



For better  
mental health

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## Sheffield Mind

### Comments and Complaints Policy

Sheffield Mind aims to provide a high quality service for those who use the service and for those who we work with in other ways. In order to know we are achieving this we need to know when users of our service feel that the service has not met their expectations or when the standard falls below that which is acceptable. By bringing problems to our attention we will aim to put things right for those concerned whilst also review our work to ensure that we take appropriate action to ensure the problem does not recur.

#### Comments Procedure

When people have a concern about the services of Sheffield Mind we encourage the individual to raise the concern informally. Most concerns can be effectively resolved in this way. This can be done verbally or in writing. The following are ways this can be done;

- By talking to the member of staff concerned.
- By talking to another member of staff.
- By talking to the manager.
- In writing to the member of staff concerned or to the manager.
- By using the comments and feedback box which is by the front door.

When an issue is raised informally we will endeavour to come to an agreement with the individual about the issue and any action that needs to be taken as a consequence, and to feed back any outcomes or progress of that action to the individual.

#### Complaints Procedure

An alternative way to raise an issue of concern is by making a formal complaint. This might be the chosen course of action when;

- The individual feels that the issue has not been adequately dealt with informally.
- Where the issue is of such seriousness that the informal procedure is not appropriate.

The formal complaints procedure has 2 stages as follows:

##### **Stage 1**

The complaint should be made directly to Steve Williams whose job is to deal with complaints. This can be done by:

- Writing a letter (please include as much detail as possible).
- By email: [steve@sheffieldmind.co.uk](mailto:steve@sheffieldmind.co.uk)
- By telephone or a face to face meeting

Once the complaint has been received Steve Williams might contact the complainant to discuss further and to seek clarification if needed.

An acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 5 working days of receipt and this will include the course of action that will be taken to investigate the complaint. The course of action will depend on the nature of the complaint but could include an



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investigation or raising the issue with the staff concerned. The complaint will be dealt with within 28 days and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

## **Stage 2**

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of stage 1 they can refer the complaint to the Board of Trustees. This should be done in writing and addressed to Usha Fitch and should be done within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of stage 1. The trustees will appoint a panel comprising 2 trustees and an independent person (who will not be a member, trustee or member of staff of Sheffield Mind). The panel will meet to consider the complaint and may invite the complainant and others involved to speak. The panel will meet within 28 days of the complaint being received and the complainant will be given at least 14 days notice of the date of the panel. The panel will come to a decision about the complaint and identify any further action that needs to be taken. They will report to the [Chair of the Trustees/next full board]. If the recommendations of the panel are agreed, the complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing within 7 days. This decision is final.

At all stages in this procedure, the complainant may be assisted and accompanied by another person. At all stages the time limit may be altered by mutual agreement.

All new and existing staff should be made aware of this policy on commencement of their employment. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all staff who report to them are aware of and adhere to the policy framework within which Sheffield Mind operates and to keep them abreast of updated and new policies as soon as practicable.

The complaints policy should be brought to the attention of service users and others through publicity such as notice boards, leaflets etc.

Policy agreed by Directors on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Policy due to be reviewed on January 2011