

Open

Mental
Health

Induction Handbook



April 2025

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a member of Open Mental Health!

We are delighted to welcome you to our alliance of Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise organisations working together across Somerset to support individuals with a range of mental health needs.

What is Open Mental Health?

Open Mental Health is Somerset's trailblazing approach to providing mental health services.



Together with Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset Council, our partners, and people with lived experience of mental health challenges, we are changing the way support is offered and provided. Our approach challenges traditional models of care. We believe that by working collaboratively in new and innovative ways, we can support people to achieve a better quality of life.

MISSION

We deliver positive change in mental health, sharing our experience, expertise and specialisms.

What is Open Mental Health?

Our approach is a holistic one with a strong sense of community – a joined up network of support, for both patients, clinicians, and anyone else involved in supporting individuals experiencing poor mental health. We don't distinguish between primary and secondary care. We are an interlocking network – a person-centred culture, not a hierarchy – a collaboration between key experienced partners replicated at every level.

We've worked hard to remove barriers to getting mental health treatment and support, in addition to people accessing support themselves, anyone can contact us for an assessment. Whether you're a General Practitioner, pharmacist, social worker, community or district nurse, group organiser, police officer or concerned friend, we are 'Open for Mental Health' in Somerset.

We can provide access to a range of specialist services to help support adults in Somerset struggling with their mental health. This includes: Specialist clinical staff; Recovery and Wellbeing workers (1:1 & group support); Peer Support; Eating disorder support; Debt, housing & benefits advice; Volunteering opportunities; Outdoor health and wellbeing.



Our Values

Concept of Openness

Our approach is unique and one of our key values is openness. It is in our name and in the way we approach everything that we do.

We're open minded about mental health and by that we mean all aspects of it – how it's accessed, how its provided, the language that's used, how our clients get the support and help they need and how we all work as one.

We're open minded about doing things differently – and about accepting that we won't always get things right. We work in a way that is accepting of failure and views it as necessary to achieve real change – for the better – to learn and to grow. For our clients and colleagues working in mental health across Somerset our door is always open. There are numerous routes to accessing our services and we have designed it that way to ensure nobody is ever turned away.

Open Mental Health is also built on many other shared values that develops our culture and passion to achieve:

Inclusivity	purposefully involving and connecting people in the different communities of Somerset.
Courage	allowing us to be bold, ambitious and take risks for good.
Resilience	enabling us to adjust, manage and recover from setbacks and adversity.
Trust	that our confident expectations of secure relationships with each other will be realised.
Compassion	as the demonstration of the warmth and kindness we feel for each other.
Empowerment	we empower each other to be self-determining, independent, and responsible.

Our partners & their services

As a partnership of voluntary, community and social enterprises, including Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset Council, and those with lived mental health experiences, Open Mental Health is revolutionising mental health services in Somerset and challenging conventional care models. Our partners include:

Age UK
Citizens Advice Somerset
The Community Council for Somerset
Diversity Voice
Fuse Performance
Love Community

Mind in Somerset
Minehead Eye
NHS Somerset
Rethink Mental Illness
Second Step
Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership

SWEDA
Somerset Council
Spark Somerset
The Balsam Centre
WATCH CIC
Young Somerset

You can find out more information about the organisations that make up our partnership here: <https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/open-mental-health-partners>

You can find a summary of services provided by each partner organisation right here in our "Directory of Partner Services":

<https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/directory-of-partner-services>



What is Co-Production?

Co-production, sometimes known as Co-design, “is about challenging the imbalance of power held within groups of individuals, who make important decisions about others’ lives, livelihoods, and bodies. Often, with little to no involvement of the people who will be most impacted by those decisions. Co-design seeks to change that through building new relationships, capability, and capacity for boundless curiosity. It uses inclusive convening to share knowledge and power.”

-KA McKercher, Beyond Sticky Notes

Co-production values two equal perspectives:

- **Those living with a mental illness/condition (experts by experience)**
- **Those treating and supporting within an organisational system (experts by training)**

Experts by Experience

Embedding co-production and the voice of lived experience through the planning, design, implementation, delivery, and evaluation of Open Mental Health is key to our shared values.

Experts by Experience Leaders provide Open Mental Health with their lived experience to help shape, guide and develop its services and how it should work. They bring a shared and joint voice around the table, that ensures a golden thread of coproduction sits across the whole service and its collaborative partners.

What is the difference between Expert by Experience Leaders and Experts by Training?

Experts by Experience are individuals living with a condition over time. They understand how medical, clinical and social interventions fit in with their lives and needs – in a holistic way. Theirs is real life experience: 'lived experience'. They may have knowledge/understanding of system or they may not. Carers are also experts by experience through caring for someone with a severe mental illness.

