



Complaints Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- a) To enable Inclusive Exeter CIC to comply with standard complaint procedures and associated law;
- b) To provide guidance for those within the company involved in responding to complaints;
- c) To help staff and volunteers to understand Inclusive Exeter CIC's processes for resolving and learning from complaints.

Who can complain?

A complaint may be made by:

A). A person involved with Inclusive Exeter CIC's activities or events

B). Any person who is affected by or likely to be affected by the action, omission or decision of Inclusive Exeter CIC.

1. Inclusive Exeter CIC welcomes feedback and recognises the right of people to comment, raise a concern, or complain about its events or activities. Inclusive Exeter CIC is committed to trying to resolve complaints as soon as possible and to seek to achieve the desired outcome for complainants. Where Inclusive Exeter CIC has fallen short in the high standards it seeks to maintain, a sincere apology should be offered at once, or as soon as it is brought to the attention of those concerned. Those approaching us with feedback should be treated positively, as giving information, and all dealings with them should be conducted in a respectful manner. Openness and transparency when responding to complaints means that all outcomes from complaints will be shared honestly with complainants, except when this is precluded by legislation.
2. Where possible, a meeting should be arranged with the complainant, to hear any grievances and to seek to find a solution. In the first instance, the meeting should be between the complainant and the person about whom the complaint is made. Where either party is not comfortable with such a meeting, the complaint should be escalated to the Chair of Inclusive Exeter CIC.
3. Where the complaint or grievance is resolved at a meeting of the parties concerned, a copy of the record should be sent to the Chair.
4. The Chair will also inform fellow Directors of the receipt of a complaint which has been escalated to his/her attention and, on resolution of the complaint, of the outcome.
5. A record of any meeting should be made and signed by both parties.

Inclusive Exeter CIC

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6. The Chair should acknowledge the receipt of a complaint escalated to him/her, within five working days and contact the complainant to (i) clarify concerns, (ii) agree what outcome is desired by the complainant and (iii) the date they can expect to receive the decision, normally within one month.
7. The Chair should complete the Complaint Resolution Plan (CRP) with the outcome of these discussions and forward to the complainant asking for them to confirm/sign the CRP and return within seven working days. Should there be any changes to this 'agreement', the Chair should inform the complainant.
8. The Chair should inform the party complained against of the receipt of the complaint and request information about the incident, allowing fourteen days for the response.
9. If the Chair discovers that further evidence is required from the complainant, at this stage, s/he should request that, allowing fourteen days for a response.
10. The Chair should keep detailed records of all action taken, including telephone contact, email and reports of meetings.
11. If **mediation** is requested or appropriate, it should be offered and facilitated by the Chair or other suitable person. Where mediation takes place, both parties must be willing to accept the outcome. The outcome of the mediation should be recorded and a written copy provided to both parties and to the Chair who will distribute it to fellow Directors.
12. Where mediation does not take place, the Chair should complete the investigation in the timescale allowed and to allow time for (i) the draft response to be checked by a fellow Director and (ii) for the final response to be posted or emailed to the complainant.
13. Complaints must be finalised, with responses provided to the complainant within six months from the date of receipt of the original complaint. On the rare occasions where this is not possible, the reasons for the delay need to be discussed in a transparent way with the complainant, a realistic date for completion agreed and this information will be confirmed to them in writing.
14. Inclusive Exeter CIC will provide a written (final) response by the date agreed with the complainant. The response will be signed either by the Chair or by a person directed by or acting on behalf of the Chair. This response will be shared with the other party.
15. Should the complaint involve actions which fall within the areas of misconduct or gross misconduct, this may entail further disciplinary proceedings including and up to terminating the contract with the perpetrator and, where appropriate, making a report to his/her professional body.



16. Where the complaint is about the Chair, it should be escalated to another Director of Inclusive Exeter CIC, who will deal with it in the manner described above.

17. Any learning should be shared with Directors of Inclusive Exeter CIC and, where necessary, changes implemented within practice. Any such changes to practice should be reviewed by the Chair within one month of implementation and again at three months, to ensure that the changes made have addressed the problems identified. If any further concerns are identified at this stage, the DOS should have discussions with all of those within the service as to what further changes may be necessary.

18. This policy does not affect the legal and statutory rights of those involved.

19. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Date of last review: November 2020

Signed: *Kathryn A. Hannon*

Next Review Date: