

# **Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy**

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope .....	3
3. Responsibilities.....	3
4. Definitions .....	4
5. Comments, ideas and suggestions.....	4
6. Compliments.....	4
7. Complaints .....	5
7.1 Informal complaints procedure.....	6
7.2 Formal complaints procedure.....	6
7.3 Complaints of a significant and/or serious nature.....	7
8. Appeals procedure .....	7
9. Procedure for issues with CEO and/or Board .....	8
10. Independent advice/support .....	8
11. Monitoring complaints.....	8
12. Confidentiality.....	9
13. Timescales .....	9
14. Policy implementation.....	10
15. Policy monitoring and review.....	10
16. Version control.....	10
17. Related policies .....	11
18. Appendices.....	12
Appendix 1 – How to Contact Us.....	12
Appendix 2 - Complaints Procedure .....	13

## 1. Introduction

Nottinghamshire Mind recognises that comments, compliments and complaints enable our organisation to become more responsive to the needs and expectations of our service users, volunteers, staff and partners. We positively welcome suggestions, comments and complaints as a means by which stakeholders can say what they think of the organisation and our services.

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- Those who interact with Nottinghamshire Mind in any capacity have ways to let us know of their experience and know how to contact us.
- We acknowledge, where possible, feedback and show we've acted on it.
- We have a fair and easy to use procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- People are aware of the policy, and that it is easy to access and clear.
- Everyone at Nottinghamshire Mind knows what to do if a complaint, comment or compliment is received.
- All complaints are dealt with constructively, impartially and effectively and investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Complaints are resolved, where possible, in a way that promotes positive relationships.
- We use the information to improve what we do.

## 2. Scope

The policy aims to set a culture whereby compliments, comments and complaints are encouraged, handled appropriately and seen as opportunities for improvement. This policy applies to all workers, including:

1. Employees
2. Trainees/ Placements
3. Contractors
4. Agency/Bank workers
5. Volunteers
6. Trustees

## 3. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees. However, everyone at Nottinghamshire Mind has a responsibility to ensure we work within [Mind values](#) with a view to offering excellent service internally and externally to our organisation. Additionally, Nottinghamshire Mind has a duty to ensure that those who have dealings with the organisation are informed of the complaints' procedure.

## 4. Definitions

**Comments** - *a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction.* These are really helpful to us in reviewing and evolving the services we offer.

**Compliments** - *a polite expression of praise or admiration.* We value feedback on your experience of our staff and services.

**Complaints** - *A complaint is regarded as a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.* We work to ensure the way we work and the services we offer are in a timely, respectful and competent manner. However, things do sometimes go wrong and it's important we know about this as soon as possible.

## 5. Comments, ideas and suggestions

We welcome comments, ideas and suggestions about our services and the way we deliver them. It is even better if solutions are offered on how we could improve things.

Comments can be made through multiple means, including email, phone, social media, letter (see [Appendix 1](#)). We will review all comments and suggestions and, we will consider all reasonable ideas. We will let the sender know if we decide to take action as a result.

We may act on comments in a variety of ways, including:

- Making an immediate change where we can see the suggestion has sound merit
- Inviting people who submit comments or ideas to meet with us to discuss their suggestion in more detail
- Holding a consultation or engagement activity to gain the views and input of others

Not all comments and suggestions received will result in changes to services, but we will record all comments made and regularly review these to check for patterns and commonalities.

## 6. Compliments

Compliments may be received through both formal and informal processes, such as email, phone, social media, letter (see [Appendix 1](#)). All written compliments will be acknowledged via post or email and will be passed to both the staff member, or volunteer, involved and their line manager. A copy of the compliment will be kept on the individual's personnel file.

Where a compliment relates to the wider organisation, as opposed to an individual, these will be recorded centrally and brought to staff attention through internal communications. They will also be reported to the Board through the quarterly report on Comments, Compliments and Complaints.

## 7. Complaints

We should consider any expression of dissatisfaction, whether or not we ourselves think it is justified, as a complaint. Every complaint should be viewed as an opportunity for us to improve and grow. If something has gone wrong it should be dealt with in the most appropriate way, as quickly as possible, without breaching confidentiality.

Nottinghamshire Mind will ensure that the complaints procedure is:

- easy to use and has multiple ways in which a complaint can be submitted
- not intimidating
- encourages open dialogue with the complainant
- ensures concerns are dealt with promptly
- ensures complaints are treated confidentially
- effective in resolving the issue/ concern.

