



## **Solihull Mind**

### **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure**

Solihull Mind believes that in order for us to provide high quality services which meet the needs of people with emotional distress, we must listen to the comments and complaints of people who use, or wish to use, our services; relatives of people with emotional distress; mental health colleagues; and the general public.

People have the right to make compliments, comments and complaints about the activities of Solihull Mind, and these will be judged against the philosophies and policies of the organisation – see appendices for details.

#### **Compliments and Comments**

An important part of knowing aspects of service delivery are meeting the needs of the service users, or that certain aspects of the work of Solihull Mind are being delivered well, is by receiving the feedback from service users, the public, and others. Service user feedback is collected by using the services of the organisation, however from time-to-time it may be that they want to provide additional feedback that a form may not provide. On this basis, Solihull Mind welcome all Compliments and Comments and how to provide same is detailed at the end of this policy.

#### **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints and comments about Solihull Mind's activities - including the behaviour of its staff/volunteers/Executive Committee - can be made in written or verbal form, by the person themselves or with the help of an advocate or supporter. This is for ALL; staff, volunteers, service users, Board members, general public, etc.

It is hoped that complaints and comments about services/individuals can be made as quickly as possible in order that the problem can be resolved and any necessary changes made. As it is unusual for us to keep notes it is inevitable that the investigators will be relying heavily on people's memories of an event. As a consequence we feel unable to look at events that took place more than 3 months before the date of the complaint.

Initial contact to make a complaint or comment can be made to any member of staff, who will then bring it to the attention of the CEO or, if s/he is unavailable or the subject of the complaint, to the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

All panel members in stages 1 and 2 of the complaints procedure will be Trustees of Solihull Mind. The complainant can have access to a list of Trustees if requested, however, they will not be informed of the individual Trustees involved.

The staff member/volunteer/trustee who is the subject of the complaint will be informed of the progress and final decision. Solihull Mind acknowledges that as well as being distressing for the complainant, it is also a difficult time for the subject of the complaint, and aims to be as supportive as possible.

**Complaints will be considered in three stages :**

**a) Stage 1 - Informal resolution**

An informal interview to discuss the problem/complaint with either the complainant or their advocate will usually be arranged for a time no longer than 3 working days after notification to the CEO. If requested the complainant can bypass this stage and go straight to making a formal written complaint. If the CEO is the subject of the complaint, the Chairperson will carry out this informal interview.

**b) Stage 2 - formal complaint/interview**

If the issue is not resolved during the informal interview with the CEO/Chairperson, the person will be asked to make a formal written complaint - assistance in doing this will be offered either by a staff member/volunteer or Executive member of Mind, or, where possible, by putting the person in contact with an independent advocate. The complainant, along with their supporter or advocate if required, will then be offered the opportunity to meet with a sub-committee consisting of the Chairperson and two members of the executive committee who will then investigate the complaint. This meeting will normally take place within 5 working days of being notified of the complaint. The committee will aim to report back within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, however, if this is not possible, an interim report on progress will be made.

A written response to the complaint will usually be made within three days of the formal meeting.

**c) Stage 3 - review**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the sub-committee, they can request that it be reviewed by a further sub-committee made up of three other members of the Executive committee - this will usually contain the vice-chairperson or treasurer, plus at least one service user. This request needs to be made to the Chairperson within 2 weeks of the completion of stage 2. The meeting will usually take place within 10 working days of a request being received. If this is not possible the complainant will be kept informed of the new timescale and the reasons why it is necessary. This committee will look at whether the informal/formal complaints procedures had been correctly followed; not the detail of the complaint. If the procedure has not been followed then this group will re-consider the original complaint. Timescales will be as in Stage 2.

The decision of the review panel will be given verbally on the day of the meeting (assuming all relevant information is available at the meeting) to the Chairperson of the stage 1 committee, and in writing to the complainant and the stage 1 committee within 5 days of the meeting.

**Outcomes/recommendations**

The informal or formal investigators of the complaint can, if appropriate, recommend the following actions to the Solihull Mind Executive Committee as a consequence of a complaint:

- changes in Solihull Mind Policy
- changes in Solihull Mind practice

- changes in an individual employee's/volunteer's/trustee's practice\*
- implementation of the staff disciplinary procedure\*
- removal of Executive Members (Trustees)
- where appropriate, reporting serious findings directly to National Mind, the Charity Commission, or funding agencies.

\*To be carried out via the appropriate management structure.

The complainant will be contacted by the Chairperson at the end of the complaints procedure to inform her/him in writing of the committee's findings and any changes that may have been made as a consequence. If the complainant needs further clarification of this information they will be given the opportunity to meet with two panel members to discuss the contents of the letter.

The internal complaints procedure has now been completed. However, if the complainant wishes to take up the issue with bodies outside of the organisation, any appropriate information on how to access these will be given. Examples of these may be: National Mind, The Charity Commission, Solihull Social Services, Solihull PCT, service funders.

## **General Information**

### **Information**

A leaflet containing the procedure for making comments and complaints shall be produced and made easily available to service users.

### **Venue**

All meetings will normally take place in the Mind offices at 14/16 Faulkner Road, Solihull; however a change of venue may be considered if the complainant has good reason why it should be held elsewhere, and a new venue can be mutually agreed.

### **Independent Advice**

A complainant should be offered advice on how to receive help and support from an independent advocate, or where appropriate, an interpreter. All reasonable travel costs/expenses for the complainant / advocate / supporter/ or interpreter will be paid by Solihull Mind.

Possible sources of advocates include:

- other Mind workers/volunteers/Executive Committee members (assuming the person is felt by the complainant to be sufficiently independent)\*
- other mental health professionals
- another user of the service being challenged
- a friend

- any other advocacy agency that exists in the borough

\* It is acknowledged that this is a legitimate activity for Mind staff/volunteers and Executive committee members, and that individuals will not be adversely affected by acting as an advocate / supporter for a person making a complaint against a colleague or Mind service.

### **Training**

All Solihull Mind Executive Committee members will receive training in the implementation of the complaints procedure, including the guidance given in the “handling complaints” resource pack for local Mind groups developed by National Mind.

### **Complaint Management**

The CEO will normally be responsible for the administration of the complaint procedure, ensuring appropriate records are kept, meetings organised, and information given to the committee members at the relevant stages. Where the CEO is the subject of the complaint another member of staff will be nominated by the Chairperson to carry out this task.

See Appendices 1-3 for copies of the complaints action sheets and monitoring information.

### **How to make contact:**

Via:

The Comments Form located around the site (or requested from a member of staff).

In writing to: Solihull Mind, 14-16 Faulkner Road, Solihull, B92 8SY

Verbal communication: To any member of staff, either face-to-face, or by telephone.

Email to: [contact@solihullmind.org.uk](mailto:contact@solihullmind.org.uk)

Or other appropriate methods that are suitable to your needs.

### **Review date**

The policy shall be reviewed at least every two years and updated where necessary.

**April 2023**