



Complaints Policy

July 2020

This document is relevant to:	
Service users	✓
Members of the public	✓
External organisations	✓
Volunteers	✓
Trustees	✓
Members	✓

Policy Owner	Chair of Trustees
Date first adopted by Trustees	February 2020
Date this version approved	February 2020
Date for next review	January 2022

Change History

Version	Date	Author	Reason
1.1	July 20	Sheridan Hammond	Minor text amendments no substantive changes

Reviewers

Name	Position
Penelope James	Chair of Trustees
Steve Inett	Interim CEO



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Policy Statement

South Kent Mind aims to provide the best possible services and is committed to continuous improvement. It positively welcomes feedback and suggestions for how services can be improved. South Kent Mind takes complaints seriously and all complaints and comments will be considered in the regular planning and improvement of the organisation and its services.

This policy deals with complaints made against South Kent Mind staff, trustees and volunteers from our service users, volunteers, trustees, members and people external to the organisation.

Policy

South Kent Mind's complaints process is intended to be speedy, effective and easily understandable. To ensure fairness, any investigation required will be carried out by someone who was not directly involved with the incident relating to the complaint.

South Kent Mind recognises that making a complaint can be difficult and stressful for the person making the complaint. Appropriate assistance will be offered to the complainant. At any stage a complainant may seek the help of an independent advocate and South Kent Mind will provide information on this on request.

A complaint can also be stressful for a person against whom a complaint is made and that person may also need assistance and support. Any member of staff, trustee or volunteer against whom a complaint is made will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms.

Every effort will be made to try and resolve any problem as soon as possible with the person concerned. If it is necessary to take the matter further it will be done in line with the Complaints Procedure.

Some complaints have or may have financial or legal consequences for South Kent Mind. In such cases its insurers may require South Kent Mind to cease direct contact with the complainant. It may then be necessary in the interests of the complainant to refer them to another agency both for assistance with the complaint and to ensure that their service needs are met.

The confidentiality of any complaint will be given high priority in so far as this is consistent with the need to investigate the complaint. South Kent Mind will respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and any person complained about, subject to the provisions of South Kent Mind's Confidentiality Policy. However, if a complaint is to be properly investigated and action taken as a result of the complaint, it may not always be possible to avoid a breach of confidentiality. The permission of the complainant will be sought for this but when the welfare of the complainant or

other people is seriously at risk it may be necessary to breach confidentiality even if that permission is withheld.

The outcome of all complaints and investigations will be reported in confidence to the Board of Trustees and in writing to the complainant. A report on Complaints will also be made available to funders of South Kent Mind services as part of the evaluation of these services.

South Kent Mind will make efforts to ensure that every user of its services is aware that this policy, and its accompanying Complaints Procedure, exists. Copies of this policy and the Complaints Procedure will be available on request at all South Kent Mind services.

There will be no adverse implications for anyone who makes a complaint or allegation through this policy.

The Complaints Procedure details the procedure to be followed to make and manage a complaint.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive is responsible for the efficient operation of the complaints policy and procedure. Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers in South Kent Mind, under the authority of the Chief Executive.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

The equality impact of this policy has been considered and South Kent Mind believes that it complies with its commitment to equality as stated in its Equality Policy