
Oxfordshire Mind

Complaints Policy



For better
mental health

Oxfordshire Mind
125 Walton Street
Oxford
OX2 6AH

Registered Charity Number 261476
Company Limited by Guarantee 4343625

Introduction

The importance of complaints

Oxfordshire Mind recognises that it is very important for people to be able to complain and feel safe doing so. All feedback about our services is helpful to us to make sure that our services are of the highest possible standard.

Whilst complaints are encouraged it is important not to see them as being about blame and punishment. They are about listening to each other. The purpose is to enable everyone concerned to move forward, making any changes that might be necessary.

It is important that complaints are handled fairly for everyone involved. Having a complaints procedure is part of the organisation's responsibility towards those who use our services, to protect them against bad practice. The organisation also has a responsibility towards workers and volunteers so that they are not victimised or unnecessarily blamed.

Formal and informal complaints

The formal complaints procedure is set out below. However if you have a complaint to make about any aspect of the service we ask that you first try to sort out the problem informally with those directly involved. For example you could talk to a worker or raise the issue in the members' meetings in the day services or residents' meetings at the housing projects.

A copy of this Complaints Policy is available on request at every Oxfordshire Mind project.

The Formal Complaints Procedure

1. Who can complain

This procedure is for users of our services, applicants to our services, their carers and members of the public. It is not for paid workers, who may use Oxfordshire Mind's Grievance Procedure instead.

Usually we will only investigate complaints that are either

- Made within six months of the event, or
- Made within six months of you realising that you had something to complain about, as long as that is not more than twelve months after the event itself.

2. What you can complain about

You can complain about any specific action (or lack of action) taken by Oxfordshire Mind. Examples might include a decision taken by a Mind worker

or committee, the information we have published or provided, or any matter over which Oxfordshire Mind has control and for which it has some responsibility. The procedure cannot be used for matters not related to Oxfordshire Mind's work or over which Oxfordshire Mind has no control or responsibility.

Oxfordshire Mind reserves the right to refuse to investigate a complaint in cases where the person making the complaint persistently refuses to follow the complaints procedure or is threatening, abusive or violent towards staff or Trustees investigating the complaint.

The procedure cannot be used to make complaints about a worker's general character but can be used to complain about something they have done, or failed to do.

Once the complaints procedure is completed the matter will be considered closed and not re-investigated unless significant new information comes to light.

3. What can be expected as a result of making a formal complaint

All formal complaints are taken seriously. The outcome may be that Oxfordshire Mind reviews or changes a decision or it may be that the complaint is not upheld. You will always be given a written response to your complaint.

4. Confidentiality

Your complaint will be treated in a confidential manner. It may well be necessary for the person investigating the complaint to speak with staff working in Mind services or with other service users. Any concerns about this should be raised at the meeting with the person conducting the investigation.

The Formal Complaints Procedure; Step by Step

The First Stage

Put your complaint in writing or on tape and send it to the Administrator at the Oxfordshire Mind office at 125 Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6AH. It is helpful if you say what outcome you want from the complaint. They will log your complaint in the Complaints File and pass it to the most appropriate people.

They will send you a letter acknowledging receipt. This letter will include a statement of the complaint which you can amend or change if you wish. This is important to make sure that we have a clear understanding of the matter to be investigated. It will not be possible to make further changes to the statement after it has been agreed.

After the statement has been agreed we will arrange a meeting between yourself and the person investigating the complaint. This will usually be a Day

Services Manager or the Head of Mind Housing. If the complaint is not connected with either housing or day services it will usually be investigated by the Director.

You are welcome to be accompanied to this meeting (or any subsequent meetings) by a friend or supporter but not someone directly involved in the matter being investigated

The person carrying out the investigation may also need to speak to other staff or service users before making a response to your complaint. We aim to write to you with our response within 28 days of the meeting.

The Second Stage

If you are not satisfied with the response to the first stage you have the right to ask the Board of Trustees of Oxfordshire Mind to review the complaint. If you want to do this you need to put your request in writing to the Administrator at the Mind Office within 14 days of receiving the written response to the First Stage.

The Board of Trustees will be informed that a complaint has reached the Second Stage and will appoint a group to review the complaint. This group will consist of at least two Trustees and wherever possible it is desirable that one of the group should be someone who has some experience of using mental health services. The group may interview any of those concerned with the complaint. They will come to a decision and will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will usually write to you within 28 days of the group being convened.

National Mind

If you feel that the procedures have not been followed properly, you may approach National Mind to ask that the procedure be reviewed. The role of National Mind will be to consider whether this Complaints Procedure has been followed, and not to adjudicate on the content of the complaint. If you wish to contact National Mind they can be reached at:

The Director
Local Mind Association Support Department
National Mind
15 – 19 The Broadway
London
E15 4BQ

Telephone 0208 215 2225