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| Name of Local Mind | Carrick Mind |
| Policy | Complaints Policy and Procedure |
| Version | 2 |
| Date when last reviewed | April 2018 |
| Date when next review due | April 2020 |
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| This policy is for: | Clients, staff, volunteers, and members of the public |

A. Introduction

This procedure is principally concerned with complaints made against an organisation’s staff, trustees or volunteers. Disputes between clients will generally be covered by one or more of the policies in place for individual projects. However, there will be occasions when it will be appropriate to use this procedure to provide a framework for an investigation of a dispute or machinery for an appeal.

B. Principles

1. The opportunity to make a complaint or grievance is an essential right for all those who use the services provided by any organisation. Complaints can be a valuable way of evaluating and improving our services and of ensuring they are responsive to the needs and preferences of users.
2. This complaints procedure 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.

3. It is recognised 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 Carrick Mind will provide information on this on request.
4. 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 or volunteer against whom a complaint is made will be given the fullest opportunity to answer any criticisms.
5. Every effort will be made to 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 procedure described below.
6. Some complaints have or may have financial or legal consequences for the organisation. In such cases its insurers require Carrick 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
7. We will respect the confidentiality of both the complainant and any person complained about, subject to the provisions of our Confidentiality Policy. This states that, 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.
8. 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 Mind services as part of the evaluation of these services.
9. Every effort will be made to ensure that every user of its services is aware that this procedure exists. The procedure is described below.

C. Procedure

1. 1st Stage: informal discussion with the person concerned. The Chief Executive may be asked to help to resolve the complaint informally.

2. 2nd Stage: a formal complaint in writing should be sent as follows:

- Complaint against a member of staff or volunteer: to the Chief Executive
- Complaint against the Chief Executive: to the Chairperson
- Complaint against a trustee: to the Chairperson
- Complaint against the Chairperson: to the Chief Executive, for the attention of the trustees

The person who receives the complaint will carry out an investigation, or, where appropriate, appoint someone else to do so. The investigator will report the results in writing within 15 working days to the complainant and the relevant members of staff.

If the complainant or the person about whom the complaint is made is unhappy with the results of this they can then ask for the complaint to be referred to the 3rd Stage. The request should be made in writing to the Chairperson of Carrick Mind.

3. 3rd Stage: On receiving the complaint the Chairperson will consult with another trustee to decide whether the complaint should proceed to this level. If they decide it should not, the Chairperson will write to the complainant explaining why. If they deem that it should, the Chairperson will set up a panel to consider the complaint. The panel will generally consist of three people, one of whom will be a service user. The remaining panel members be trustees, but the Chairperson may replace one or more of the trustees with people of independent organisations if appropriate. The panel will aim to meet within 28 working days, although this may take longer in complicated cases.

The panel will invite to the meeting the complainant and the person or persons against whom the complaint has been made. Any such person may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or supporter, or by an independent

advocate. Guidelines for the conduct of the meeting will be agreed by the Chairperson

The panel will report their decision and any recommendations in writing to the complainant and to any persons against whom the complaint was made within 21 days. The decision of the Panel will be final.