

## 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. We value feedback from external stakeholders in helping us to evaluate and improve our work and we also want to know when things have gone wrong and prevent them for going wrong in the



future. Lancashire Mind is committed to providing an effective way in which individuals can comment on Lancashire Mind's work and services, which will help us to improve the way we do things in the future.

## 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 about how we have handled your personal data will also be dealt with in line with this policy and procedure.
- 2.3 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 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:

- 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.
- All complaints must be reported to the relevant line manager and escalated to senior management where unresolved.
- 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.
- We will not accept the complaint where the behaviour of the complainant is unacceptable such as abusive, intimidating or aggressive behaviour.
- All complaints will be dealt with confidentially, fairly and honestly regardless of who raises the complaint.
- 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 severity and nature of the accusation.
- Where a complaint relates to the CEO, the Chair of the Trustee Board will handle the complaint.
- Where a complaint relates to a member of the board, the Chair of the Trustee Board will handle the complaint.

- Where a complaint relates to the Chair of the Trustee Board, the complainant should contact the Charities Commission.

#### 4.3 How complaints are handled

- 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.

#### 4.4 Responding to complaints

- We aim to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact, wherever possible.
- We will take ownership, apologise where we have made a mistake and aim to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction wherever possible.
- 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.
- Where further support is required by a complainant, we will signpost externally for further advice or advocacy where possible.
- Complainants can appeal if they feel that the response is wrong or inadequate. (Please refer to the Procedure on page 5)
- Complainants who continue to be dissatisfied with the way we have dealt with a complaint following an appeal can contact the relevant regulator, e.g. Fundraising Regulator or Charity Commission.

#### 4.5 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 Data Protection Policy. This includes ensuring that data is held securely, is not disclosed unlawfully and is destroyed when no longer needed. If you wish to complain about how we have handled your personal data, the complaints procedure may be used for this purpose. However, we will respond and handle data protection complaints however they are presented to us.

## 5. Responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of:

### 5.1.1 Lancashire Mind

- a. To ensure the policy is readily available to all staff and sufficient resources are in place to support its implementation
- b. To provide support, guidance and resources to ensure Lancashire Mind can apply the policy effectively
- c. To monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of the policy.



**5.1.2 All managers**

- a. To implement the policy and review where policy improvements can be made
- b. To handle complaints effectively where appropriate and escalate where necessary
- c. To support staff to understand and correctly follow the policy and procedures
- d. To review feedback from staff and complainants to improve the policy.

**5.1.3 All Staff**

- a. To familiarise themselves with the policy and procedures
- b. To report any comments, compliments and complaints to their line manager in line with the policy within a timely manner
- c. To communicate feedback on policy or procedural improvements to their line manager in a timely manner.

**Related Policies and Procedures:**

Data Protection 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:

- Speaking directly to a member of staff
  - Calling the Lancashire Mind office on 01257 231660 and leaving a message
  - Emailing [complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk](mailto:complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk)
  - Submitting a message via the contact form on our website [www.lancashiremind.org.uk](http://www.lancashiremind.org.uk)
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- 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 shared with staff through Teams messages for all staff to read and celebrate.
  - Compliments we have received in writing may be used in impact reports, explicit consent will be obtained from individuals before we share personal information publicly.
  - 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](mailto:complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk) or write to **Lancashire Mind, 7 Balfour Court, Leyland, PR25 2TF.**

- 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 3 working days 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 between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays) or leave a message if no one is available to take your call.
- d. A complaint will be acknowledged in writing to the complainant within 3 working days of Lancashire Mind receiving the complaint.
- 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 3 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, 7 Balfour Court, Leyland, PR25 2TF or emailing [complaints@lancashiremind.org.uk](mailto: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. Where the complaint involves a Trustee, this will be handled by the Chair of the Trustee Board. Where the complaint involves the Chair, this will be handled by the trustees.
- d. 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.
- e. If the complaint involves the CEO, this will be handled by the Chair of the Trustee Board.
- f. You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the investigation within 20 working days of the appeal being made in most circumstances.
- g. 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/complain-about-charity>. Serious complaints about a charity can be reported to the Charity Commission.

**Fundraising Regulator** <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/service/complaints-about-fundraising> Tel: tel:0300 999 3407

**Charity Commission** <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/> Tel: 0300 066 9197 Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm (closed on Wednesdays between 11:45am and 1pm for staff training). For serious complaints contact the Charity Commission.

**Timeframe for handling complaints**

<b>1 - the complaint is acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt</b>
<b>2 - the complaint is resolved within 10 working days where possible</b>

**3 – an appeal must be submitted to the CEO within 14 days, or the Chair of the Trustee board within this timeframe if this involves the CEO**

**4 – the appeal is acknowledged within 3 working days**

**5 – 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 Data Protection 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.