An Expert by Experience Leader is someone with lived experience that is more regularly and actively involved in the Open Mental Health transformation.



Experts by Training are staff working in the health and care system. They have expertise in particular practice areas. Theirs is experience/knowledge from learning and training: 'learned experience'. They have knowledge and understanding of the health and care system. Staff may have their own lived experience.

As co-production intentionally brings two different perspectives together, they need to be clear about which perspective they are bringing to a consideration or decision.

The Open Mental Health Model

Culture Change – The Importance of Language

These are big changes! At Open Mental Health we are seeking to move away from the more traditional approach to language around mental health needs and move to a model which is open, non-stigmatising and natural.

We are keen to move away from 'referral' language - we are all part of one system and team that operates together. We introduce our clients to other parts of the same system via a warm introduction, rather than 'refer' to another independent service that may or may not accept them.

We are also hoping to move away from language currently used around 'thresholds' – we trust each other's view of whether a person may benefit from the warm transfer. If it turns out not to have been quite right, we will support that person into another part of the system that may be better for them. We speak to each other in order to support this. This is the case between voluntary sector organisations, and from national to voluntary sector organisations and vice versa.

We are also seeking to change the way that professionals refer to language around 'triage.' If someone is transferred in, or accesses any part of our system, we will not turn them away or 'signpost' them elsewhere. If a part of Open Mental Health is not the right support for them, we will support them to another part of the ecosystem.

Finally, we are working to move away from language around 'discharge.' A person may progress to 'managing independently - to their own individual level - within the ecosystem' but they are not then 'closed' as such. This means they can easily come back at any time.

The Open Mental Health Model

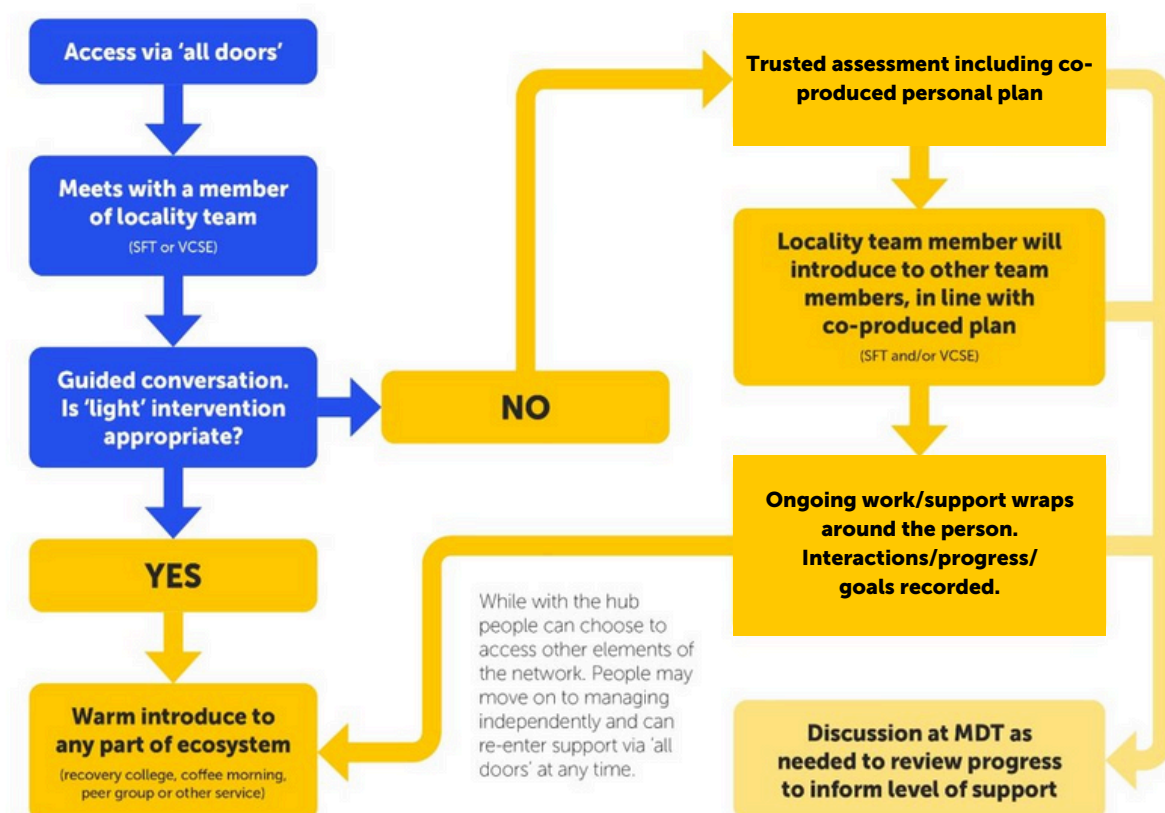
Access Routes

There are a number of different ways that people can access support from Open Mental Health. Some of these include:

