



**Comments,  
Compliments &  
Complaints Policy**



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# 1. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to our volunteers, service users, and members of the public. A separate grievance policy and procedure is in place for staff who wish to raise concerns.

# 2. Aims of this policy

At Mid Kent Mind (MKM) we are committed to ensuring that our work is of the highest quality. The aim of this policy is to make sure that comments, compliments and complaints are encouraged, handled appropriately, and taken as opportunities for improvement. We believe that through effective management and investigation of comments, compliments and complaints we can identify learning to achieve high quality work and continuous improvement as an organisation.

# 3. Policy content

## 3.1. Principles which underpin this policy

The following principles underpin our approach to handling comments, compliments and complaints:

- a) We encourage volunteers, clients and members of the public to feed back any comments, compliments and complaints.
- b) The procedure is as fair, easy and as transparent as possible.
- c) The procedure is accessible to all regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation.
- d) We recognise people's reasoning for making comments and complaints.

Specifically relating to complaints:

- e) We treat complainants with respect and courtesy and they receive appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.
- f) Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the complainant.
- g) We deal with concerns and complaints efficiently, appropriately and we investigate them within the agreed timeframe.
- h) We provide complainants with a timely and appropriate response.

## Outcomes and learnings

- i) Importantly, we make every effort to make sure that anyone making a complaint understands the outcome of their complaint.
- j) We take action where necessary in the light of the outcome of the complaint. This might include an explanation or an apology and information on any action taken; if relevant and appropriate.
- k) We used learning from complaints to improve our work and drive forward a culture of continuous improvement.

### **3.2. Informal procedure for raising comments, compliments and complaints**

Informal comments, compliments and complaints can be raised in the following ways:

- a) By emailing us at [community@midkentmind.org.uk](mailto:community@midkentmind.org.uk).
- b) By completing the form on our website.
- c) By speaking to a member of staff.
- d) By phoning us at 01622 692383.
- e) By writing to the CEO at Mid Kent Mind, 23 College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6YH.

Service users can raise comments, compliments and complaints using any of these methods.

If you have compliments or positive feedback about our work or how we have helped, we would very much like to hear from you. Feedback of this kind can be valuable to share with others who might need support or to secure funding for services. We will always ask you before we share feedback and it will always be anonymous.

We will investigate complaints that relate to an incident(s) within the last 12 months.

### **Responding to informal comments, compliments and complaints**

Depending on the method used to raise the comment, compliment or complaint, we will endeavour to respond to the person directly informally.

Comments and complaints which cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally can be moved onto our formal procedure.

### **3.3. Making a complaint**

#### **3.3.1. Stage one (informal)**

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

If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email [mindhelp@midkentmind.org.uk](mailto:mindhelp@midkentmind.org.uk) All complaints will be acknowledged by the member of staff to whom you communicated your complaint or by the Management Team within five working days from the date it is received.

In order for us to resolve your issue to the best of our ability, please complete a Complaints Form (Appendix 1) and include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation. We will respond to stage one complaints within seven working days of the acknowledgement.

If your complaint concerns the CEO or a trustee, you should arrange for a conversation to be had at this stage with either party or request that the complaint is escalated to Stage Two.

#### **3.3.2. Stage two (formally registering a complaint)**

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at stage one, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to stage two, either through your contact at stage one, or directly to the Management Team. Please submit the details of your complaint using one of the methods in section 3.2. of this policy. Your complaint will be acknowledged within five working days. Please use the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Form if you can.

A Head of Department will be assigned to investigate your complaint and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement. If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to speak to the CEO at Mid Kent Mind and given the option to appeal (stage three).

If your complaint concerns the CEO or a trustee, this will be escalated to another trustee who will be assigned to investigate your complaint and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement. If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to appeal.

