to the CEO to deal with.

Once the CEO receives a written complaint, he/she will arrange for it to be fully investigated. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receiving it and the letter will say when you can expect a full response. This should normally be within three weeks unless the matter is very complicated, such as where other organisations need to be contacted. Where this is the case, we will still let you know what action is being taken and tell you when we expect to provide you with a full response.

4.4 Step 4: The final stage

If you are not satisfied with the CEO's investigation you can take your complaint to the York Mind Board of Trustees. York Mind is a registered charity and as such is managed by a Board of Trustees. All materials relating to your complaint and to the CEO's investigation will be sent to the Chair of the Board (contact details will be provided for you). He/she will normally let you know within seven working days that he/she have received your complaint and tell you when to expect a full response from them.

5.0 Responsibility for reviewing this document

It is the responsibility of the **Chief Executive Officer** to review this document at least every two years to take account of changes in legislation and policies and practices within York Mind.

6.0 Monitoring and Review

The **Board of Trustees** will review policies and procedures at the date of review.

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