- **Via 24/7 Mindline Helpline - 01823 276892 or 0800 138 1692.**
- **Via GP (General Practice) transfer (could be General Practitioner directly or Mental Health liaison nurse)**
- **Via any team member at a locality hub**
- **Via any network partner**
- **Eco-system/social prescribing workers/housing teams/social care/pharmacists should all be aware and able to introduce people to the network**

Client Journey Overview

Below is an overview of the client journey when accessing an Open Mental Health service.



The Open Mental Health Model



We have removed the barriers to getting mental health treatment and support, so anyone can contact the Locality Hubs for an assessment of what could help and what the person needs. Whether it is for yourself or if you are a General Practitioner, pharmacist, social worker, community service worker, group organiser, police officer or concerned friend, we are Open for Mental Health in Somerset.

Locality Hubs

Open Mental Health utilises a locality hub model in which locality teams in 4 different parts of Somerset, made up of multi-disciplinary teams from the voluntary sector and the National Health Service work together and act as the main point of contact for organisations and individuals looking to introduce into Open Mental Health.

Our 4 partner locality leads are:

Taunton and West Somerset – Mind in Somerset

Sedgemoor – Second Step

South Somerset – Balsam Centre

Mendip – Mind in Somerset

Depending on the location, access into the service will be centralised here and multi-disciplinary team meetings (interface meetings) will be the platform for discussions regarding how our combined offers can wrap around and support a person.

The Open Mental Health Model

The hub teams are multi-disciplinary and made up of a number of different professionals. These include:

- **Holistic wellbeing workers (focusing on 1:1 and group support)**
- **Peer supporters/peer support workers**
- **Psychologists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists**
- **Older and young people specialists**
- **Eating disorder specialists**
- **Developmental trauma specialists**
- **Support advice**

If the team feel that an individual may benefit from access to support from other areas of the ecosystem such as housing, employment and learning and skills development, they will be equipped to offer that person an introduction with the most appropriate service. Similarly, if it is felt that a person would benefit from support from a General Practitioner or a crisis service, the locality team will be able to make that connection.

Contact into the locality hubs should ideally be made directly through the locality inboxes below:

Mendip@openmentalhealth.org.uk

Sedgemoor@openmentalhealth.org.uk

SouthSomerset@openmentalhealth.org.uk

Tauntonwestsomerset@openmentalhealth.org.uk

You can find out more about the Open Mental Health locality model here:

<https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/localities/>

More information on how to refer through the localities can be found here:

<https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/how-to-refer/>

Open Mental Health Teams and Services

In addition to the core Open Mental Health model (described above), there are a range of teams and projects within Somerset which contribute towards the dynamic and ever-expanding support provided by the Open Mental Health Alliance. These include:

Crisis Safe Space



Crisis Safe Space is an out-of-hours service provided by our partners, Mind in Somerset and Second Step, for adults (18+) who feel like they are really struggling with their mental health. Instead of going to Accident & Emergency, making an urgent doctor's appointment, or suffering in silence, individuals can arrange a one-to-one session with a member of the Crisis Safe Space. Sessions are held both face to face and virtually depending on the location.

Suicide Prevention Peer Support

We have paid peer support workers located within the locality teams, whose focus is working with individuals experiencing suicidal ideation. They work closely with Somerset National Health Service Foundation Trust teams. They also receive training from Watch, which has been developed to align with Health Education England core competencies.

Stakeholder Engagement Hub

Works to provide a countywide provision of engagement with the aim to:

- increase access
- improve participation/representation
- enhance coordination & communication across agencies & increase measured satisfaction of service delivery; in relation to protected characteristics, underserved, isolated, marginalised groups or those who through and social determinants of severe mental ill health are at risk of health inequality.

Open Mental Health Teams and Services

Family Safeguarding

As part of the Open Mental Health model, adult Mental Health Practitioners (Recovery and Wellbeing Workers) are employed by Mind, Second Step and the Balsam Centre and are embedded within the children's social work teams. These practitioners are closely linked within the Open Mental Health locality teams and also link in with the wider Open Mental Health model.

Family Safeguarding teams work using a multi-disciplinary approach, by providing high quality support to families with complex needs, working with adults with mental health issues to achieve their goals and enabling families to remain together improving outcomes.

