



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

Creative Active Lives CIC is committed to delivering safe, inclusive and high quality services. We take all concerns and complaints seriously and use them as an opportunity to improve our practice.

This policy sets out how complaints can be made, how they are handled and how we ensure fairness, transparency and accountability.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions, decisions or behaviour of staff, volunteers or representatives of Creative Active Lives CIC.

This policy does not replace safeguarding procedures. Any complaint raising a safeguarding concern will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy in addition to this process where appropriate.

3. How Complaints May Be Made

Complaints may be received:

- By email
- By telephone
- In person
- In writing
- Via social media or other public channels

All complaints will be treated seriously, regardless of how they are received.

4. Recording Complaints

Complaints received by telephone or in person must be recorded.

The person receiving the complaint must:

- Record the date and details of the complaint

- Write down the facts as described
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Record their relationship to Creative Active Lives CIC, for example parent, participant, volunteer or partner
- Inform the complainant that we have a formal complaints procedure
- Explain what will happen next and expected timescales
- Where appropriate, invite the complainant to provide a written account in their own words

All complaints must be passed to the Director within two business days.

The Director records the complaint in the Complaints Log.

5. Stage One – Local Resolution

Where possible, complaints should be resolved quickly and informally by the person responsible for the issue, if appropriate.

Whether resolved immediately or not, the complaint must still be reported to the Director and logged.

If the complaint is not resolved immediately, the Director will:

- Acknowledge the complaint within five working days
- Confirm who is handling the complaint
- Provide a copy of the Complaints Policy
- Outline the expected timescale for response

An appropriate person will be appointed to investigate. If the complaint concerns a specific individual, that person will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

We aim to provide a full written response within one calendar month. If this is not possible, a progress update will be sent explaining the delay and giving a revised timeframe.

The final response will include:

- A summary of the complaint
- The action taken to investigate
- The findings
- Any actions taken as a result
- Information about escalation to Stage Two if the complainant remains dissatisfied

6. Stage Two – Board Review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage One outcome, they may request a review by the Board of Trustees.

The request must be made in writing within 14 days of receiving the Stage One response.

The request will be acknowledged within five working days and the complainant will be informed who will lead the review and the expected timescale.

The Board will:

- Review all relevant documentation
- May speak with those involved in Stage One
- Ensure a fair and impartial review

If the complaint concerns the Director, the Board will manage the process directly to avoid conflict of interest.

A written response will normally be issued within one calendar month. If further time is required, an update will be provided.

The Board's decision is final unless it determines that external mediation or advice is appropriate.

7. Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

If a complaint raises concerns about:

- The safety or welfare of a child
- Allegations against staff or volunteers
- Criminal activity

It will be managed in line with our Safeguarding Policy and, where necessary, referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer or relevant external agencies.

8. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will be shared only with those who need to

know in order to investigate and resolve the complaint.

All records will be stored securely in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

9. Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints

Where a complaint is found to be malicious, repeated without new evidence, or abusive in nature, the organisation reserves the right to limit contact or refuse to pursue the complaint further. Any such decision will be documented and approved by the Director or Board.

10. Variation of Procedure

The Board may vary this procedure where necessary to avoid conflicts of interest or where the seriousness of the complaint requires an alternative approach.

11. Monitoring and Learning

The Complaints Log is reviewed annually by the Director and Board to:

- Identify patterns or recurring issues
- Improve service delivery
- Inform policy development and staff training

Learning outcomes are recorded and acted upon.