

# Oxfordshire Mind

## Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy

July 2022

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## Version Control

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### Summary of main changes in this version:

Added a Purpose to the beginning of the policy

Updated definitions for the key terms we use in this policy

Combined the procedure for processing a concern and a complaint to avoid confusion over whether something was defined as a concern or complaint - in line with MQM .

Procedure of logging a complaint has been updated to reflect our use of In-Form versus paper records and to keep in line with MQM recommendations.

Added clarification that everything enters at Stage One (informal) with the aim that the informal complaint/ concern can be quickly resolved by talking it over to everyone's satisfaction and avoiding the need for escalation. All stage one complaints/ concerns will be logged so there is a record and patterns can be identified.

Removed volunteers as people who *couldn't* use the complaints procedure as this is incorrect. Volunteers can complain using the complaints procedure.

Removed statement that complaints will be recorded separately from a service user's personal file as In-Form is the common recording system for all processes.

National Mind – references removed as the email address is not valid and National Mind don't take complaints about Local Minds.

Advocacy Service – updated this to a generic reference to local commissioned advocacy service rather than naming a specific organisation as this may change over the lifetime of the current iteration of Oxfordshire Mind's policy. Staff on the complaint helpdesk will be made aware of the current provider from time to time and how to signpost.

**Information sources used:**

Oxfordshire Mind Policy on Policy Management

Mind Quality Mark

National Mind Complaints, Concerns and Compliments Policy

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## Introduction

### Purpose:

Oxfordshire Mind works hard to provide high quality services to everyone we interact with. In order to do this, we need to be open to feedback from our volunteers, service users and members of the public about what we’re doing well and where we need to improve.

This policy encourages people to make complaints, share comments and give compliments (positive feedback) so that we can continue to learn and improve. It also explains the process for how to share complaints, comments and compliments, as well as any relevant investigation processes that follow the feedback shared.

This policy was developed with our people who use our services and follows the principles of our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality (EDIE) strategy. It also meets the standards set out in the Mind Quality Mark (MQM) policy checklist.

The following principles guide Oxfordshire Mind's approach to handling comments, compliments and complaints:

- Listening to people's experiences is a vital tool in measuring how well Oxfordshire Mind is providing services and how we can improve for the future.
- The process is fair, easy and transparent (we will always be honest, and be as open as possible about what's happening).
- The process is accessible to everyone, whatever their identity and experience.
- Making a complaint will not negatively affect the service that is being given to anyone making a complaint
- Concerns and complaints are dealt with efficiently, appropriately and are investigated within the agreed time.
- People who make complaints are treated with respect and courtesy, and receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.
- People who make complaints receive a timely and appropriate response, sharing the outcome of any investigation and what will happen next.
- Action is taken where necessary in the light of the outcome of the complaint. This might include an explanation, an apology and, if relevant and appropriate, information on any action taken.
- It is very important that every effort is made to ensure anyone making a complaint understands the outcome of their complaint.

If a staff member of Oxfordshire Mind has a concern they should follow the guidelines set out in the organisation's grievance policy.

### Time limits to submit a complaint

Usually, we will only investigate complaints that are either:

- Made within six months of the event

or

- Made within six months of the person realising that they have a reason to make a complaint, as long as the event they are making a complaint about happened no more than twelve months ago

If an event complained about happened more than 6 months ago, it may be difficult for us to deliver a full investigation. We will therefore encourage people to raise issues as soon as possible to ensure best possible investigation. In exceptional circumstances - for example gross misconduct or abuse - Oxfordshire Mind may choose to investigate a historic complaint. The decision to do this will be made by a member of the Senior Management Team.

The procedure included in this policy (please see the sections from Stage One to Stage Four) outlines the process which Oxfordshire Mind follows. The principles of good complaint handling as defined by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) are:-

- Getting it right
- Being customer focused
- Being open and accountable
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Putting things right
- Seeking continuous improvement

### Definitions

When Oxfordshire Mind uses the words **concern**, **complaint**, and **compliment**, here's what we mean:

- When someone shares a **concern**, it means they are sharing that they are worried or uncomfortable about something happening at Oxfordshire Mind.
- When people make a **complaint** to Oxfordshire Mind, it means that they are telling us that they are not satisfied about something they have witnessed or experienced, because they feel that Oxfordshire Mind has:
  - Failed to provide a service
  - Failed to provide an acceptable standard of service,
  - Made a mistake in the way a service was provided
  - Failed to act appropriately
  - Been unfair in some way

All concerns and complaints will be logged and follow the same processes and progress:

1. Stage One is informal (see the Stage One section below for more information)
2. Stage Two will usually be carried out by a manager at Oxfordshire Mind
3. Stage Three will usually be carried out by a member of Oxfordshire Mind's Senior Management team
4. Stage Four will be carried out by a member of Oxfordshire Mind's Board of Trustees

Where a complaint is following one of the formal stages, it will be assigned for investigation by someone with sufficient seniority and distance from the individual / service complained about to ensure an objective review. The investigation will normally be internal, but in some circumstances, Oxfordshire Mind may decide to ask for an external review.

