

**The Sandbox Clinical Governance:
Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is understood that there may be times when individuals feel unhappy with the service they are receiving. It is hoped that in such situations, the parties concerned will feel able to discuss any concerns or issues that they may have with The Sandbox.
- 1.2. A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction or concern a service user may have about services provided by The Sandbox, for example, issues around opening times, policies and procedures, staff or clinicians.
- 1.3. This does NOT include:
 - 1.3.1. harassment and bullying
 - 1.3.2. disciplinary or misconduct procedures
 - 1.3.3. concerns about a child in relation to safeguarding
 - 1.3.4. allegations against a person who works with children
 - 1.3.5. an allegation, claiming that a staff member has done something wrong or illegal against the company or a service user. In cases of allegations against staff, please refer to The Sandbox Point of Contact policy [here](#) and the HR policies, if relevant.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy sets out definitions of complaints and the relevant procedure to be followed on any occasion where a service user submits a complaint against The Sandbox.
- 2.2. This policy applies to all The Sandbox staff and clinicians and is to be read in conjunction with:
 - 2.2.1. Mindler's [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

3. Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of intent with regards to the identification, handling and investigation of service user complaints. The Sandbox complaint handling policy and procedures have been created to meet accepted general complaint handling standards and requirements. This policy is representative of Mindler's standard complaints handling procedure, but is specifically amended for The Sandbox service.
- 3.2. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all customer complaints, either written or verbal, are handled in a consistent manner and that further complaint incidents are mitigated and, where possible, prevented.
- 3.3. Where a customer has cause to complain, the complaints handling procedure will be followed in every instance. A record will be made, detailing the nature of the complaint and actions undertaken to help improve The Sandbox service and reduce the occurrence of similar complaints. This will be shared with the respective NHS Trust through monthly reports.
- 3.4. The Sandbox complaints policy ensures that the following principles are applied when dealing with complaints:
 - 3.4.1. **Accessibility** – it should be easy for service users to find out how and where to complain. Details are available on our website and staff and clinicians should know how to advise clients about how to make a complaint.

- 3.4.2. **Simplicity** – our system is straightforward: there should be as few steps as possible and the complainant should be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 3.4.3. **Time Scales** – there should be clearly defined timescales built into the procedure that allow for proper investigation and response. Generally, complaints should be resolved within four weeks.
- 3.4.4. **Acknowledgement** – a simple email acknowledging receipt of the complaint, an indication of who will deal with it and the time it is expected to take should be included.
- 3.4.5. **Independence** – any complaint should be dealt with by somebody who is not directly involved. If the client is not satisfied, they should be able to pursue the complaint through management.
- 3.4.6. **Confidentiality** – every complaint should be treated in confidence as much as possible.

4. The Sandbox's Objectives for the Complaint Handling Process

- 4.1. The Sandbox considers and responds to all complaints, no matter what they refer to.
- 4.2. Complaints will be acknowledged via email within two working days of being received.
- 4.3. The Sandbox would aim to resolve issues and complaints raised at the first point of contact, where possible.
- 4.4. If first contact resolution by the Care Coordination team is not possible, the relevant team member(s) will take ownership of the investigation. The Sandbox will send an update and/or final response letter within 5 working days.
- 4.5. For more complex complaints, an investigation will take place with the client updated and/or final response letter sent within 28 days from the initial date the complaint was raised. A copy of this response should be kept on file.
- 4.6. If more time is needed, complaints will be investigated further and responded to within 8 weeks from the initial complaint.
- 4.7. Complaint responses will always be provided in writing (unless the complainant makes a specific request for an alternate form of communication which will be provided in addition to the written format).
- 4.8. Complaint procedures will be available on The Sanbox's website, as well as provided in cases of written and/or verbal request.
- 4.9. All complaints will be investigated by a relevant member of staff and a full outcome summary will be provided to the Sandbox Clinical Lead and The Head of CYP Services.
- 4.10. Complaint records will be used to revise company procedures and to improve communication and business practices, where applicable.

5. Procedures and Guidelines

- 5.1. Service users can request the Sandbox's complaints procedure via email.
- 5.2. If a customer telephones The Sandbox and wishes to raise a complaint, Care Coordination should advise the caller to submit the complaint via email to

sandbox@mindler.co.uk, so that the respective team member can investigate and respond to the complaint.

- 5.3. If the complaint can be resolved at the first point of contact, then a member of the Care Coordination team will follow up with the outcome in writing and the complaint will be logged in a complaints record.

6. Final Response

- 6.1. After the complaint has been handled in the first instance or else investigated in full and an outcome and action decision has been reached, a final response letter will be sent to the customer with their findings and decision regarding any action(s) to be taken.
- 6.2. The Sandbox will always aim to submit the final response letter at the earliest opportunity following resolution of the complaint. The final response letter should be sent no later than five working days from the date the complaint was closed.

7. Recording Complaints

- 7.1. A record of complaints provides a quality control mechanism for Care Coordination and The Sandbox management review and ensures that all complaints can be tracked.
- 7.2. A simple Complaints Register shared between the Care Coordination and the Sandbox leadership team (The Sandbox Clinical Lead and the Head of CYP Services) will be kept up-to-date with the following information and shared on a monthly basis with the respective NHS Trust:
 - 7.2.1. The date and time the complaint was made
 - 7.2.2. A brief description of the nature of the complaint
 - 7.2.3. Actions taken in response to the complaint, including the date on which this was completed.
 - 7.2.4. The outcome of the investigation, e.g. measures taken to improve the service.
 - 7.2.5. Details of information and findings given to the person making the complaint.
 - 7.2.6. Complaint Status: open / closed
 - 7.2.7. Complaint Outcome: upheld / not upheld
 - 7.2.8. The date the complaint was closed
 - 7.2.9. The date the final response letter was sent
- 7.3. The register will also contain:
 - 7.3.1. Juvonno Chart Number of the complainant (where applicable), or their name otherwise. As this is confidential information, this is not to be shared with the NHS.
 - 7.3.2. Information about the level of investigation of the complaint went through, and any changes or improvements made in response to this.

Appendix 1: How To Make A Complaint (Information for Service Users)

(To be made available to the service users via The Sandbox website)

- A complaint can be made with The Sandbox in writing by emailing sandbox@mindler.co.uk
- All complaints will be dealt with in the first instance by our fully trained staff in Care Coordination, who will aim to help resolve your complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. Where more time is needed for further investigation, the designated Complaints Handler will keep you up-to-date every step of the way.
- The Sandbox will send a written acknowledgement of your complaint within two working days of being received. Any further communication will keep you updated with any actions taken and timescales involved, so you know how your complaint is being dealt with.
- In the event that you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the complaint will be reviewed by the Head of Children and Young People's Services.
- If the complaint relates to your therapist, Care Coordination will work with you and liaise with the Senior Clinical Team to help resolve the complaint.