



# Complaints Policy & Procedure

<b>Date of last review</b>	July 2022	<b>Date of next review</b>	July 2024
<b>Review period</b>	Every two years	<b>Owner</b>	CEO



## **1. What is a complaint?**

- 1.1 Devon Mind views complaints in a positive light and sees them as a way of enabling the organisation to review and improve its services.
- 1.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken.
- 1.3 A complaint can be made by an individual or a group.
- 1.4 You may wish to complain if you are not satisfied with the way you have been treated or the service you have received from Devon Mind.

## **2. Principles of Devon Mind's complaints procedure**

- 2.1 Devon Mind recognises that complaints are an important part of client and service user feedback.
- 2.2 All complaints will be investigated fully and fairly.
- 2.3 Complaints will be dealt with in confidence. The only exception to this is when others could be put at risk by matters referred to in the complaint.
- 2.4 If the complainant is not happy with the result of the response to the complaint, they will have the right to appeal.
- 2.5 Devon Mind is committed to ensuring that its services are of the highest quality. This procedure enables Devon Mind to respond clearly and properly to complaints, and to know when and why people are not satisfied with its services, so that it can improve them.

## **3. Who can make a complaint?**

- 3.1 This procedure is for people using Devon Mind's services or experiencing Devon Mind's work. It can also cover complaints made by volunteers, fundraisers, ambassadors, or representatives of Devon Mind.
- 3.2 This procedure does not cover complaints made by staff, who need to follow agreed grievance, disciplinary, or other internal procedures.



#### **4. Making a complaint**

- 4.1 There are three stages that you can go through to try and resolve the problem you have. You may wish to involve an advocate, friend, or someone else to support you at any stage.
- 4.2 If you need a sign language or community language interpreter, please let the person dealing with the complaint know and every reasonable effort will be made to provide it.

#### **5. Stages of making a complaint**

##### 5.1 Stage one: Initial complaint

To make an initial complaint, please speak to or email the individual(s) concerned or their line manager, and we will endeavour to satisfy your complaint and let you know of any remedial action that is to be taken.

If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, email [admin@devonmind.com](mailto:admin@devonmind.com) or submit the complaint online at <https://www.devonmind.com/contact/feedback-compliments-complaints>

All complaints will be acknowledged by the member of staff to whom you communicated your complaint within three working days of receipt.

For us to resolve your issue to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.

We will respond to stage one complaints within seven working days.

##### 5.2 Stage two: Formal complaint

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at stage one, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to stage two, either through your contact



at stage one, or directly via email to [admin@devonmind.com](mailto:admin@devonmind.com) or writing to Devon Mind, Guild House, 156 Mannamead Road, Plymouth PL3 5QL. Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt.

A manager will be assigned to investigate your complaint. You will receive a full written response within 21 working days from the date of the acknowledgement, from the person appointed to investigate it.

The response will include the following information:

- details of the investigation,
- a decision about whether the complaint was upheld or not,
- the reason for the decision,
- the redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to the complainant (for example, an apology, additional help, or directing to other sources of advice or support), and
- any other action that may be taken in light of the complaint.

If it is not possible to provide a full answer to the complaint within 21 working days, the letter will outline reasons why and give a date by which a full answer is expected.

### 5.3 Stage three: Appeal

If you not satisfied with the response to the complaint, you must outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction by letter or email within seven working days of receiving the response, to the CEO (or the Chair of the Board of Trustees, if the complaint was directed to them).

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will convene a Special Appeals Panel made up of two members of the Board of Trustees and at least one other person who is independent of Devon Mind. Panel membership will be restricted to people who have had no previous involvement in the complaint. The panel will meet within 14 days of receipt of the appeal unless a longer period is required and agreed to. The panel will hear the complaint. The panel will also hear evidence from others involved in the



complaint and its attempted resolution as they feel appropriate. You and your representative will also be able to question others involved in the complaint and to bring evidence and witnesses forward to the panel.

The chair of the Appeals Panel will write to you within 28 working days of receiving the appeal, to confirm:

- the final decision about the complaint,
- the reason for the decision, and
- the redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to the complainant (for example, an apology, additional help, or directing to other sources of advice or support).

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

## **6. Time limits**

- 6.1 In circumstances where time limits cannot be met due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be notified in writing. The reasons for the delay with adjusted timescales will be supplied by the person responsible for handling the complaint.

## **7. Accountability**

- 7.1 The CEO of Devon Mind is responsible for the efficient operation of this procedure (or the Chair of the Board of Trustees if they are dealing with the complaint).
- 7.2 Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers under the authority of the CEO.

## **8. Monitoring, audit, and review**



- 8.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for managing this Policy and overseeing its implementation. The CEO is responsible for implementing the policy within their areas of work, and for overseeing adherence by staff and volunteers. Every member of staff and volunteer should take personal responsibility for conforming to it.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the CEO to audit compliance with all policies as part of the charity's normal audit cycle, and to undertake or direct remedial action as required.

**9. Associated policies and procedures**

Confidentiality Policy & Procedure