



What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken. A complaint can be made by an individual or a group. You may wish to complain if you are not satisfied with the way you have been treated or the service you have received from Mind (NAMH).

Principles of Mind's complaints procedure

- Mind recognises that compliments and complaints are an important part of customer feedback.
- All complaints will be investigated fully and fairly.
- 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.
- If the complainant is not happy with the result of the response to the complaint, she or he will have the right to appeal.

Mind is committed to ensuring that its services are of the highest quality. The complaints procedure enables 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.

Who can make a complaint?

This procedure is for members of the public who have received a service from Mind (NAMH).

We recognise that it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish between Mind (NAMH) and local Minds. However, local Minds are each independent registered charities and complaints about services you have received from local Minds need to go directly to them. Mind (NAMH) can only become involved in complaints about local Minds in exceptional circumstances (see section B).

This procedure does not cover complaints made by Mind staff, volunteers and trustees who need to follow agreed grievance, disciplinary or other internal procedures.

Local Mind funders and contractors to local Minds need to follow the procedures for complaints or disputes laid out in contracts, grants or other funding arrangements with local Minds.

Section A - Complaints about Mind (NAMH):

If your complaint is about Mind (NAMH) then there are four stages that you can go through to try and resolve the problem. You may wish to involve an advocate, friend or someone else to support you at any stage. 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.

The four stages are:

Stage one (Informal)

Speak to the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and try to resolve the complaint informally. The individual concerned is required to tell you their name and who their line manager is if you ask them, however, you can also refer to the list below to find out who is the appropriate manager for you to contact.

Department

Contact

Chief Executive's Office

Head of Planning and Governance

Media, Policy and Campaigns,
Information, Communications,
Information, Membership

Director of External Relations

Appeals/Fundraising, Conferences
and training

Director of Fundraising

Mind Cymru

Director of Mind Cymru

Grants and
services to local Minds

Director of Networks and Communities

Finance and administration

Director of Finance and Resources

Stage two (Formally registering a complaint)

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received at stage one (informal) you should then use stage two of this procedure.

1) Outline the details of your complaint by letter, fax, email, or audio tape and send it to the Chief Executive (CEO), Mind (NAMH), 15-19 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 4BQ or paulfarmer@mind.org.uk. If your complaint is about the CEO then you need to address it to the Chair of the Council of Management (CoM) (marked private and confidential), which is ultimately responsible as trustees of the organisation.

Your complaint will be acknowledged by letter within seven working days from the date it is received. The letter will contain the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number of the person who will investigate the complaint.
- The date the investigation will start.
- What support you can receive during the process of the complaint, e.g. in terms of making information accessible, using interpreters etc.

2) You will receive a full response to your complaint within 21 working days from the start of the investigation in writing from the person appointed to investigate the complaint. 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 you e.g. an apology, additional help or directing to other sources of advice or support.
- Any other action that may be taken in light of the complaint.
- If it is not possible to provide a full answer to your complaint within 21 working days, the letter will outline reasons why and give a date by which a full answer is expected.

Stage three (Appeal)

1) If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint then outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction by letter, fax, email, or audio tape within seven working days of receiving it to the CEO (or the Chair of the Council of Management if it is about the CEO).

2) An Appeals Panel, normally of three members, including a trustee, will be convened to consider your appeal. The CEO will be responsible for ensuring the panel is appropriately representative. Panel membership will be restricted to people who have had no previous involvement in the complaint

3) Members of the Appeals Panel will:

- read through the necessary papers
- speak to relevant individuals involved with the complaint
- make a final decision.

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

- the final decision about the complaint
- the reason for the decision
- the redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to you e.g. an apology, additional
- help or directing to other sources of advice or support

- any action that may be taken in light of the complaint.

Review of the process

1) If once you have been through stages one to three of the complaints procedure, you are not satisfied that Mind (NAMH) has followed the process properly and dealt with your complaint fairly (e.g. by giving you insufficient opportunity to represent your view or ensuring all the relevant people are involved in the investigation), then you can outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction by letter, fax, email, or audio tape within 21 working days of receiving the Appeals Panel report to the CE (or the Chair of the Council of Management if it is about the CEO) to request a review of the complaints handling process, not a further investigation of the complaint.

2) The CEO or the Chair will make arrangements for a review of the complaint-handling process, and will inform you of how the review will be carried out.

3) The decision of the process review will be final. The Chair or CEO will communicate in writing within 28 working days of receiving your appeal:

- whether or not the procedure has been followed properly and fairly
- the reason for the decision
- the redress, if appropriate, which will be offered to you e.g. an apology, additional help or directing to other sources of advice or support
- what action may be taken in light of the review.

Time limits

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

Section B - Complaints about local Minds

If your complaint is about an individual local Mind, then as each local Mind is an independent registered charity you need to:

I. Contact the local Mind directly to explain that you wish to make a complaint and therefore would like to receive a copy of their complaints procedure.

II. Follow the local Mind's complaints procedure as outlined. If you have been through all the stages of the local Mind's complaints procedure, and you are still not happy, you may consider taking the following step:

III. If the local Mind has provision for an independent review of their complaints handling process then you should agree with them a mutually acceptable independent person to review the complaints handling procedure, where

appropriate. A member of NAMH staff may act in this role with the agreement of all parties concerned. The role of the NAMH staff member will be confined to a review of the complaints handling process only.

Complaints about Mind (NAMH) by local Minds

Local Minds wishing to make a complaint about Mind (NAMH) should follow the process as set out in Section A of the complaints policy.

Accountability

The CEO of Mind is responsible for the efficient operation of this complaints procedure. Responsibility for carrying out investigations of complaints may be delegated to appropriate managers in Mind (NAMH), under the authority of the CEO.

Recording complaints

Each Director within Mind (NAMH) will be responsible for ensuring a record of all complaints relevant to their Department is maintained in a format agreed by the Chief Executive's Office. These will be reviewed by the Mind Executive Team on a quarterly basis. The Chief Executive's Office will be responsible for collating information about complaints, and furnishing the Council of Management on an annual basis with details of the totality of complaints received, main reasons for complaints, outcomes and how any underlying problems have been resolved.