

Title of Policy	Complaints
Policy Type	Employment
Ref No	TBC
Reviewed on	17 March 22
Reviewed by	Lucy Hughes, CEO
Responsible Trustee	Shazna Khanom
Date signed off by Trustee	14 Feb 23
Date disseminated	7 Mar 23

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1 - Purpose

The Organisation aims to provide all Service Users with high quality therapeutic services. Employees are offered continuous professional development and are committed to:

- being courteous and professional at all times;
- adhering to all the Organisation's Policies;
- monitoring and evaluating performance;
- providing a high quality service at all times

If the Organisation fails to achieve this it needs to know, so all Service Users must be informed there's a formal Complaints Policy and that it's available in writing on request.

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly according to the process outlined in this Policy.

2 - Definitions

- the Organisation = Mankind UK
- Service User = a person using the services of the Organisation
- Trustee = members of the Trustee Board
- Named Trustee = the Responsible Trustee named on page one of this Policy
- Employee = paid staff, freelance staff, unpaid volunteers, Advisors, Trustees and anyone undertaking work on behalf of the Organisation
- Line Manager = the person directly responsible for managing the Employee
- Supervisor = an Employee of the Organisation who delivers clinical supervision to clinical Employees
- Complainant = a Service User making a complaint
- Advocate = a professional in the field of law
- Investigator = an Employee assigned to investigate a complaint on behalf of the Complainant
- Reviewer = a person of CEO or Trustee level assigned to lead a review of an investigation
- Complaints Panel = a group of three or more people assigned to carry out a review of an investigation

3 - Linked Policies

There are no specifically linked Policies.

4 - Legalities

The Organisation is a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Service Users have a right to follow the BACP complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with the final outcome of the Organisation's complaints procedure.

5 - Relevance

This Policy may be used by any Employee or Service User for information regarding specific complaints, or for general guidance. It may also be used for training.

6 - Governance

6.1 Overall Responsibility

6.1.1 External

Overall and final responsibility for complaints outside the Organisation lies with the BACP - see [Section 7.9](#).

6.1.2 Internal

Overall and final responsibility for resolving complaints within the Organisation lies with the Trustee Board. The Named Trustee will lead on such matters and act as liaison between the Board and the CEO.

On occasion, the Named Trustee may be required to appoint a Reviewer - see [Section 7.7](#).

6.2 Delegated Responsibilities

6.2.1 CEO

Unless the CEO is the subject of the complaint, their role is to act as the Investigator, where the complaint is about more than one specific Employee. If a complaint is referred for a review, the CEO will usually assume the role of Reviewer.

6.2.2 Clinical Services Manager

For general service quality complaints, the Clinical Services Manager will act as the Investigator.

6.2.3 Line Managers

If the complaint relates to one individual, their Line Manager will act as the Investigator.

6.2.4 Employee

Employees have a responsibility to honestly and openly assist in any complaint investigations, whilst maintaining confidentiality within the Organisation.

6.3 Review

This Policy will be fully reviewed by the CEO every three years; changes will be subject to approval by the Trustee Board.

7 - Process

7.1 Informal Discussions

If the Complainant feels able to, they should first speak to the Employee involved. The Employee will listen attentively and record the details. They will then discuss a solution.

If it's a general service issue they should explain their concerns to the Clinical Services Manager, who will make a record and seek a resolution.

If this doesn't resolve the issue, or isn't possible, the Complainant can use this Policy to make a formal complaint.

7.2 Use of an Advocate

Complaints can't be made by a friend or other non-official third party, but should a Complainant wish, they may engage an Advocate to act on their behalf. In this instance they must supply the following information:

- The name of Advocate and advocacy service
- Full contact details of the Advocate, and their preferred method of contact
- Written permission for the Advocate to act on their behalf
- The terms of the advocacy agreement

The Organisation will contact the Advocate to discuss the terms of the advocacy agreement and establish how the Complainant wishes the Advocate to represent them. The Complainant may amend their advocacy arrangements at any time.

