

Policy	53. Complaints
Approved by	CEO, SLT. Apr-20
Next review	Apr-23

Policy

1. It is the policy of Woking Mind that any complaints should be declared, properly investigated and, if substantiated remedied. Complaints can be made about anything that gives an individual cause for concern including the behaviour of staff, volunteers or other users; the standard of service provided; discrimination, or provision of inaccurate information.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, the procedures below apply only to the activities and attitudes of employees and volunteers and should be differentiated from the Grievance Procedures which concern the decisions made or not made by employees, volunteers and trustees.
3. The procedures below are principally concerned with complaints made against Woking Mind staff, trustees or volunteers. However, when appropriate these procedures could be used as a framework for a dispute between members.
4. Woking Mind is also aware of the fact that a complaint can be stressful for a person against whom a complaint is made and that person may also need assistance and support. Any member of staff or volunteer against whom a complaint is made will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms.

Procedures

Informal Procedure

1. It is expected, and thought preferable, that complaints should normally be resolved informally by those directly involved and without recourse to the 'Formal Procedure'. In most cases we may be required to write to a complainant to clarify a complaint or in rare occasions to apologise if there has been an inconvenience.

Formal Procedure

(The term complainant is used to describe the person making the complaint).

1. During any part of the Complaints Procedure the complainant may be accompanied by a friend or independent advocate who is not a lawyer or Queen's Counsel.
2. At each stage the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the complaint.
3. At the conclusion of each stage of the procedure there will be a written report on the findings and proposed action to be taken, where appropriate.
4. A report on Complaints may be required to funders of Woking Mind services as part of the evaluation of these services. More specifically they may require as part of the funding agreement that a log detailing anonymous data will be kept in order to inform appropriate parties of the number and nature of complaints including the resolution and achievements within the timescales.

Stage 1

1. If the person making the complaint is an employee or volunteer, he/she should make the complaint to the Manager or CEO. If it is a member, the complaint may be made to an employee, volunteer or a trustee who shall convey it to the Services Manager or CEO.
2. On receipt of a complaint, the Services Manager or CEO must consider its severity and seek advice from the Insurers if it appears likely to result in litigation or a financial claim. For other complaints, the Services Manager or CEO appoints an appropriate individual to investigate the complaint and make recommendations of any remedial action necessary within one calendar month. No person involved in the complaint may be chosen to investigate it.
3. The investigating Individual may make such enquiries as seem necessary, and they must discuss the matter with the complainant. The discussion should include providing details about the complaint and obtaining the complainant's view of what would remedy the situation.
4. All employees who are the subject of a complaint must be informed that disciplinary action could be undertaken in light of any findings from the investigation. Volunteers who are the subject of a complaint must be informed that their role within the charity may be altered or suspended in light of any findings from the investigation.

5. The Investigating individual must report their findings to the complainant and to the Services Manager or CEO. The process from receiving the complaint to presenting the findings should be no longer than six weeks. If this timescale cannot be achieved an extension must be agreed with the Services Manager or CEO and complainant and the reasons recorded.

6. On receipt of the findings, the Services Manager or CEO must ask the complainant whether he/she finds them acceptable. If the complainant does, then they will be put into effect.

Stage 2

1. If the complainant does not find the findings acceptable, then they should make the reason for this known. An appeal Panel comprising not less than two Trustees may then be appointed by the Chair to reconsider and report on the complaint within four weeks. The panel should review the investigative process and report in light on the complainant's comments and report the findings to the complainant and Chair. This will conclude the investigative process and the findings will be final.

2. On receipt of these findings, the Chair must again ask the complainant whether he/she accepts them. If they are accepted, then the Chair should put them into effect.

Stage 3

1. If the complainant does not find the findings acceptable, then they may exercise their statutory rights.