

Teesside Mind

Comments, Compliments & Complaints Policy

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Section 1: Purpose

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Teesside Mind is committed to providing high quality services to everyone who accesses support. We will maintain the highest possible standards of openness, transparency, and accountability.

1.1.2 We recognise that one of the ways in which the organisation can continue to improve services is by listening and responding to the feedback from people who use our services, supporters, and stakeholders. We will encourage people to use this policy to provide feedback.

1.1.3 We recognise that effective communication is a vital part of dealing with comments, compliments and complaints to ensure people feel listened to and respected.

1.1.4 We know that sometimes we will be able to put things right and make improvements. On occasion we may only be able to explain our actions, apologise and learn from feedback.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy can be used by people who use Teesside Mind's services, volunteers, supporters and the general public.

1.2.2 This policy does not apply to employees. Employees should use Teesside Mind's grievance or whistleblowing policies where appropriate.

1.3 Aims

1.3.1 To provide a framework for raising and addressing comments, compliments and complaints that is fair, easy and as transparent as possible.

1.3.2 To explain what steps Teesside Mind will take if it receives a comment, compliment or complaint.

1.3.3 To ensure consistent, equitable and fair treatment in line with Teesside Mind's values in accordance with adherence with Teesside Mind's **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality** policy.

1.3.4 Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the person raising it, and Teesside Mind will ensure that they are treated with respect and courtesy, receiving appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.

1.3.5 Learning from complaints will be used to improve Teesside Mind's work and drive

forward a culture of continuous improvement.

1.4 Roles & responsibilities

The following section details the responsibilities of specific individuals and groups involved in compliance with this document.

1.4.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy, as well as ensuring that Teesside Mind is properly resourced to fulfil its obligations.
- Ensuring all aspects of this policy are fairly, equitably, consistently and sensitively applied in line with Teesside Mind's values and in accordance with the organisation's **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality** policy.

1.4.2 The CEO, Deputy CEO and senior leadership team is responsible for:

- Ensuring all employees are aware of this policy and procedure.
- Ensuring all aspects of this policy are fairly, equitably consistently and sensitively applied, in line with Teesside Mind's values and in accordance with the organisation's **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality** policy.
- Treating any concerns seriously and dealing with them in a timely manner.
- Offering reasonable adjustments and wellbeing to support the person raising any concerns where the process is causing them distress or affecting their mental health.
- Offering reasonable adjustments or extra support to employees who need it, including to individuals named in a complaint, where the process is causing distress or affecting the mental health of anyone involved.
- Regularly monitoring comments, compliments and complaints for any trends to inform ways to improve practice and maintain high quality services.

1.4.3 Managers, staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding this policy.
- Listening to anyone raising a comment, compliment or complaint and making them feel listened to and supported
- Recording comments, compliments and complaints on the record form (located on SharePoint)
- Escalating, where needed, any comment, compliment or complaints to the management support rota.

- Treating any person who complains fairly in accordance with the **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality** policy, and with compassion and respect
- Communicating openly and honestly during complaints investigation meetings.

Section 2: Comments, Compliments and Complaints

2.1 Comments and Compliments

2.1.1 Teesside Mind welcomes compliments about its services. Any written compliments received will be shared with the member of staff, volunteer, and/or relevant department.

2.1.2 Compliments allow Teesside Mind to know when something is working well and continue to deliver suitable services.

2.1.3 Teesside Mind recognises that comments are helpful for reviewing the services on offer, and welcome suggestions of solutions.

2.1.4 Teesside Mind will advise of any changes made because of a comment.

2.2 Complaints

2.2.1 Teesside Mind will make sure that making a complaint is as easy as possible.

2.2.2 All complaints will be taken seriously as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with a service or individual which calls for an immediate response.

2.2.3 Any person making a complaint will always be treated with courtesy and fairness in accordance with Teesside Mind's **Inclusion, Diversity and Equality** policy.

2.2.4 When initially receiving a complaint we will ask the complainant what would be a good outcome to making the complaint? E.g. An apology, change to practice, extra support. We will clarify with the person what they are complaining about and log this clearly. We will try to resolve the complaint during our initial discussion. We will still record this to be sure to capture learning from complaints where early resolution is made.

2.2.5 Complaints will be responded to in the right way – for example, with an explanation or an apology where things have gone wrong, and information on any action taken etc.