There is also a voluntary sector employed Clinical Psychologist who oversees this work. The Psychologist's role is to oversee the clinical supervision of staff within the Family Safeguarding team, as well as case management and oversight and group supervision.



Open Mental Health Membership

Within Open Mental Health there are different membership options for organisations wanting to join the alliance. These membership options are described below:

Core Member:

- Has a seat on Partnership Board, where strategic issues are discussed, and decisions made. All Board members have a vote as part of this process.
- Membership is reviewed on a 2-year cycle.
- Commitment to and involvement in development of strategy
- Delivering as part of the Open Mental Health contract
- Commitment to core principles and ways of working
- Is able to use the Open Mental Health logo and branding and is provided with Open Mental Health brand guidelines
- Signs up to Open Mental Health Partnership Agreement
- Receives Open Mental Health newsletter

Associate Member:

- Either delivering as part of Open Mental Health or a strategic partnership where we have another written agreement in place (e.g. data sharing).
- Either involved in direct delivery or delivery of some other part of the Open Mental Health model
- Commitment to core principles and ways of working
- Signs up to Open Mental Health Somerset Partnership Agreement
- Receives Open Mental Health newsletter
- Is able to attend Open Mental Health engagement and membership events
- Receives communications from Partnership Board on key items of business/strategy decisions
- Is invited to participate in discussions when Open Mental Health funding opportunities arise
- Is able to use the Open Mental Health logo and branding and is provided with Open Mental Health brand guidelines
- Is able to express an interest in becoming a core member on a 2-year basis

Grant Funded Organisations:

- Is delivering a defined project/piece of work against criteria which has been submitted to and agreed by the Grants Board
- Is committed to core principles and ways of working
- Signs up to Open Mental Health Somerset Partnership Agreement
- Receives Open Mental Health newsletter
- Is able to attend Open Mental Health engagement and membership events
- Is provided with grant specific branding which they can use for the duration of their project.
- The membership is a temporary status during the life of the funded project

Policies and Procedures

Prior to joining Open Mental Health, all potential members are subject to an assessment and series of due diligence checks. This includes, but is not limited to, meeting criteria such as having safeguarding, data protection and health and safety policies in place; being able to demonstrate that they are a registered charity/company and an assessment of their financial accounts for the previous three years.

We have created a policy and protocol matrix which allows us to assess Associate and Core Members against a range of policies and protocols which are required as a minimum to comply with the Open Mental Health quality assurance processes.

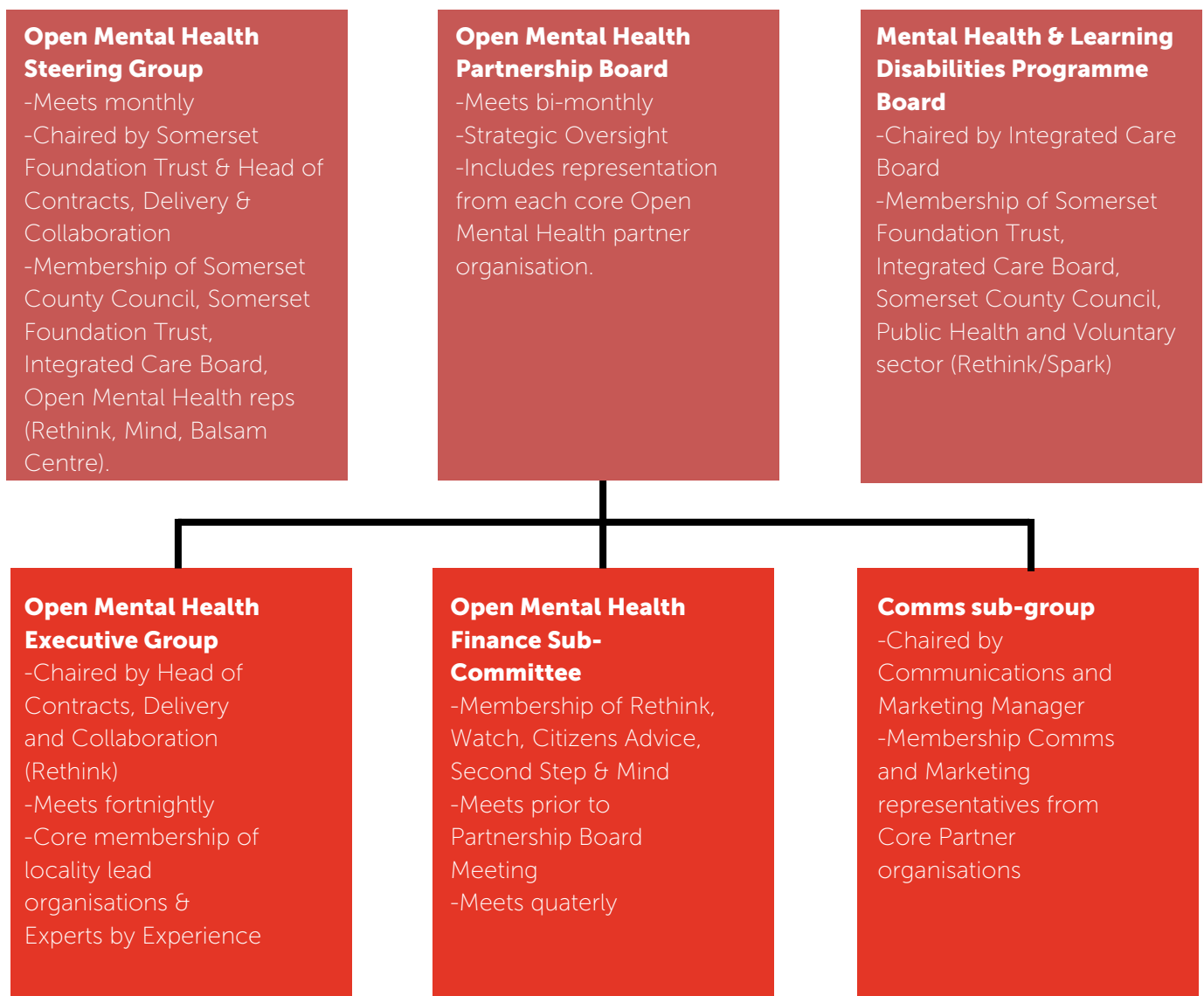
Annual checks are carried out to gather up-to-date information and documentation.