The complaints procedure will be applied if:

- A service user has concerns over the service they have received
- A staff member has a concern to raise
- A volunteer has a concern to raise
- An individual or organisation working with Nottinghamshire Mind has a concern to raise.

The overall process is outlined in [Appendix 2](#), but in essence is as follows:

1. All complaints are acknowledged on receipt.
2. A dialogue is opened with the complainant which includes taking the time to explain the complaints procedure fully.
3. A discussion should take place, on an informal basis between the complainant and the person responsible for the service.
4. If dissatisfaction remains or the complainant does not wish to have an informal meeting with the above, a written complaint can be submitted to the Complaints Officer and will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
5. Following investigation, a reply should be made within 4 weeks or less (unless investigations take longer, in which case the complainant should be kept updated).
6. If, after we have responded, the complainant is not satisfied, the matter will be reported to the next meeting of the Trustees, who will decide on any further steps to resolve the situation.

## 7.1 Informal complaints procedure

We treat all complaints seriously and aim to deal with them in a fair and timely manner. Complaints do not initially have to be in writing; they can be made in a variety of ways:

- by phone - 0800 470 0203
- via the [online form](#) on our website
- by private/direct messaging us through our social media
  - [Twitter](#) - @notts\_mind
  - [Instagram](#) - nottinghamshiremind
  - [Facebook](#) - nottsmind
- in person at our Worksop and Mansfield offices (see [Appendix 1](#) for addresses)
- in writing
  - by post to: Complaints, 6 Hardy Street, Worksop, Notts S80 1EH
  - email to: [feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk](mailto:feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk)

Complaints may also be made direct to the [person who manages the service](#) involved if the complainant has their contact details. Complaints received by staff members or volunteers should be forwarded immediately to their line manager.

All complaints will be logged by the Complaints Officer and forwarded to the service manager for initial response.

### Communications with the complainant

We recognise that keeping the complainant updated on the progress of their complaint, and actions we are taking, is key to preserving a positive relationship and preventing escalation. We are committed to maintaining ongoing open dialogue and regular communications with the complainant throughout the complaints management process.

If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed. The complainant should be made aware that this option is open to them at any point and details of how to access it should be provided.

## 7.2 Formal complaints procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied with our response to their informal complaint or they wish to raise the matter more formally, they should follow the formal complaints procedure.

To help us address any issues it is helpful to receive any formal complaint in writing within three months of the incident. The Board of Trustees has the right to extend this period if it is considered that the complainant has good cause for not having made the complaint earlier.

Formal complaints should be made in writing:

- by post to Complaints, 6 Hardy Street, Worksop, Notts S80 1EH
- email to [feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk](mailto:feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk)

All formal complaints will be logged in the Complaints Register and the complainant will receive a written acknowledgement within three working days. The aim is to investigate complaint properly and provide a reply within ten to twenty working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with.

Outcomes may include:

Service user complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to support offered</li><li>• Changes to personnel involved</li></ul>
Staff member complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mediation</li></ul>
Volunteer complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to role</li><li>• Change of supervisor</li></ul>
Individual or organisation complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further investigation</li><li>• Policy review</li></ul>

### **7.3 Complaints of a significant and/or serious nature**

Occasionally complaints of a more serious nature may be received, such as those which relate to issues of:

- Immediate or significant risk/harm to an individual or individuals
- Serious concern such as a data breach, financial mismanagement
- Or is damaging to the relationship between service provider and service user, carers or others

In such cases the organisation has a duty to act immediately, and we will refer to the relevant policy and procedure eg grievance procedure/ whistleblowing/ safeguarding/ disciplinary policies.

## **8. Appeals procedure**

If the complainant is unhappy with a decision, or does not accept the resolution offered, they can appeal within one month of receiving the outcome of the complaint.

The appeal will be put before the Boards of Trustees who will evaluate the initial investigation, including:

- how it was handled;
- whether it was done in a way that appropriately addressed the complaint;
- whether it resolved any issues or identified shortfalls;
- whether it was thorough, fair and impartial

The Board may take different steps to inform the appeal process, including ordering a further investigation to be carried out or requesting to meet with the complainant to discuss their concerns.