2.2.6 Learning from complaints will be shared and will be used to improve services.

2.2.7 Concerns raised informally will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as formal complaints.

2.2.8 Persistent/vexatious complaints will be managed sensitively in order to support the person making the complaint whilst ensuring that other people using services, staff and volunteers do not suffer detriment.

2.2.9 This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed for its effectiveness and accessibility.

2.3 Monitoring

2.3.1 A log of all compliments, comments and complaints is kept and a quarterly report is prepared for the Senior Management team and The Quality & Safety Group, before being shared with the Board of Trustees.

2.3.2 Complaints are monitored to identify any trends which will inform ways to improve practice and maintain high quality services. We will record and report on all complaints including those that are resolved early and without escalation.

2.3.3 Support and training is offered to staff to enable them to conduct investigations.

2.3.4 Complaint information will be retained for a period of 6 years in accordance with the **Data Retention Schedule**.

2.4 Confidentiality

2.4.1 Confidentiality will be maintained where possible as outlined in Teesside Mind's **Confidentiality Policy**.

2.4.2 Where a complaint concerns an individual, requires an investigation or raises safeguarding implications, confidentiality may need to be breached. This will be explained to the person making the complaint before being acted upon.

2.5 Implementation

2.5.1 Staff, volunteers and trustees will be required to read and understand this policy as part of induction and refresher training.

3. Procedural guidelines

3.1 Submitting a complaint - Stage One – Informal

3.1.1 To make an initial complaint (Stage 1), please speak to or email the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and we will endeavour to satisfy your complaint. We will let you know of any remedial action that is to be taken.

3.1.2 If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email info@teessidemind.org.uk or send your complaint **in writing** to Deputy CEO, The Mind Centre, 90 – 92 Lothian Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 2QX **by telephone** on 01642 257020 or **in person**

3.1.3 In the event that your complaint involves the Chief Executive, please address your complaint for the attention of the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will bring it to the trustees attention.

3.1.4 You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 5 working days from the date it is received.

3.1.5 In order for us to resolve your issue to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.

3.1.6 People can choose to make a complaint via an advocate, relative or friend. If this is the case, it should be made clear that it is the person making the complaint supported by the third party, rather than the third person making the complaint. All communication will be sent to the person making a complaint, and if they request it, copies can be sent to the third party.

3.1.7 We will respond to informal complaints within 5 working days from the acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint.

3.2 Submitting a complaint - Stage Two - Formal

3.2.1 If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated from the beginning, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, either through your contact at Stage 1, info@teessidemind.org.uk or send your complaint **in writing** to Deputy CEO, The Mind Centre, 90 – 92 Lothian Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 2QX **by telephone** on 01642 257020 or **in person**.

3.2.2 You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 5 working days from the date it is received.

3.2.3 An appropriate manager will be assigned to investigate your complaint based on the gravity of the concern and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement.

3.1.4 In the event that your complaint involves the Chief Executive, please address your complaint for the attention of the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

3.2.5 If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to speak to the Deputy CEO and given the option to appeal (Stage 3).

3.3 Appealing against the decision - Stage Three

3.3.1 If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation and wish to appeal against the decision made, you must put this in writing and email it to Kerry.robinson@teessidemind.org.uk or send it in writing to Deputy CEO, The Mind Centre, 90 – 92 Lothian Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 2QX within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

3.3.2 The appeal review and further investigation will be carried out by someone at a senior level to the original investigator – for example, if the complaint was against a manager and thereby investigated by the Deputy CEO then the Chief Executive will review the complaint and make further investigation if necessary.

3.3.3 You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal within 20 working days.

3.3.4 The response of the appeal will be final and no further internal investigations will take place. If the person making the complaint is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they can contact external agencies dependant on the complaint:

- General - Charity Commission - <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>
- Data protection - The ICO <https://ico.org.uk/>
- Fundraising - Fundraising regulator <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/>

Appendix A – COMPLAINTS FORM

Your name	
Telephone number	
Address	
Postcode	
Name of person filling out this form (if differs to the person making the complaint)	
Details of your complaint <i>Please include any dates, places or other information relevant to this complaint, including any people involved in this complaint if applicable. Please give as</i>	

much information as possible in order for us to investigate your complaint effectively.

References

Confidentiality Policy
 Data Protection Policy
 Privacy Notice
 Safeguarding Policy
 Subject Access Request Policy
 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date of last edit:	By Whom:	Approved by:	What changed?	Date of next review