- When someone gives a **compliment**, they are sharing a positive comment with the organisation about an experience they have had with Oxfordshire Mind and how this has affected them. This compliment contains information that helps Oxfordshire Mind to understand what it is that people like or value when they connect with us, and why. Compliments help us to understand what we're doing well so that we can help even more people and grow the skills that we have.

If someone wants to share a compliment about something Oxfordshire Mind does or how we have helped, they should email [getinvolved@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@oxfordshiremind.org.uk) or tell one of our team or call 01865 263755 and leave a voice mail so we can track and share that feedback and act on it where necessary. We will keep a record of all compliments, concerns and complaints and share these regularly with our staff and volunteers, Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees.

### [Support for those making complaints](#)

Public / service user facing information about this policy will include signposting information to aid people who feel their mental health is being negatively affected by the process and who may wish to seek additional support from Oxfordshire Mind or another organisation.

Public / service user facing information about this policy will include signposting information to aid people who wish to seek the support of an independent advocacy service to support them in bringing a complaint.

### [Timescales](#)

The timescales for Oxfordshire Mind's complaints process at each stage are set out in flowcharts at Appendix A and detailed below.

## Stage One (Informal)

To share a concern or make a complaint, people should speak with or write to the person involved or their line manager. Oxfordshire Mind will do our best to address the worry or unhappiness through a conversation or by writing to the individual, and letting them know what we have done or will do next, as a result of the person getting in touch with us.

If someone doesn't know who to contact, or if they don't want to speak to the person connected with the complaint themselves, they should email [complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk) or call 01865 263755 to leave a voice mail. (This number is a voice mail box only)

A member of Oxfordshire Mind staff will acknowledge any concerns or complaints within five working days of receiving them.

So that the organisation can best address the concern or complaint, people will be encouraged to provide a brief summary, be specific about what the concern or complaint is, and provide further detail as necessary, including copies of any relevant communications.

After the concern or complaint has been acknowledged, the staff member who received the Stage 1 complaint will undertake any further discussion or investigation as required and reply to the person who lodged the concern or complaint within a further 10 working days.

If the individual is not satisfied with the response at this stage, they can request the complaint be escalated to Stage Two. Details on how to do this are at the start of the Stage Two section of this policy.



## Stage Two: Formally registering a complaint

To log a complaint formally, this should be put in writing and either sent to:

The Complaints Helpdesk  
Oxfordshire Mind  
2 Kings Meadow  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0DP

or emailed to: [complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk).

A complaint about the Chief Executive Officer or the Board should be marked for the attention of the Chair of Trustees, or for the attention of the Vice Chair of Trustees if the complaint is about the Chair.

If someone is unable to put the complaint in writing themselves, they can speak to an employee of Oxfordshire Mind and ask them to log the complaint, or leave a message on **01865 263755** and someone will contact the person to discuss logging the complaint in writing on their behalf.

All Stage Two complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt, including a summary of the complaint and advice to the complainant that they may request changes to this summary within 28 days.

After 28 days, or confirmation that the person making the complaint does not wish to make any changes to the summary, whichever is sooner, the complaint will be assigned to a manager, who will carry out an investigation, and provide a full written response within 20 working days from when the complaint is assigned.

## Stage Three

If the person complaining feels that the organisation's investigation did not answer or fully address the point they were trying to make in Stage One and Stage Two they can request that the complaint investigation is reviewed by a member of the Senior Management Team.

To escalate or move the complaint on to Stage Three, the complainant must request this in writing within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of the State Two investigation. The request must be accompanied by an explanation as to why the individual is not satisfied with the investigation, and either sent to:

The Complaints Helpdesk  
Oxfordshire Mind  
2 Kings Meadow  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0DP

or emailed to: [complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk)

If the request for the Stage Two investigation to be reviewed is concerned with a complaint about the Chief Executive Officer or the Board, it should be marked for the attention of the Chair of Trustees, or for the attention of the Vice Chair of Trustees if the complaint is about the Chair.

If someone is unable to put the request in writing themselves, they can speak to an employee of Oxfordshire Mind and ask them to log the request, or leave a message on **01865 263755** and someone will contact the person to discuss logging the request in writing on their behalf.

All Stage Three complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt, including a summary of the complaint and reasons for requesting a review of the investigation, with advice to the complainant that they may request changes to this summary within 28 days.

After 28 days, or confirmation that the person making the complaint does not wish to make any changes to the summary, whichever is sooner, the complaint will be assigned to a member of the Senior Management Team manager, who will review the information and investigate further if required. The individual will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the Stage Three complaint being assigned.

If the individual is not satisfied with the response they receive at Stage Three, they can request the complaint is escalated to Stage Four, where it will be investigated by the Board of Trustees.

## Stage Four

If, after the complaint investigation has been reviewed by a member of the Senior Management Team, the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the response, they can request a further review by our Board of Trustees.