7.3 Explanation of the Process

The Complainant may request an explanation of the process from the Organisation at any time. This should be delivered by an Employee the Complainant feels comfortable speaking to. If their complaint is about one or more specific individuals, a different Employee should step in.

7.4 Writing to the Investigator

The Complainant must set out the details of their complaint in writing, within one calendar year of the incident taking place, and post or email it to the Investigator at:

Complaints, Mankind UK, 1 Brunswick Road, Hove BN3 1DG

or

admin@mkcharity.org

The written complaint should include:

- the reason for the complaint;
- when and where it happened;
- the name or names of anyone involved, if known;
- the outcome the complainant is hoping for;
- the complainant's contact details and preferred method of contact.

If there exists a barrier to the Complainant personally making a complaint in writing, the Complainant may request the assistance of an Employee either in person or by telephone. Such barriers may include:

- a physical or other disability;
- learning difficulties;
- limited English literacy;
- other significant difficulty

7.5 Investigation

On receipt of the complaint, the Investigator will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five days, stating what will happen next, and sharing details of the BACP, as detailed in section 7.9.

The Investigator will then gather information and consider the complaint. The details will only be shared with Employees who can help resolve the issue, and all details will remain confidential within the Organisation.

The Investigator may request a meeting or telephone call with the Complainant or their Advocate to gather further information, or to help clarify the concerns. The Investigator might be accompanied by an appropriate Employee, and the Complainant will be advised to bring a trusted friend or supporter with them.

Notes of this meeting will be taken by the Investigator and shared afterwards with the Complainant. These notes will be added to the complaint file. If all parties agree, an audio recording of the meeting may be taken.

7.6 Investigator's Response

The Investigator will make a written response to the Complainant within 28 days to:

- Identify the issues and apologise for things that've gone wrong
- Set out any plans for internal action to either resolve the issue or ensure it doesn't happen again
- Explain their right to a review of the investigation, should they be dissatisfied with the outcome.

A record of the complaint and outcome will be stored for seven years, after which, the file will be securely destroyed.

7.7 Review

Sometimes the outcome may not meet the complainant's hopes and / or expectations. In this instance, the Investigator will inform the Complainant they can write to the CEO by post or email, who will elect a Reviewer to undertake a review. If the complaint was about the CEO, or they were previously the Investigator, the Complainant will be advised to instead write to the Board of Trustees.

The assigned Reviewer will then:

- set up a Complaints Panel consisting of themselves, at least one Trustee, and at least one independent third party person who has not yet been involved in the complaints process;
- Lead the panel in carrying out a review of the investigation, and conducting a new investigation;
- If necessary, instigate a further meeting with the Complainant.

If a meeting takes place, the Reviewer might be accompanied by an appropriate Employee or third party, and the Complainant will be advised to bring a trusted friend or supporter with them. Notes of this meeting will be taken by the Reviewer and shared afterwards with the Complainant and the other members of the Complaints Panel. These notes will be added to the complaint file. This meeting may also be recorded if all parties agree.

7.8 Reviewer's Response

The panel will consider the results of both the investigation and the review. They will then issue a formal written response to the Complainant within 28 days of the review request.

The written response will:

- identify any additional issues and apologise for things that've gone wrong;
- set out any plans for internal action to either resolve the issue or ensure it doesn't happen again;

- explain the Complainant's right to complain to the BACP, and provide contact details - see [Section 7.9](#)

Should the Complainant not fully understand the response, they will be given the opportunity to speak to the Reviewer, who will give further clarification.

The decision of the Reviewer will be considered final and no further information relating to the complaint can be submitted. No further correspondence will be entered into by the Organisation about that particular complaint.

7.9 External Complaints Process via BACP

If a Complainant has exhausted the Organisation's internal complaints process and is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they can follow the BACP complaints procedure. Details can be found on the BACP website, or they can be contacted at:

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

BACP House

15 St John's Business Park

Lutterworth

Leicestershire

LE17 4HB

Telephone No: 01455 883300

Email: enquiries@bacp.co.uk

Website: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>