

Complaints and Compliments Policy



Version	July 2018
Date when last reviewed	September 2023
Date when next review due	September 2026
Author	Policy and Quality Group
Approved by:	Board
Date of approval:	August 2018
This policy applies to:	All employees and volunteers of Mind in Somerset
Equality Impact Assessment	See Appendix A for Initial Screening

Summary of Changes	Name/Amendment date
Change to Mind in Somerset format	Tessa Mason Sept 2019
Completion of EIA	Tessa Mason Aug 2020
Addition of Bridgwater office address a	Tessa Mason Aug 2020
Change address of Yeovil office	Tessa Mason Jun 2021
Added Shepton Mallet and Minehead offices	Tessa Mason May 2022
Extended review date to 3 years	Tessa Mason Oct 2022
Added 9 protected characteristics to Accessibility paragraph	Tessa Mason Sep 2023
Changed author to Policy and Quality Group.	Tessa Mason Oct 2023

Policy reviewed – next review date Sep 2026	Tessa Mason Oct 2023
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Purpose

Mind in Somerset is committed to ensuring that its work is of the highest quality. We believe that views and learning from these views is an important part of achieving high quality work.

In order that users, carers and family members can fully influence services offered, Mind in Somerset hope that those who come into contact with its services can easily voice their views and opinions about them and seek to effect changes where possible and appropriate. Mind in Somerset views complaints as a useful and constructive way to develop its services to meet the need of users and will aim to listen without judgement, reprisal or discrimination.

Definition

Complaints are any views about any aspect of the services provided by Mind in Somerset. They could cover a very wide range from simple matters of everyday organisation to major allegations of unacceptable behaviour on the part of staff, volunteers, trustees, other users or anyone else associated with Mind in Somerset.

Policy

The following principles are used in Mind in Somerset Complaints and Compliments policy: -

Mind in Somerset recognises that complaints and compliments are an important part of customer feedback.

The procedure is **fair** to people using services or experiencing Mind in Somerset work, complainants and to staff.

The procedure is **accessible** to all regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the complainant.

Concerns and complaints are dealt with efficiently and are properly investigated.

Complaints are treated with respect and courtesy and receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.

Complainants receive a timely and appropriate response, identifying the outcome of any investigation, wherever possible.

Action is taken where necessary in the light of the outcome of the complaint.

Learning from complaints will be used to improve Mind in Somerset work.

If the complainant is not happy with the result to the complaint, he or she will have the right to appeal.

Complaints are treated as confidentially as possible.

Advocacy

Anyone wishing to complain using any stage of the procedure has the right to have support from a person who is independent from Mind in Somerset. This person could act as a friend to give confidence to help someone explain their complaint or they could be instructed to write or speak on behalf of a complainant.

How to Make a Complaint

Stage 1

To make an initial complaint, raise the matter by speaking to or emailing the person concerned as soon as possible and try together to resolve the matter informally. You will be notified of any remedial action to be taken.

Stage2

If it is not possible to settle the problem this way or you feel unable to discuss the problem with the person concerned, then you should ask a member of staff of Mind in Somerset for a private meeting because you want to make a complaint. At the meeting, the nature of your complaint will be written down in a form acceptable to you and you may be asked some questions about it. The member of staff will make further investigations and try to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction as speedily as possible.

Stage 3

If you are unhappy with the result of the investigation, you should make a written complaint to the Chief Executive, Mind in Somerset, Yeovil Foyer, Peter St, Yeovil BA20 1PN marking the envelope **Private and Confidential**. In order for us to resolve the matter to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint including any communication or documentation. The Chief Executive will meet with you and a response will be issued within 10 working days of the meeting.

In all cases, complaints will be fully investigated, and a written response issued.

Stage 4

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 3, you can further complain in writing to the Chair of the Mind in Somerset Board marking your envelope **Private and Confidential**. You should also use Stage 4 if your initial complaint is about the Chief Executive and you have been unable to resolve the matter by a Stage 1 informal approach.

The person dealing with the complaint will be the Chair who will also wish to meet with you and if appropriate, will inform the board that a complaint has been made. The Chair will respond within 10 working days of the meeting. The decision of the Chair shall be final subject to the appeal procedure as outlined below.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against the chair's decision, you must make that appeal in writing to the Chair at the above address, again marking your envelope **Private and Confidential** within 10 working days of the Stage 4 decision. On receipt, the Chair will convene an Appeals Panel, normally made up of three trustees and an independent person acceptable to both you and Mind in Somerset to consider the appeal. The Chair will not be a member of the panel.

The panel will meet within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal and will hear your complaint and evidence from such others involved in the complaint and its attempted resolution as they deem appropriate. You will also be able to question others involved in the complaint and bring evidence and witnesses forward to the panel.

The panel must inform you in writing of its decision with reasons and any action that may be taken within 15 working days of the hearing. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Compliments

If you have positive comments about our work or how we have helped you,

Please email – mail@mindinsomerset.org.uk

Or telephone or write to –

Taunton:

Mind in Somerset, Sussex Lodge, 44 Station Road, Taunton TA1 1NS

Tel: 01823 334906

Yeovil:

Mind in Somerset, Yeovil Foyer, Peter St, Yeovil BA20 1PN

Tel: 01935 474875

Bridgwater:

Mind in Somerset, Town Hall, High St, Bridgwater, TA6 3AS

Tel: 01278 421190

Shepton Mallet:

57c High Street, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5AQ

Tel: 01749 233115

Minehead:

Market House Lane, Minehead, TA24 5NW

Tel: 01643 353115

and we will pass on your compliments to the relevant staff.

Appendix A

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Could a particular group be affected either positively or negatively by this policy?
Consider:

1. Purpose of the policy.
2. How in practice the policy will achieve this?
3. Who is benefiting, who is not and how?
4. Any secondary aims of the policy and what they are.

Indicate in the table with a Y for any negative or positive impacts identified

Group	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Evidence
Age			
Sex			
Gender reassignment			
Sexual Orientation			

Being married or in a Civil Partnership			
Disability	Y		
Pregnancy/Maternity Leave			
Religion or belief			
Race including colour, nationality or national origin			
Any other groups	Special educational needs		

Give Details of any identified impacts: *We need to be conscious as service providers that not all individuals are able to exercise their rights to raise concerns or complain about the service they receive due to their disability, especially those who have a mental health condition or learning disability and those who may have language issues.*

Where a negative impact is identified are there any policies, procedures, services, strategies or functions that need to be assessed alongside this policy for further screening? Please list: *To mitigate this can we accept complaints, both informal and formal, in a variety of methods to ensure the service is as accessible as possible and is not dependant on visiting our offices – complaints of an informal nature can be made through any means and do not need to be received in writing.*

In relation to negative impacts identified, does the policy need to proceed to a more detailed equality impact assessment to understand fully the impact and seek ways of reducing or removing this? Indicate with a Y/N - **N**
If no give reasons: Paragraphs - Advocacy and How to Make a Complaint - *Stage 1 and Stage 2 adequately mitigate the negative impact of clients who may not find it easy to complain without support.*

If yes ensure a full equality impact assessment is completed and relevant actions and outcomes followed through to update this policy prior to this policy being approved.

Declaration:

We are satisfied that an initial equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy and no further action is required.

Carried out by (Name): Tessa Mason Signed: Date: August 2020

Approved by (name): P&QG Signed: Date: August 2020

