

OBS Complaints and Allegations Policy and Procedure

Whilst Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support (OBS) strives to deliver quality breastfeeding support that meets the needs of service users, we recognise that on occasion something may go wrong, and OBS may not provide the high standards of support that we intend to deliver. OBS recognises that it has a duty to act quickly and appropriately to resolve any complaints about the service, or any allegations made against paid contractors and volunteers working at its drop-in sessions, virtual services and within its online forums. Every complaint, made either formally or informally, is a matter for concern, and will be followed up.

OBS welcomes feedback and, where possible, uses complaints and feedback as a quality improvement tool to develop the service, which includes putting measures in place to stop mistakes recurring.

This policy and procedure sets out the mechanism for raising any concerns, issues or formal complaints, and the action that will be taken upon a complaint being received.

A copy of this policy will be available on the OBS website. OBS will seek to make the complaints process as accessible as possible. Where a complainant's first language is not English, or if the complainant has specific communication needs (for example due to neurodiversity, visual impairment, or hearing impairment) please contact us and we will make preferred arrangements.

Making a complaint

If a service user is unhappy with the support they have received at OBS they may raise a complaint. It is important that OBS are made aware of any concerns as quickly as possible. The support that a user receives will not be adversely affected, following any complaint made.

In the first instance, complaints and allegations should be made either in person or in writing to the Project Lead at: operations@oxbreastfeedingsupport.org. Further

contact details can be found at

<https://www.oxbreastfeedingsupport.org/index.php/aboutus/contact>.

If the complaint or allegation is regarding the Project Lead or they are unavailable, it should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees at: chair@oxbreastfeedingsupport.org

If the complaint or allegation is made by a paid contractor, employee or volunteer about another colleague within the organisation, it should be addressed to the Project Lead in the first instance. If the allegation is a safeguarding matter, the Safeguarding policy and Whistleblowing policy must be followed

<https://www.oxbreastfeedingsupport.org/index.php/aboutus/safeguarding>.

If the allegation is of abuse of a child or adult, it will be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who deal with complaints and allegations against those who work or volunteer with children and families.

Verbal Complaints

Upon receipt of a verbal complaint, the recipient will aim to resolve the issue immediately. OBS will record all verbal negative or critical comments in the Complaints log, located on the OBS Drive. If it is not a complaint, but a suggestion or comment, OBS will not send a confirmation in writing on the course of action to be taken. The recipient will ask the complainant if they would like to consider their verbal complaint as a 'formal verbal complaint', which will receive a formal response.

Complaints Procedure and Investigation

All written complaints and formal verbal complaints will be acknowledged within 48 working hours of receipt and an initial response will be provided within 7 working days. The initial response will include details of the course of action that will be taken, with timescales and information as to who will be investigating the concern.

All complaints and allegations will be brought to the attention of the Project Lead and the Chair of Trustees. The complaint will be allocated to a Trustee or staff member, who will establish a discourse with the complainant and investigate fully by reviewing the detail of the complaint, gathering evidence needed to establish the facts of the complaint, then carefully considering the facts in order to come to a conclusion and resolve the complaint or allegation appropriately. The Project Lead and the Chair of Trustees will oversee this process.

The complainant will be sent a letter explaining the outcome of the investigation and the proposed resolution.

Due to confidentiality and data protection it may be possible that some of the information is anonymised or withheld. If this is the case it will be made clear what data cannot be shared and the reason for this.

If the complaint has highlighted areas for improvement or if an error has occurred, OBS will thoroughly explore what can be done to prevent a recurrence. OBS will monitor and review complaints to establish any learning that can be identified. The risk register may be updated in light of complaints and feedback.

Appealing an Outcome

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and outcome they can inform the Chair of Trustees. The Chair will investigate if due process has been followed and may request further investigative work.

Once the complaint has been fully dealt with by OBS, if you are not satisfied with the outcome you can complain to the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission provides a free independent service. You can contact the Charity Commission to get information and advice or to register a complaint on

Phone: 0300 066 9197

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

The Charity Commission will not usually investigate complaints, until the charity has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

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