When their review is complete, the Board will inform the complainant of the outcome of the appeal, in writing within 30 working days. If this is not possible, for example because a further investigation has been requested, the complainant will be informed and provided with an estimated timescale for completion.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with our response, they will be advised of the alternative processes open to them. These may include contacting the [Charity Commission](#), [Information Commissioners Office](#), [HSE](#), or other regulatory body relevant to the issue (eg BACP).

## 9. Procedure for issues with CEO and/or Board

Complaints in relation to the CEO or a member of the Board of Trustees, will be dealt with by the Chair, who will lead on investigations.

Where a complaint is regarding the Chair, the Vice Chair will liaise with National Mind for support in the investigation.

## 10. Independent advice/support

Individuals will be encouraged to seek independent support/advice at any stage of the process, should they wish to access this. Nottinghamshire Mind will signpost to appropriate advocacy and/or advice groups, such as:

- [PoHWER](#)
- Citizens Advice

The National Mind website also has a useful [resource of advocacy and advice](#) services that can support people to make a complaint.

## 11. Monitoring complaints

All complaints, whether formal or informal, are recorded on our Complaints Register. The register contains the information listed below and will be audited quarterly to ensure that incidents are not being repeated and improvements are working well.

Data in Complaints Register:

- Date of complaint
- Details of complainant
- Nature of complaint
- Project/service involved
- Complaint reference number
- Lead investigator
- Outcome of investigation
- Response to complainant
- Improvement action
- Date complaint closed

Such reviews will be reported to the Board on a quarterly basis and if there are trends or high impact issues, strategies will be decided upon and implemented to address these.

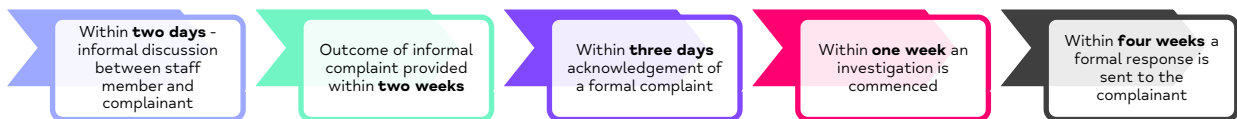
Such records will be kept for two years.

## 12. Confidentiality

All complaints information will be handled sensitively and confidentially, in accordance with our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies. We will only tell those within the organisation who need to know so that the complaint is managed and responded to in a timely way and according to process.

## 13. Timescales

In short, the timescales are as follows:



Below is a summary of the timescales as they relate to the key steps in each part of the complaints process. The steps are explained in more detail in Appendix 2.

Process	Action	Timescale
<b>Informal Complaint</b>	Acknowledgement	Two days
	Consider detail of complaint	Within one week
	Response provided	Two weeks
<b>Formal Complaint</b>	Acknowledgement	Three days
	Investigation commenced	Within one week
	Response provided	Four weeks
<b>Appeals Process</b>	Acknowledgement	Two days
	Review commenced	Within one week
	Response provided	Within 30 days

## 14. Policy implementation

The Policy will be displayed openly and provided freely to the relevant individuals and agencies. This policy will be made available to all members of staff and volunteers through our online shared document facility (SharePoint/OneDrive) and to the public on our website.

Leaflets will be produced with information on support and where to share concerns. These will be posted at each of the staff sites.

## 15. Policy monitoring and review

Implementation of this policy will be monitored through a review of reports on comments, compliments and complaints. Feedback on the ease of accessing the process, timeliness and appropriateness of response will be periodically sought.

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or before if organisational needs require it.

## 16. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Owner/ Author	Date	Review
1.0	Policy created (Complaints only)	Nic Roberts, CEO	1/4/2018	
2.0	Formatted to Mind Nottinghamshire Document Template, restructured and policy name changed to Comments, compliments and complaints policy to follow Mind checklist. Reviewed and updated with relevant information.	Rosie Dorontic, Project Support/ Nic Roberts, CEO	05/05/2022/ 23/05/22	
2.1	Updated to include how we respond to comments and compliments, revised contact details and to include a process flowchart for complaints management	Katie Freeman, Project Support	31/08/2022	31/08/2025
2.1	Double-checked & status updated prior to publication	Katie Freeman	12/09/2022	

<b>Date adopted by Trustees</b>	12/9/2022	<b>Date Published</b>	12/9/2022	<b>Date for Review</b>	31/08/2025
<i>Approved by</i>	Derek Adlam Amanda Fletcher Roger Stendall - Chair				