Guidance on our Alliance Partner Assessment can be found [here](#)

Open Mental Health Governance

Open Mental Health is greater than the sum of its parts, with 9 Core members and 10 Associate partners, not to mention the 140+ Grant recipient organisations that form part of the wider Mental Health Ecosystem. As the alliance grows it is critical that we maintain a robust governance structure that's develops and grows to meet the needs of this constantly expanding programme in Somerset. As such, several governance structures have been developed and implemented.

Any Alliance partner organisation can request an item be added to the Executive Group agenda, by contacting the chair (Via Fiona.harvey@rethink.org). That partner may then be invited to attend the meeting for that agenda item.



Open Mental Health Governance

Role of Rethink as Lead Accountable Body

Rethink were voted in by the Alliance Partnership Board members to act as Lead Accountable Body for Open Mental Health; providing leadership and management services including governance, financial services, administration, project management, operational oversight, and alliance development.

Operational Delivery & Administration

Development of programme workstreams; Progress monitoring and reporting; Metrics and data reporting; Quality assurance & performance; Stakeholder & partner relationship management; Contract Management & compliance; Audit; Financial oversight; Service modelling, development & implementation; Marketing & communications

Co-Production

Ensuring there is a lived experience voice/presence across all workstreams and projects; Support and supervision for a number of Experts by Experience; Training opportunities to promote co-production across services; Development of co-produced comms, resources, and promotional materials.

