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Advocacy Service: information for organisations, services and professionals

This leaflet is a summary of guidelines for the MindOut Advocacy Service and explains the role of an advocate.

Our advocates are bound by the MindOut Advocacy Service Code of Practice, which is based on the Advocacy Charter and Standards, available on request.

This leaflet tells you about:

* Confidentiality
* Complaints
* Equality & Diversity
* Recording
* Independence
* Referrals

We are independent from other services and professionals. Advocacy is client-led, we promote empowerment through self-advocacy and will only represent the client if instructed. We share all information with the client that is received from other services and professionals.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

* The client’s right to confidentiality is essential to the advocacy relationship. MindOut takes client confidentiality very seriously.
* We share all information received about a client with the client.
* We do not share information with anyone else without the client’s consent, unless they or someone else is at risk. Where possible we will always try to seek clients’ permission first before breaking confidentiality.

##### COMPLAINTS

Please let us know if you have any complaints, concerns or comments about the MindOut Advocacy service.

* All complaints whether verbal or written are taken seriously and responded to promptly.
* A written complaints procedure is available on request.
* Complaints which cannot be easily resolved, or which relate to professional misconduct or bad practice, are dealt with by the Director or the Chair of our Trustee Board.

##### EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

* MindOut is a specific LGB&T mental health organisation, run by and for LGB&T people. We recognise the diversity within LGB&T communities. Everyone is welcome to make contact with our advocacy service regardless of race, cultural background, disabilities, sexual orientation, age, gender and religious belief.
* We want to make sure that everyone has equal and easy access to our advocacy service.
* MindOut’s Equality and Diversity policy is available on request.

##### RECORDING

* We need to keep written records of our work with individuals, we do this in line with the Data Protection Act 1988.
* We operate an open-file policy, where clients can have access to any written records kept about them on request.

**INDEPENDENCE**

* Our services are independent from statutory mental health services. This means that we are free to advocate on our clients’ behalf, and help them raise complaints.
* Our funding comes from the Big Lottery, small grants such as the Rainbow Fund and from the NHS. We also raise money from donations, gifts, bequests and fundraising events.

**REFERRALS**

* People mostly self-refer, but referrals are accepted from anyone as long as the client has requested this.
* You can make a referral by contacting us by phone or email and letting us know the client’s contact details. We aim to make initial contact within two working days.
* We have an Advocacy, Engagement, Referral & Assessment Policy which is available on request.

**CONTACT US**

MindOut LGB&T Mental Health Project

Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XG

**Tel** 01273 234839 (24 hr confidential answerphone) **Email** info@mindout.org.uk

*MindOut is run by and for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans people who have lived experience of mental health issues.*

*All staff and volunteers have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.*

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