



Mission: working together to help make people and communities stronger and healthier through education, training, and support for mental health and wellbeing

Vision: to be the most trusted mental health and wellbeing charity

Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

Policy Owner and Lead	CEO
Author	Counselling Service Manager
Applies to	Clients, staff & volunteers
Formally endorsed by	Board of Trustees
Endorsement date	January 2025
Next review	January 2027
Signed: - Trustee	
Signed: - CEO	

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Section 1: Purpose

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Tyneside and Northumberland Mind is committed to providing high quality services to everyone who accesses support. We will maintain the highest possible standards of openness, transparency, and accountability.

1.1.2 We recognise that one of the ways in which the organisation can continue to improve services is by listening and responding to the feedback from service users, supporters, and stakeholders. We will encourage people to use this policy to provide feedback.

1.1.3 We recognise that effective communication is a vital part of dealing with comments, compliments and complaints to ensure people feel listened to and respected.

1.1.4 We know that sometimes we will be able to put things right and make improvements. On occasion we may only be able to explain our actions, apologise and learn from feedback.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy can be used by Tyneside and Northumberland Mind service users, volunteers, supporters and the general public.

1.2.2 This policy does not apply to employees. Employees should use Tyneside and Northumberland Mind grievance or whistleblowing policies where appropriate.

1.3 Aims

- 1.3.1** To provide a framework for raising and addressing comments, compliments and complaints that is fair, easy and as transparent as possible.
- 1.3.2** To explain what steps Tyneside and Northumberland Mind will take if it receives a comment, compliment or complaint.
- 1.3.3** To ensure consistent, equitable and fair treatment in line with Tyneside and Northumberland Mind values in accordance with adherence with Tyneside and Northumberland Mind **Diversity Equity and Inclusion** policy.
- 1.3.4** Making a complaint will not harm or prejudice the service that is given to the person raising it, and Tyneside and Northumberland Mind will ensure that they are treated with respect and courtesy, receiving appropriate support throughout the handling of the complaint.
- 1.3.4** Learning from complaints will be used to improve Tyneside and Northumberland Mind work and drive forward a culture of continuous improvement.

1.4 Roles & responsibilities

The following section details the responsibilities of specific individuals and groups involved in compliance with this document.

1.4.1 The **Board of Trustees** is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy, as well as ensuring that Tyneside and Northumberland Mind is properly resourced to fulfil its obligations.
- Ensuring all aspects of this policy are fairly, equitably, consistently and sensitively applied in line with Tyneside and Northumberland Mind values and in accordance with the organisation's **Diversity Equity and Inclusion** policy.
- Regularly monitoring comments, compliments and complaints for any trends to inform ways to improve practice and maintain high quality services.

1.4.2 The **CEO and senior management team** is responsible for:

- Ensuring all employees are aware of this policy and procedure.
- Ensuring all aspects of this policy are fairly, equitably consistently and sensitively applied, in line with Tyneside and Northumberland Mind values and in accordance with the organisation's **Diversity Equity and Inclusion** policy.
- Treating any concerns seriously and dealing with them in a timely manner.
- Offering reasonable adjustments and wellbeing to support the person raising any concerns where the process is causing them distress or affecting their mental health.
- Offering reasonable adjustments or extra support to employees who need it, including to individuals named in a complaint, where the process is causing distress or affecting the mental health of anyone involved.

- Regularly monitoring comments, compliments and complaints for any trends to inform ways to improve practice and maintain high quality services.

1.4.3 Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding this policy.
- Listening to anyone raising a comment, compliment or complaint and making them feel listened to and supported.
- Escalating any comment, compliment or complaints to Head of Services
- Treating any person who complains fairly in accordance with the **Diversity Equity and Inclusion** policy, and with compassion and respect
- Communicating openly and honestly during complaints investigation meetings.

Section 2: Comments, Compliments and Complaints

2.1 Comments and Compliments

2.1.1 Tyneside and Northumberland Mind welcomes compliments about its services. Any written compliments received will be shared with the member of staff, volunteer, and/or relevant departments.

2.1.2 Compliments allow Tyneside and Northumberland Mind to know when something is working well and continue to deliver suitable services.

2.1.3 Tyneside and Northumberland Mind recognises that comments are helpful for reviewing the services on offer, and welcome suggestions of solutions.

2.1.4 Tyneside and Northumberland Mind will advise of any changes made as a result of a comment.

2.2 Complaints

2.2.1 Tyneside and Northumberland Mind will make sure that making a complaint is as easy as possible.

2.2.2 All complaints will be taken seriously as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with a service or individual which calls for an immediate response.

2.2.3 Any person making a complaint will always treated with courtesy and fairness in accordance Tyneside and Northumberland Mind **Diversity Equity and Inclusion** policy.