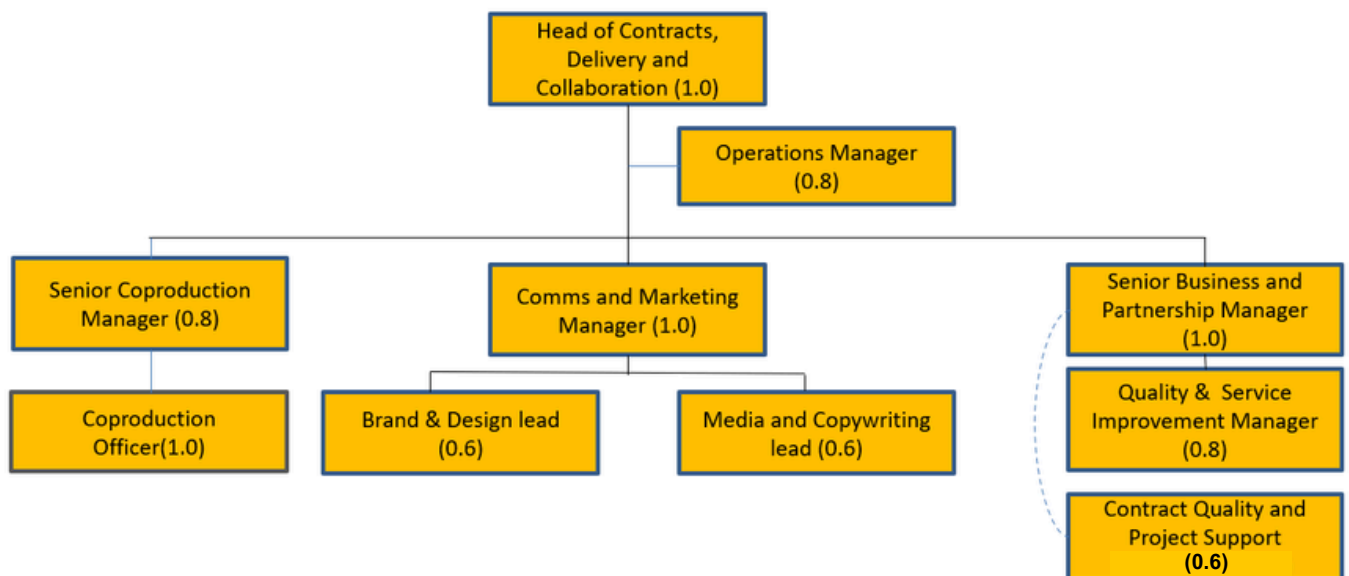
Legal

Development of required legal documentation; Ongoing support to onboard new contracts; Ad hoc legal support.

An outline of Lead Accountable Body roles and responsibilities can be found [here](#)

Open Mental Health Governance

Overview of the Lead Accountable Body Structure



Systems and Processes

Data Collection and Sharing

Data Collection and Sharing forms a contractual and therefore legal obligation for all “partners” delivering services on behalf of Open Mental Health. As part of any subcontracting arrangement with “partners” this will form part of this legally binding arrangement and compliance will be maintained during “due diligence” activity and intermittent audit checks.

As the Open Mental Health Contract is directly commissioned by the National Health Service, all* delivery partners will need to sign up to the Data and Protection Toolkit <https://www.dsptoolkit.nhs.uk/> to remain contractually compliant.

In addition, it is important that individuals who are seeking support from an Open Mental Health service are made aware that their data may sometimes be shared with other organisations within Open Mental Health. Whilst it is hoped that this would naturally form part of the discussion between the individual and those supporting them, there may be some situations, for example in the case of an emergency or crisis, when data is shared without prior consent. As such, information around data has been incorporated into the template consent form for services to use and adapt. Similarly, if organisations are using their own consent forms, it is recommended that organisations check to ensure that data sharing across Open Mental Health organisations is discussed and addressed within these forms.

It is the responsibility of each organisation involved in delivering the Open Mental Health contract to gain appropriate consent from clients. The level of consent obtained will vary depending on the nature of the work and the level of involvement. A template Open Mental Health consent form has been developed and is included in the appendices for services to adapt and use if needed.

*depending on the nature of personal information being shared to maintain delivery of Open Mental Health service(s)

Systems and Processes

Monthly Data Reporting

As part of the Open Mental Health reporting processes, organisations will be asked to collect and submit anonymised activity and outcomes data monthly. This will be discussed and agreed with each organisation individually as this data is likely to vary from one organisation to another depending on their service type and the scope of their involvement in Open Mental Health.

Upon agreeing a data and outcomes framework, each partner will be given a template which will allow them to collect monthly data on categories such as activity, demographics, workforce, and outcomes. This data should be submitted via the reporting portal each month on the dates specified.

Once submitted, Rethink Mental Illness collate all the data and present it in the form of data dashboards for all to access.

Please note that no identifiable data should be included in each month's data submission.

Systems and Processes

Quarterly Partner Contract Review Reports

As part of Rethink's role as Lead Accountable Body for Open Mental Health we are required to attend Quarterly Contract Review Meetings with Somerset Foundation Trust, Public Health, Somerset Council and Somerset Integrated Care Board. In order to feed information back on behalf of the Open Mental Health partners, we ask partners to submit a quarterly contract review report to Rethink which provides a summary of the work that they have done in line with their contractual arrangements.

The information supplied in this template will form part of our overarching Quarterly Report alongside the activity data provided by the dashboard (see above). Therefore, each Partner will be asked to provide the following:

- Comments to accompany the dashboard data
- Key successes or achievements during the quarter
- Challenges and learning
- Priorities for the coming quarter
- Case studies or examples (using standard template)
- Any additional data you may be capturing that you want to share (not a requirement, but optional if you have anything that is not currently being captured by the dashboard)

A breakdown of the submission dates for the quarterly reports will be provided

Monthly Workstream Reports

If you are also involved in leading on a particular project or workstream within Open Mental Health, you will be asked to report monthly on progress against your project/workstream.

