

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

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A. Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lancashire Mind strives to achieve high standards of work and to keep getting better in line with our strategic objectives.
- 1.2 We value feedback from external stakeholders in helping us to evaluate and improve our work.
- 1.3 We want to know when things have gone wrong and prevent them from going wrong in the future.
- 1.4 We are committed to providing an effective way in which individuals can comment on Lancashire Mind's work and services.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to compliments, comments and complaints received from external stakeholders, volunteers and/or people who use Lancashire Mind services.
- 2.2 Complaints by Lancashire Mind staff are dealt with through Lancashire Mind's Grievance Policy.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To provide a clear and easy process for people to feedback about Lancashire Mind, its services and people.
- 3.2 To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- 3.3 To publicise the existence of our compliments, comments and complaints policy and procedure so that people know how to provide feedback.
- 3.4 To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner.
- 3.5 To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- 3.6 To gather information that helps us to improve what we do and allow us to keep getting better.

4. Principles

4.1 Lancashire Mind ensure that evaluation is an integral part of service delivery, we welcome and encourage feedback, both positive and negative.

4.2 Definitions:

- A comment is positive or negative feedback about our service, which does not require a response.
- A compliment is an expression of gratitude or praise for a member of staff or service.
- A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Lancashire Mind, that requires a response.
- A formal complaint is either a complaint that cannot be resolved quickly at point of contact, or one where the complainant has requested a formal, written response.
- An informal complaint is a complaint that can be resolved quickly at first point of contact, a response will be confirmed in writing. Even where a complaint is resolved informally, all complaints should be reported to the Head of Operations for monitoring and improvement purposes.

How complaints are handled

4.3 Compliments, comments and complaints can be made to anyone in the organisation and can be made verbally, by phone, by email, through our website or in writing. Anonymous complaints will be recorded and investigated.

4.4 All complaints must be reported to the relevant line manager and escalated to senior management where unresolved.

4.5 All complaints must be reported to the Head of Operations in every case, unless they are cited within the complaint, in which case the CEO would take responsibility.

4.6 We will not accept the complaint where the behaviour of the complainant is unacceptable such as abusive, intimidating or aggressive behaviour.

4.7 All complaints will be dealt with confidentially, fairly and honestly regardless of who raises the complaint.

4.8 Making a complaint will not result in any adverse consequence for the complainant unless the complaint is found to have made unsubstantiated accusations and found to be vexatious. This could result in Lancashire Mind withdrawing access to their services depending on the nature of the accusation.

*For more information, please refer to the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

Responding to complaints

4.9 We aim to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact, wherever possible.

4.10 We will take ownership, apologise where we have made a mistake and aim to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction wherever possible.

4.11 Written responses will be in plain English, will summarise the complaint and outline any decisions and/or action Lancashire Mind have taken. We will provide responses in a more accessible format where reasonably practicable e.g. Where English is not a first language.

4.12 Where further support is required by a complainants, we will signpost externally for further advice or advocacy where possible.

4.13 Complainants can appeal if they feel that the response is wrong or inadequate.

4.14 Complainants who continue to be dissatisfied with the way we have dealt with a complaint following appeal can contact the relevant regulator, e.g. Fundraising Regulator or Charity Commission.

4.15 Data protection: we are committed to complying with the requirements of data protection regulations. Any personal data collected and stored as part of procedures will be processed in accordance with Lancashire Mind's Information Governance Policy. This includes ensuring that data is held securely, is not disclosed unlawfully and is destroyed when no longer needed.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of:

5.1.1 Lancashire Mind trustees

- a. To ensure that they understand the complaints process.
- b. To understand their role where complaints are escalated to the board.
- c. To monitor compliments, comments and complaints for lessons learnt and continuous service improvement.

5.1.2 CEO and senior managers

- a. To ensure that the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and procedures are readily available to all employees.
- b. To review and monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

5.1.3 Managers

- a. To implement the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and procedures.
- b. To ensure staff understand how to handle complaints.

5.1.4 Staff

- a. To familiarise themselves with the policy and procedures.
- b. To inform external stakeholders about the policy and the procedures for providing feedback.
- c. To encourage feedback from external stakeholders.
- d. To understand how to handle feedback received from external stakeholders.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Engagement & Inclusion Policy.
- Information Governance Policy.
- Volunteering Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Grievance Policy.
- Disciplinary Policy.
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

B. Compliments, Comments and Complaints procedure

1. How to provide feedback about our services

Lancashire Mind welcomes feedback, on all aspects of our work, from anyone who uses our services or works with us.