- 2.2.4** Complaints will be responded to the in right way – for example, with an explanation or an apology where things have gone wrong, and information on any action taken etc.
- 2.2.5** Learning from complaints will be shared and will be used to improve services.
- 2.2.6** Concerns raised informally will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as formal complaints.
- 2.2.7** Persistent/vexatious complaints will be managed sensitively in order to support the person making the complaint whilst ensuring that other service users, staff and volunteers do not suffer detriment.
- 2.2.8** This policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed for its effectiveness and accessibility.

2.3 Monitoring

- 2.3.1** A log of all compliments, comments and complaints is kept and a report is prepared for the Senior Management team and Board of Trustees.
- 2.3.2** Complaints are monitored to identify any trends which will inform ways to improve practice and maintain high quality services.
- 2.3.3** Support and training is offered to staff to enable them to conduct investigations.
- 2.3.4** Complaint information will be retained for a period of <insert here> in accordance with the **Data Retention Schedule**.

2.4 Confidentiality

- 2.4.1** Confidentiality will be maintained where possible as outlined in Tyneside and Northumberland Mind **Confidentiality Policy**.
- 2.4.2** Where a complaint concerns an individual, requires an investigation or raises safeguarding implications, confidentiality may need to be breached. This will be explained to the person making the complaint before being acted upon.

2.5 Implementation

- 2.5.1** Staff, volunteers and trustees will be required to read and understand this policy as part of induction and refresher training.

3. Procedural guidelines

3.1 Submitting a complaint - Stage One – Informal

- 3.1.1** To make an initial complaint (Stage 1), please speak to or email the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and we will endeavour to satisfy your complaint. We will let you know of any remedial action that is to be taken.
- 3.1.2** If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email our administration team:
admin@tynesidemind.org.uk, send your complaint **in writing** to Tru Knit House, 9-11 Carlil Square, Newcastle, NE1 6UF, **by telephone** on 0191 4774545
- 3.1.3** In the event that your complaint involves the CEO, please address your complaint for the attention of the Board of Trustees.
- 3.1.4** You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 5 working days from the date it is received.
- 3.1.5** In order 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.
- 3.1.6** Service users can choose to make a complaint via an advocate, relative or friend. If this is the case, it should be made clear that it is the person making the complaint supported by the third party, rather than the third person making the complaint. All communication will be sent to the person making a complaint, and if they request it, copies can be sent to the third party.
- 3.1.7** We will respond to informal complaints within 5 working days from the acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint.

3.2 Submitting a complaint - Stage Two - Formal

- 3.2.1** If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated from the beginning, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, either through your contact at Stage 1, **by emailing our Head Of Services Katy Cooke:**
Katy.Cooke@tynesidemind.org.uk, send your complaint **in writing** to Tru Knit House, 9-11 Carlil Square, Newcastle, BE1 6UF, **by telephone** on 0191 4774545
- 3.2.2** You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 5 working days from the date it is received.
- 3.2.3** An appropriate manager will be assigned to investigate your complaint based on the gravity of the concern and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement.
- 3.1.4** In the event that your complaint involves the CEO, please address your complaint for the attention of the Board of Trustees

3.2.5 If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to speak to Alex Wilson and given the option to appeal (Stage 3).

3.3 Appealing against the decision - Stage Three

3.3.1 If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation and wish to appeal against the decision made, you must put this in writing and email it to Our CEO Alex Wilson:

Alex.wilson@tynesidemind.org.uk or send it in writing to Tru Knit House, 9-11 Carlisle Square, Newcastle, NE1 6UF within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

3.3.2 The appeal review and further investigation will be carried out by someone at a senior level to the original investigator – for example, if the complaint was against a manager and thereby investigated by the Chief Executive, a member of the Board of Trustees will review the complaint and make further investigation if necessary.

3.3.3 You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal within 20 working days.

3.3.4 The response of the appeal will be final and no further internal investigations will take place. If the person making the complaint is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they can contact external agencies dependant on the complaint:

- General - Charity Commission - <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>
- Data protection - The ICO <https://ico.org.uk/>
- Fundraising - Fundraising regulator <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/>

Appendix A – COMPLAINTS FORM

Your name	
Telephone number	
Address	
Postcode	
Name of person filling out this form (if differs to the person making the complaint)	
Details of your complaint <i>Please include any dates, places or other information relevant to this complaint, including any people involved in this complaint if applicable. Please give as much information as possible in order for us to investigate your complaint effectively.</i>	

References

Confidentiality Policy

Data Protection Policy

Safeguarding Policy (Adults and CYP)

Diversity Equity and Inclusion Policy