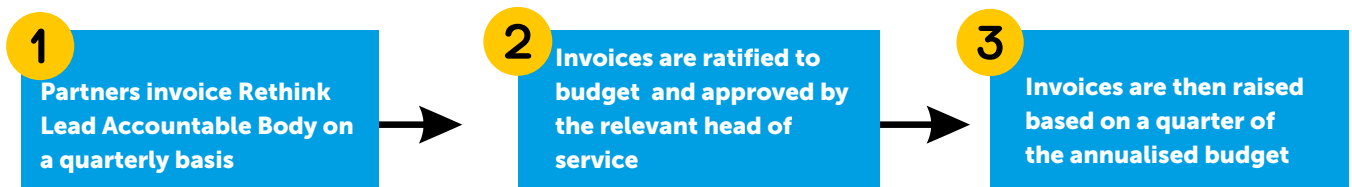
Systems and Processes

Summary of Finance Processes

Annual Budget Process

- Partners are issued with an annual budget template to complete based on their delivery areas and agreed funding.
- Budgets for partners are consolidated and presented to partnership board/finance sub for approval.

Quarterly in Advance Invoice Process



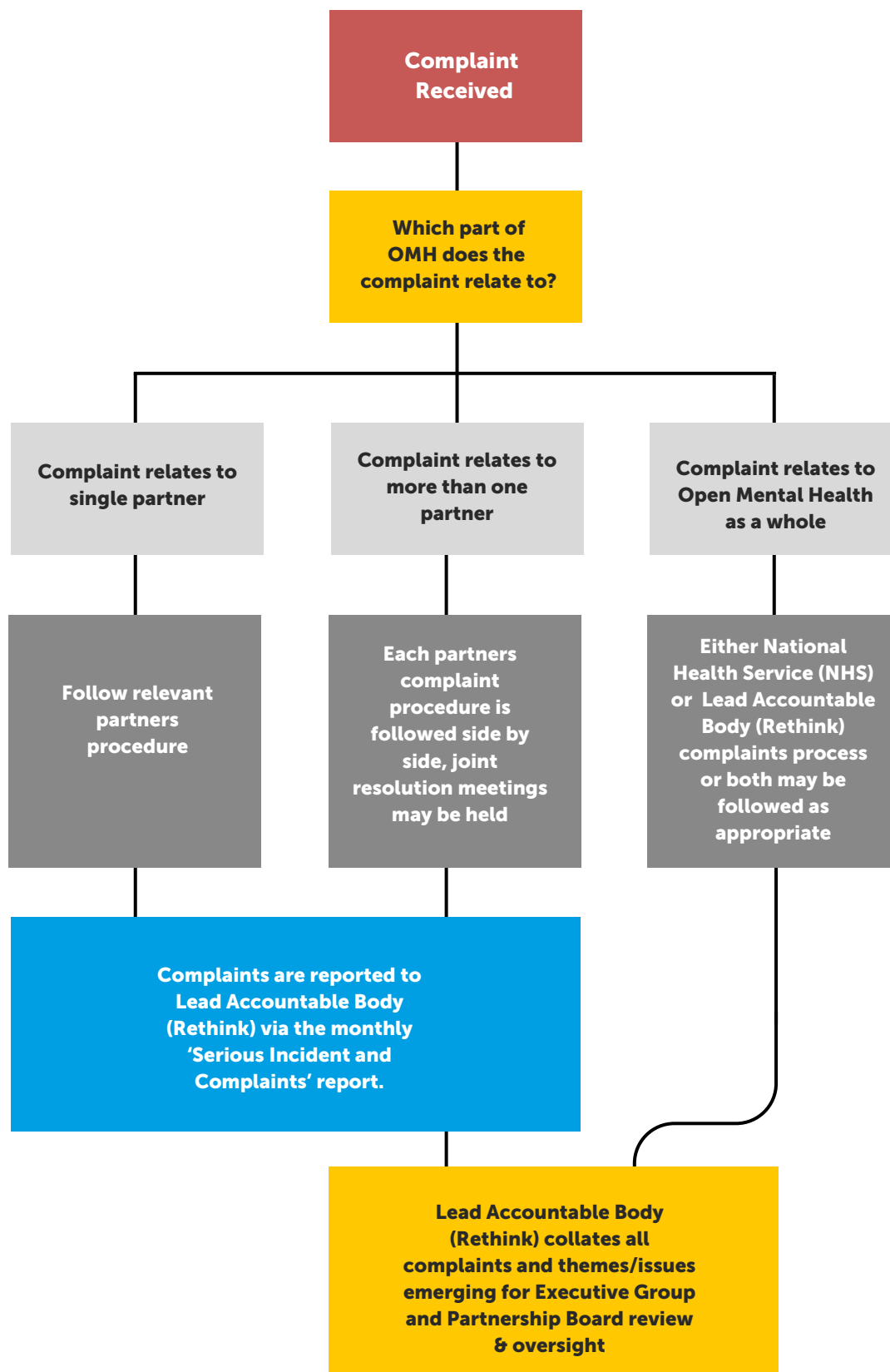
Open Mental Health Partner Finance Returns - Key Messages