### **3.3.3. Stage three (appeals)**

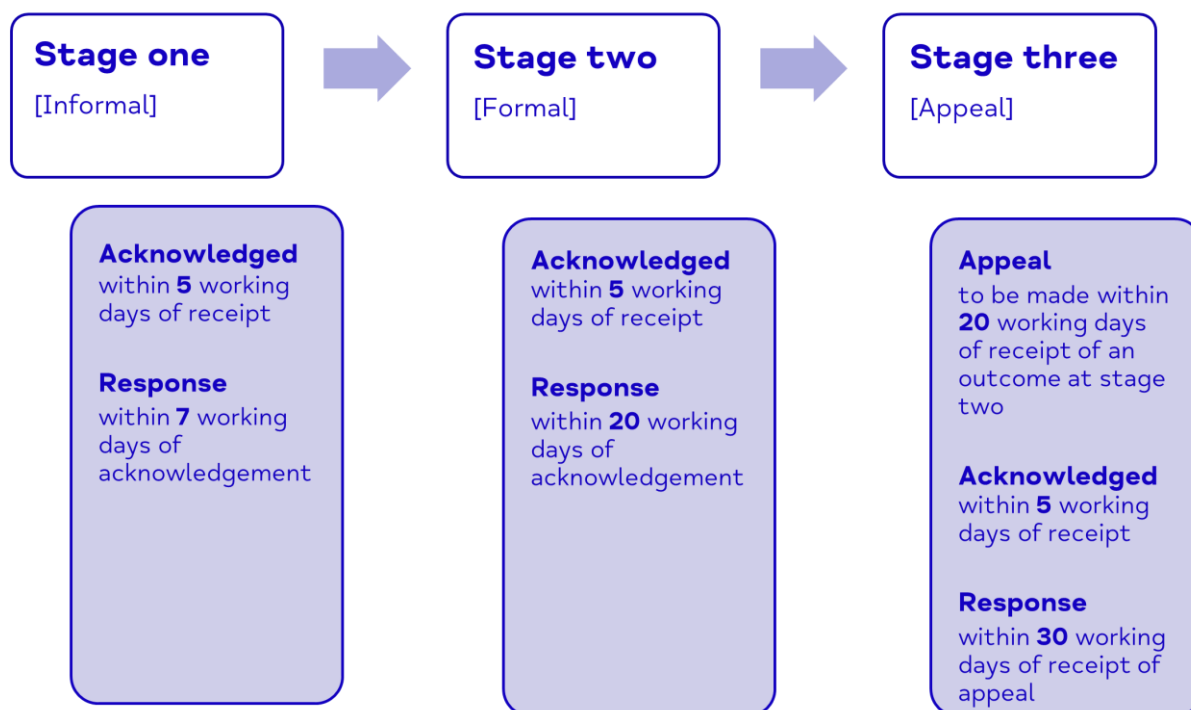
To appeal, please outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction in writing or electronically to the CEO. This must be within 20 working days of the receipt of an outcome of stage two. Your appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days. An Appeals Panel, normally made up of three members including a trustee, with no previous involvement in the complaint, will be convened to consider your appeal. The Appeals Panel, led by the CEO, will review the investigation, make any further enquiries and come to a final decision. The CEO will write within 30 working days of receiving the appeal, to confirm the final decision about the complaint and any action that may be taken in light of the complaint.

If your complaint concerns the CEO or a trustee, your appeal will be escalated to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will convene the Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will review the investigation, make any further enquiries and come to a final decision. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will write within 30 working days of receiving the appeal, to confirm the final decision about the complaint and any action that may be taken in light of the complaint.

Individuals are encouraged to seek independent support or advice at any stage of the process.

## **3.4. Summary of complaints process timings**

Here you can find a summary of the key timings associated with making a complaint, as outlined within section 3.3.



### 3.5. Independent advice and support

Complainants are encouraged to seek independent support or advice at any stage of the process. Some of the support options available are as follows:

#### 3.5.1. Fundraising Regulator

If you are dissatisfied with Mid Kent Mind's response to your fundraising complaint you can contact the Fundraising Regulator (FR) [www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/) to access their independent complaints procedure.

#### 3.5.2. Charity Commission

If you are dissatisfied with Mid Kent Mind's complaints process, you can contact the Charity Commission, who will be able to advise on the matter.

The Charity Commission can be contacted at: [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)

### **3.5.3. Information Commissioners Office (ICO)**

If you are dissatisfied with Mid Kent Mind's response to your complaint about the handling of personal information, you can contact the ICO for advice or to make a formal complaint. [www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint)

### **3.5.4. Health & Safety Executive**

If you are dissatisfied with Mid Kent Mind's response to your complaint about a health and safety issue, you can contact the Health & Safety Executive to report your concerns [www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm)

## **3.6. Monitoring complaints**

Our Mind's Board of Trustees oversee complaints at board meetings every two months and identify recurrent themes, trends and issues.

We may choose not to respond to feedback that:

- Is abusive, prejudiced or offensive;
- Harasses a member of staff or a volunteer;
- Seeks to bypass stages in the complaints procedure;
- Is repeatedly stated in a manner not conducive to resolution;
- Concerns something that Mid Kent Mind has no direct connection to: we may choose to respond to clear our name but we are not obliged to;
- Is incoherent or illegible;
- Has clearly been sent to Mid Kent Mind and a number of other organizations as part of a bulk communication: in such cases Mid Kent Mind will choose whether or not it is necessary to reply;
- Unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to or pursues a line of enquiry to the point it becomes vexatious. Escalation points in our complaints procedure are provided. If we choose not to reply again, we will inform you of this decision.

## **3.7. Confidentiality**

Complaints will be handled confidentially so far as is possible. Please refer to our Confidentiality Policy to understand how we maintain confidentiality and when we may have to breach this, for example to complete investigations.



## 4. Policy review

This policy should be reviewed every 3 years the Board of Trustees. Upon review, this policy should be submitted to the relevant approving committee for approval.

## 5. Ownership and control

### 5.1. Ownership

<b>Responsible</b> (for reviewing & updating the policy)	CEO
<b>Accountable</b> (for making decisions on the policy and for the overall meaning, objectives and compliance with the policy)	CEO
<b>Consulted</b> (for input into changes and updates to the policy)	Policy audience (as applicable)
<b>Informed</b> (about changes and updates to the policy)	Board of Trustees & policy audience
<b>Approving committee</b> (where approval is necessary as defined by the Policies Terms of Reference document)	Board of Trustees

### 5.2. Control

<b>Date of last review</b>	Nov 2023
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<b>Reviewer</b>	
<b>Date of review</b>	Feb 2025
<b>Review outcome</b>	
<b>Submitted for approval to</b>	
<b>Date submitted</b>	
<b>Outcome of approval</b>	
<b>Amends completed</b>	
<b>Date of next review</b>	

## 6. Related policies

- Data protection
- Wellbeing at work
- Whistleblowing