



SERVICE USER PROVISION: GENERAL SERVICE GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy brings together a series of measures to ensure that service users, can benefit from a safe, secure and supportive environment which can contribute to their wellbeing. This objective is central to the quality of our services and all staff and volunteers have a role to play. Several other policies are also relevant: Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Complaints and Grievances, Staff Employment and Volunteers.
- 1.2 South Lakeland Mind provides for anyone in mental or emotional distress living independently or with family, whether or not they are receiving statutory health or care services. We also provide information and advice for carers of those in mental or emotional distress.

2. Meeting the Needs of Service Users

- 2.1 South Lakeland Mind recognises the developing 'personalised' approach for mental health and care services and to that end is working with commissioners as their policies evolve.
- 2.2 At the same time, the limited company is developing its own services in order to focus more directly on individual needs. This is currently achieved through several measures:
- A register of attendance at support and social drop-ins is maintained, and staff and volunteers monitor informally the health and needs of service users.
 - Similarly attendance at courses and activities is monitored.
 - Staff and volunteers record meetings with people visiting Mind centres for the first time seeking help or advice and information.
 - Counsellors working as volunteers for the limited company maintain their own monitoring client records. These are, of course, confidential though any general concerns may be discussed with their own counselling supervisor and /or the Chief Officer.
- 2.3 In addition staff and volunteers are able to maintain their personal knowledge of service users' development, though this is an informal process.
- 2.4 The informal interaction with service users at drop-in support and social sessions and recreational activities allows staff and volunteers to discuss with service users any needs or wishes they may have which the limited company may be able to help with. However, South Lakeland Mind is not a health service provider and is committed to its 'open door' policy of maintaining access to drop-in sessions that are open to all and informal, regardless of whether or not the attenders are NHS service users.

3. General Service Guidelines

- 3.1 These apply to the services provided in the Kendal centre and to the Grange and Bowness / Windermere centres, to any sessions initiated elsewhere and to any external activities. They apply to service users and to staff and volunteers.

3.2 Staff and volunteers should make every effort to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. They should welcome new service users, offer support and help them get acquainted with others. In particular they should encourage them in their efforts to improve their condition and live fulfilling lives in the community, following the recovery model of care. However, they should not pressurise anyone into taking part in discussions or activities and should respect their privacy and avoid intrusive questioning. These points will be incorporated into recruitment and selection, training and supervision of staff and volunteers who will be subject to a DBS check.

3.3 Service users are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Everyone should treat each other with respect. Offensive or disruptive behaviour, such as verbal abuse, foul language, shouting or physical abuse or mistreatment, is not accepted. Sanctions may include verbal warning and ultimately exclusion.
- Accommodation must be left in good condition after use.
- No dogs other than guide dogs should be allowed in SLM premises.
- Mind activities are not considered suitable for children.
- Offensive or disruptive behaviour is not accepted. This may include swearing, shouting verbal or physical abuse or mistreatment. Anyone behaving in this way should be asked to moderate it; if they continue they should be given a private warning and ultimately if necessary, asked to leave.
- Drugs (other than prescribed medication) and alcohol must not be used or brought onto the premises, into staff or volunteers' vehicles or to external activities.
- Anyone caught stealing will be reported to the police.

4. Service User Involvement

4.1 It is the practice of South Lakeland Mind to encourage service users to raise and discuss aspects of service quality and organisation as well as their own experiences with health services and everyday life. This may take place spontaneously in open discussion at drop-in sessions or individually with staff or volunteers. Service users may also attend meetings of the Executive Committee, the AGM, or any other such meeting called by the Executive Committee.

4.2 To ensure that every opportunity is available for raising issues and questions, service users are invited to take part, every three months or so, in service users' meetings at each of the drop-in support centres (Kendal, Grange and Bowness / Windermere). These meetings (ad hoc if necessary) also provide the opportunity to inform service users about important changes to services and organisation, staff changes and any significant developments in the statutory health and care sectors. Guest speakers may be invited. Notes of service users meetings should be sent to the Chief Officer and any significant issues arising reported to the Executive Committee for decisions about action.

4.3 Service Users are actively encouraged to apply to become volunteers, providing there is no conflict of interest; extra support and training will be given where necessary to enable individuals to help deliver services.

4.4 In addition, service users are able to place comments and suggestions in the suggestion box at the Kendal office and at drop-in sessions in other areas. They may also verbally make or give them to staff or volunteers.

4.5 Service User Trustees are automatically involved in policy making, service development and governance through their membership of the Executive Committee. However, all service users are given the opportunity to comment on and discuss major new initiatives, organisational changes or accommodation issues at SU meetings, by attending Executive Committee or General Meetings or by talking to staff, volunteers or Trustees who will report their points to the Executive or other Committee. Copies of reports will be available for service users to read at Kendal or by request at other centres. The Executive Committee may invite service users to join any groups set up to address major policy or services issues.

5. Personal Complaints

- 5.1 For other complaints by service users, other than those concerning abuse, e.g. about quality of service or other service users, staff or volunteers, the limited company's separate Complaint and Grievance procedures may be used.
- 5.2 The Complaints and Grievance procedures will also be employed in cases of abuse or ill treatment which though rare must be handled with special sensitivity. However, any concerns, suspicions or allegations must also be reported immediately to the Chief Officer, Chair or other trustee who may report it to the police.

This policy is intended as a statement of intent and does not constitute a binding contractual or personal agreement. But it will be monitored and revised in the light of service user, staff or volunteer experience or comments and any operational changes and legislative or other external considerations. Interpretation and any matters not specifically covered by the policy will be decided by the Chief Officer and / or Trustees.

Policy Approved by Board of Trustees: April 2010

Revision(s) approved: 14th August 2014

Review Date: September 2015

If at any time it seems appropriate to review the policy sooner than the review date, such as through a change in the law, then this should be done without delay.