

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Lancashire Mind strives to provide excellent services and welcomes feedback and suggestions on how services can continually be improved. Complaints are often an opportunity to review something that is not working effectively within an organisation and to take remedial action to make improvements.

If you are not happy with any support or services that you have received from Lancashire Mind you have the right to make a complaint.

A complaint is a written, oral or signed expression of dissatisfaction, disquiet or unhappiness with the service provided by the organisation.

You have the right to:

- Make a complaint
- Have your complaint dealt with efficiently and be properly investigated
- Know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint
- Appeal if you are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with or the outcome of the investigation

There are four stages to the complaints procedure.

Stage One

A complaint can be made in person to the service manager, in writing, over the telephone or by using the Comments, Complaints & Suggestions leaflets that are available from Lancashire Mind services. There will be a response to a complaint within 10 working days of receipt. If the matter is not resolved within a mutually agreed time, it will be referred to stage two.

Stage Two

There will be a meeting between the person complaining (the complainant) and an appointed manager. The meeting will not involve any individuals who may be involved in the complaint. The discussion and plans for action will be recorded and a copy of the outcome of the complaint will be forwarded to the complainant. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The complaint will be referred to stage three.

Stage Three

If the complainant is still unhappy after Stage Two of the complaints procedure they can progress this by writing and giving their reason to be referred to the Chief Executive Officer, who may appoint a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) within 10 working days of the decision taken at Stage 2 being received. A further meeting will be held. The complainant has the right to attend the meeting to give their

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point of view. The complainant will be informed of the decision after the meeting in writing. If the complainant still remains dissatisfied with the decision, they may make a final appeal within 10 working days using stage Four.

Stage Four

If the complainant is still not satisfied after stage three, they can appeal against the decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer or a member of the SMT. The matter will be referred to an appeals panel appointed by the Board of trustees. The complainant has the right to appear before the Panel. The Panel will make a final decision and any recommendations. The decision of the Panel is final.

At all stages, the complainant has the right to be represented by a person of their choice, whose role must be made known to Lancashire Mind in advance of any meetings.

Should the complaint involve misconduct by a volunteer or employee and the complaint is upheld, the disciplinary procedure may be instigated as part of the outcome to such a complaint.

Additional Information

Handling the complaint

1. If a complaint is received in writing and an advocate's help has been requested to facilitate this, the written complaint must then state "completed on behalf of at his/her request" and be signed by the complainant and the advocate.
2. Lancashire Mind investigates all complaints thoroughly. A record is kept at the Association Office of all complaints, any investigations and the outcome and any subsequent action that is taken as a result of a complaint.
3. The Chief Executive Officer will be made aware of any complaints and will identify an Investigating Officer to investigate any complaint reaching Stage Two or stage three of the complaints procedure.
4. The complaint will not be discussed with anyone not directly involved with the complaint. Any deviation from this could lead to disciplinary action against that person. Confidentiality and security of documents is paramount at all times when dealing with a complaint.
5. The board of trustees receive information on complaint handling as part of their role in Quality and Governance. The Chair of the board of trustees is responsible for the appeals panel and will determine from time to time who should be appointed to the panel.

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