To escalate or move the complaint onto Stage Four, it must request this in writing within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of the State Three investigation, including an explanation as to why the person is not satisfied with investigations and reviews so far, and either sent to:

The Complaints Helpdesk  
Oxfordshire Mind  
2 Kings Meadow  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0DP

or emailed to: [complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk](mailto:complaintshelpdesk@oxfordshiremind.org.uk)

If the request for the Stage Three investigation to be reviewed is concerned with a complaint about the Chief Executive Officer or the Board, the request should be marked for the attention of the Chair of Trustees, or for the attention of the Vice Chair of Trustees if the complaint is about the Chair.

If someone is unable to put the request in writing themselves, they can speak to an employee of Oxfordshire Mind and ask them to log the request, or leave a message on **01865 263755** and someone will contact the person to discuss logging the request in writing on their behalf.

The complaint escalation to Stage Four will be acknowledged in writing within five working days. In the acknowledgment will be a summary of why the complaint has been escalated, with advice to the complainant that they may request changes to this summary within 28 days.

After 28 days, or confirmation that the person making the complaint does not wish to make any changes to the summary, whichever is sooner, a member of the Board of Trustees will be assigned to carry out a review of the Stage Two complaint investigation and Stage Three review, and the individual will receive a full written response within 30 working days from the date the Stage Four complaint was assigned.

## Learning

Any learning or actions agreed as part of investigating a concern or complaint will be shared with the relevant manager and team so that we can make sure any necessary changes are put into action.

Reports produced quarterly for the Senior Management Team and annually for the Board of Trustees will highlight any trends and themes from concerns and complaints, including action taken.

## Advocacy

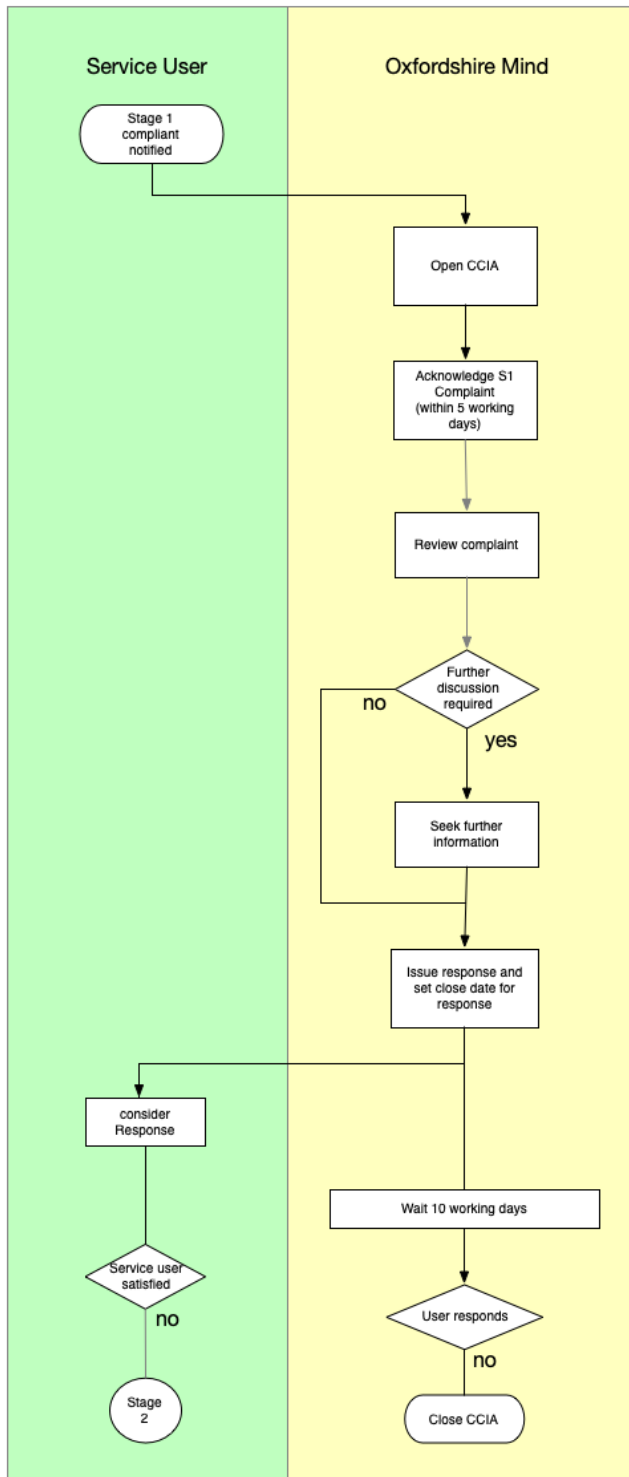
If a complaint is being made on behalf of a service user by an advocate, it must first be verified that the advocate has permission to speak from the person making the complaint, especially if confidential information is involved. Oxfordshire Mind will obtain consent from the person who has made the complaint before discussing the complaint with the advocate.

## Related Policies

- Involving People
- Data protection & Confidentiality
- Volunteering and Peer Support

APPENDIX A: COMPLAINTS FLOWCHARTS

Stage 1 - informal complaint (concern)



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Stage 2 - formal complaint



Stage 3 - review of complaint investigation



Stage 4 - Trustee review