- Finance Return templates are submitted to partners on a quarterly basis inline with the Open Mental Health Finance Return timetable issued to all partners at the beginning of the financial year.
- Partners are required to report their actual spend within their delivery area(s) against budget.
- Partners must include detailed variance analysis for any significant under or overspend.
- Project underspends will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by Lead Accountable Body and presented to Finance Sub. Underspends greater than 10% of budget may be subject to clawback dependant on the circumstances.
- Live vacancies will be matched against financial monitoring on a monthly basis.
- Lead Accountable Body analyses Quarterly Finance Returns and makes recommendations to Finance Sub of any intended underspend clawbacks.
- In exceptional circumstances, Partnership Board (with agreement from partners) can re-allocate funding in another way.

The Open Mental Health Financial Principles (2024) can be found [here](#)

Complaints & Serious Untoward Incidents

Please see below for a flowchart outlining the Open Mental Health complaints and serious untoward incidents procedure:



Open Mental Health Training

Core Training

Open Mental Health wants to ensure a positive induction experience for all of its staff, regardless of job role or employing organisation. Maintaining consistency, quality and high standards across the alliance is paramount and why we ask all staff to undertake core training activities

The core training is not role dependent but integral to operating as a member of the Open Mental Health Alliance and falls in line with our policies and procedures. This includes:

- **Safeguarding Adults**
- **Safeguarding Children (for operations staff & for those who work with children and young people)**
- **Mental Health Awareness**
- **Data Security**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Equality, Inclusion and Diversity**
- **Introduction to Co-Production**

All Open Mental Health partner organisations are required to ensure that their staff and all new starters are offered and have access to these trainings or equivalent. If the training is not available internally within partner organisation then it should be sourced locally.

Open Mental Health Training

Further training

There are an array of diverse training courses available across Open Mental Health that we recommend to staff such as

- Mental Health First Aid
- Psychological Adversity and Trauma Informed Practice
- Dialog+
- Eating disorders

We encourage staff to discuss the recommended training with their line managers to assess the applicability and requirement of such trainings in relation to their specific role. It may be that some of the recommended training is actually essential depending on the nature of the role.

Submitting Workforce & Training Data

All partner organisations are required to provide regular data on staff training uptake, training access and any training related issues as part of the monthly workforce dashboard submissions.

The monthly workforce dashboard reporting is a mandatory data submission that allows us key insights into Open Mental Health's workforce, including current vacancies, new starters, leavers as well as password control to central systems, such as Black Pear Somerset Integrated Digital e-Record/RiO electronic patient record system.

The monthly workforce dashboard submissions also provide all staff an opportunity to submit data pertaining to any unmet training need.

Open Mental Health Communications

Open Mental Health and Social Media

All staff must follow the Open Mental Health social media policy

This policy provides guidelines to help all Open Mental Health colleagues avoid the pitfalls and problems that can arise from social media use. It is not intended to restrict or reduce colleagues' use of social media but to ensure that such use continues to be one of the positive features of Open Mental Health. The policy can be found [here](#)

The Open Mental Health Website

The Open Mental Health website can be found here:

<https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/>

The website is constantly evolving, and we are keen to work with Open Mental Health partners to ensure that it meets the needs of the different organisations involved in the programme and people accessing services in Somerset.

Social Media

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/openmentalhlth>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OpenMentalHlthSomerset/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/openmentalhlth/>

Newsletter

Sign up to the Open Mental Health newsletter by scanning the QR code or here: <http://eepurl.com/h4ugq9>



Contact our Communications Team

If you would like to discuss updates to the website, the development of comms material or support with a new project, please contact: OMHcomms@rethink.org

We Value Your Opinion!

Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do here in Open Mental Health and your opinion means a lot to us.

If you'd like an opportunity to feedback to us on the Open Mental Health handbook, whether it's to provide constructive criticism, suggests areas for improvement or to just have a conversation about any of the contents within this handbook, please email us at info@openmentalhealth.org.uk