You can provide feedback by:

- a. Speaking directly to a member of staff.
 - b. Calling the Lancashire Mind office on 01257 231660 and leaving a message.
 - c. Emailing complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk.
 - d. Submitting a message via the contact form on our website www.lancashiremind.org.uk.
- Verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the member of staff receiving the compliment and passed onto the relevant manager. Any member of staff identified as the subject of the compliment will be notified within three working days.
 - Generic compliments that do not specifically mention a member of staff will be posted on staff notice boards in the Lancashire Mind office.
 - All compliments received will be shared with staff on a quarterly basis during full team meetings.
 - Feedback received anonymously will be recorded and considered. In the case of an anonymous complaint, action may be limited if further information is required to allow for a fair and full investigation.

2. How to make a complaint

Complaints about Lancashire Mind and its services should be made by contacting the person who provided the service, or their manager. Alternatively, you can email complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk or write to Lancashire Mind, 80-82 Devonshire Road, Chorley, PR7 2DR.

- a. This policy and procedure relate only to complaints received about Lancashire Mind and its services.
- b. Individuals who make complaints about any other organisation will be notified in writing, within one working day of receipt of the complaint, that they need to complain to the organisation they have the complaint with, and will be provided with contact details, where possible.
- c. If you prefer to make a verbal complaint, you can call the Lancashire Mind office on 01257 231660 and leave a message with details of your complaint.
- d. A complaint will be acknowledged in writing to the complainant within 1 working day of Lancashire Mind receiving the complaint in writing or verbally is requested.
- e. We aim to resolve all complaints at the first point of contact, but this may not always be possible.
- f. When a complaint can't be resolved at first point of contact, it will be passed to the relevant manager who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days.
- g. The manager will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 10 working days wherever reasonably possible.
- h. Where it has not been possible to provide a written response within 10 working days, the complainant will be notified in writing as to the reasons why and the expected timeframe in which the complaint will be investigated.

3. How to appeal if you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint

- a. If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint you can appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within 14 days of receiving the response by writing to us at Lancashire Mind, 80-82 Devonshire Road, Chorley, PR7 2DR or emailing complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk.

- b. The Chief Executive Officer, or another member of senior management in their absence, will acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days and will appoint a manager to investigate the matter independently, if appropriate, or will investigate the matter personally.
- c. The person investigating the matter may need to contact you during the investigation to clarify the issues and explore options for a resolving the complaint.
- d. You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the investigation within 20 working days of the appeal being made in most circumstances.
- e. Investigations may sometimes take longer, in this case, you will be informed of the change in timescale and given an indication of when you can expect to receive the outcome in writing.

If you are not satisfied with the way Lancashire Mind have dealt with your complaint following an appeal, you can raise the complaint with the relevant regulator - <https://www.gov.uk/complainabout-charity>.

Timeframe for handling complaints

- a. The complaint is acknowledged within 1 working day of receipt.
- b. The complaint is resolved within 10 working days where possible.
- c. An appeal must be submitted to the CEO within 14 days.
- d. The appeal is acknowledged within 3 working days.
- e. The outcome of the appeal is acknowledged within 20 working days.

4. How we monitor compliments, comments and complaints

Compliments, comments and complaints are an important tool, alongside data captured via other methods of gathering feedback, that allows Lancashire Mind to understand how people view Lancashire Mind and our services.

To ensure we can learn from compliments and complaints, the following data will be collected:

- Date of compliment/complaint
- Name and contact details

- Nature of the compliment/complaint
 - Name of staff member investigating the complaint
 - Action(s) taken and/or recommendation made in response to the compliment/complaint
 - Date of response to a complaint
 - Lessons learnt
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- Any personal data captured during this process is handled in line with Lancashire Mind’s Information Governance Policy, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
 - Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially.
 - Data captured is retained for six years following receipt of a compliment or closure of a complaint, after which it is securely destroyed.
 - Compliments, comments and complaints will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Lancashire Mind senior management team and reported quarterly to the People & Governance subcommittee for monitoring. Where appropriate this is fed back to the board of trustees with a view to using the data to improve and develop the work of the organisation.