



OBS Complaints and Allegations Policy and Procedure

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support welcomes all feedback including any complaints about the service. We also encourage anyone who has any concerns about the behaviour of our employees, contractors and volunteers, to contact us. It is our policy to respond promptly and appropriately to feedback, and to learn from it.

This policy and procedure sets out the mechanism for raising any concerns and the action that will be taken. Every concern will be followed up using the guidelines set out in this policy.

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 dissatisfied 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 Operations Manager at operations@oxbreastfeedingsupport.org. Further contact details can be found [on our website](#).

If the complaint or allegation is made by a paid contractor, employee or volunteer about another colleague within the organisation, it should also be addressed to the Operations Manager in the first instance.

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

Verbal Complaints

Upon receipt of a verbal complaint, the recipient will aim to resolve the issue immediately. 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 complaint, which will receive a formal response.

Complaints and Allegations Procedure and Investigation

It is our policy to first consider whether a concern of harm to a child or adult has been raised. Please refer to the [OBS Safeguarding Policy](#), which contains a section on whistleblowing, and also The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership's [Guide to reporting concerns for professionals working with children](#) and [Multi-agency guidance on managing allegations against staff and volunteers](#).

Safeguarding and allegations procedures apply to all volunteers and paid team members, whether contract or permanent employees. Even if someone steps down from their role this should not prevent a full investigation.

Referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) using the [LADO referral form](#) will be made within 24 hours when there is an allegation that any person who works in regulated activities with children, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity, with the children's workforce has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

All other written complaints and formal verbal complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days 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 Operations Manager and the Chair of Trustees. The complaint will be allocated to a Trustee and a staff member, who will work together to 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 Operations 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.

Records will be kept securely in line with the [OBS Privacy Policy](#).

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.

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

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