## 17. Related policies

- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Influence, Participation and Lived Experience Policy
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## 18. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – How to Contact Us

- in writing / by post to:
  - Nottinghamshire Mind, 6 Hardy Street, Worksop, Notts S80 1EH
  - email to: [feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk](mailto:feedback@nottinghamshiremind.org.uk)
- via the online form on our website
  - [www.nottinghamshiremind.org.uk/contact](http://www.nottinghamshiremind.org.uk/contact)
- by phone - 0800 470 0203
  - by private/direct messaging us through our social media
  - Twitter - @notts\_mind
  - Instagram - nottinghamshiremind
  - Facebook – nottsmind
- in person at our Worksop or Mansfield offices

#### Nottinghamshire Mind Head Office - Worksop

6 Hardy Street  
Worksop, S80 1EH

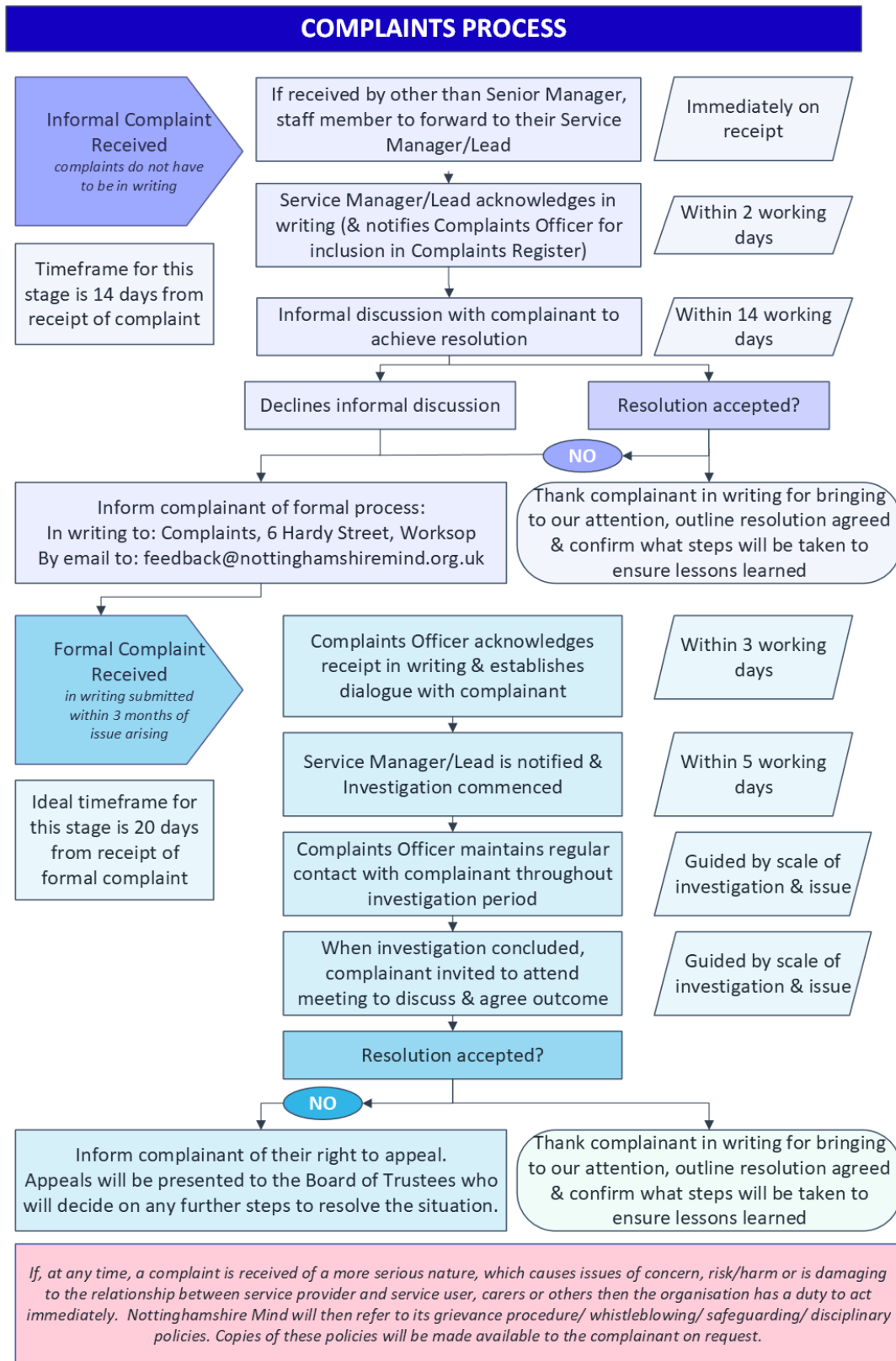
Office Hours 9am – 4pm Monday – Friday

#### Mansfield Office

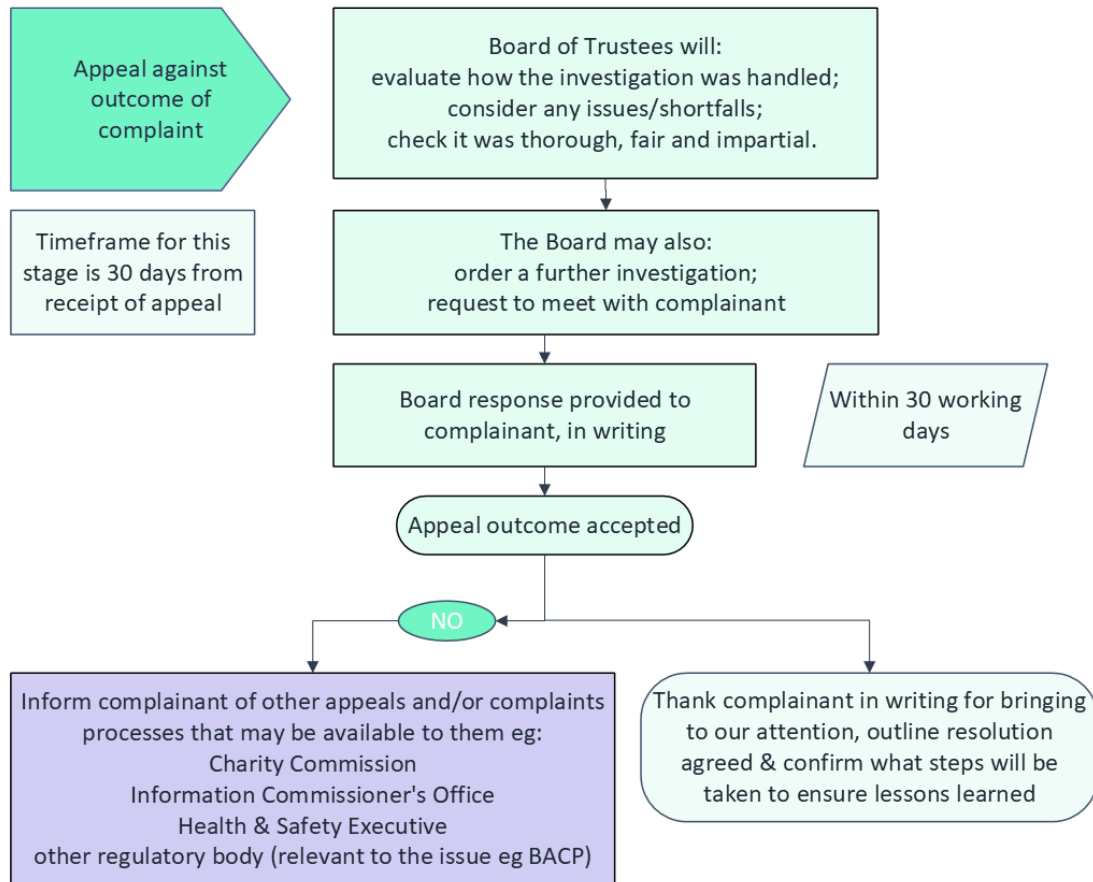
14 St John Street  
Mansfield, NG18 1QJ

Office Hours 9am – 4pm Monday – Thursday and Fridays 9am – 3pm

## Appendix 2 - Complaints Procedure



## COMPLAINTS APPEALS PROCESS



*If, at any time, a complaint is received of a more serious nature, which causes issues of concern, risk/harm or is damaging to the relationship between service provider and service user, carers or others then the organisation has a duty to act immediately. Nottinghamshire Mind will then refer to its grievance procedure/ whistleblowing/ safeguarding/ disciplinary policies. Copies of these policies will be made available to the complainant on request.*

END

Status: Approved

Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy | 31 August 2022 | Version 2.1

Page 14 of 14