

## **Our Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure**

**January 2024**

### **Overview**

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) seeks to be a transparent organisation that is open to improving and developing its capabilities, whilst sharing its learning and knowledge with others. We are a Community Interest Company (CIC) that is committed to providing a quality service in a way that builds the trust and respect of the whole community of Birmingham. Our aim is to continue to improve its service by listening and responding to the views of community members, by responding positively to complaints and by putting any mistakes right.

We regard how we deal with feedback, both positive and negative, as being of vital importance in helping us understand not only how to further develop our strengths, but also how to address any areas of concern. This document details how we as an organisation handle such feedback.

Internal and external complaints are dealt with in the same way.

BPCF Complaints Policy and Procedure has the following goals:

- Treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with its service which calls for an immediate response.
- Deal with complaints promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- Respond by resolving the complaint in the right way. This could include an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken.
- Learn from complaints, uses them to improve its service, and reviews annually its complaints policy and procedures.

BPCF will deal with any complaint as soon as possible. BPCF will record every complaint in the complaints logbook whether it has been resolved formally or informally. In all cases, a complaint will be given full and fair consideration. If a criminal offence is alleged, then the police will be informed.

### **How to submit information**

We achieve success through working together and by regularly collaborating with other organisations. As we are a small organisation, we ask that any feedback is submitted via email to [Info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:Info@birminghampcf.org). This also ensures that a designated colleague can deal with issues in the event of sickness or holidays of a main contact.

### **General comments**

Any individual or organisation can contact us using the email address [Info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:Info@birminghampcf.org)

We respond to all general comments within 10 working days.

### **Compliments**

Much of our work requires us to collect qualitative evidence of improvement made, and therefore compliments from those who have used our services are actively encouraged. If people want to send a compliment but do not want it to be used as supporting evidence on current or future projects, we ask that they identify this at the time of submission. We acknowledge any compliments received.

### **Concerns**

We classify concerns as something that an individual or organisation wishes to raise about our work, but which is not involved with actual service delivery. This might be issues such as, but not limited to:

- Something on our website or social media page(s)
- Our views on a particular issue

- Our links with other organisations/events/activities

We will answer such concerns as fully as possible, where answering such concerns would not breach the confidentiality of a third party. We acknowledge any concerns raised upon receipt and aim to respond to them within 10 working days.

### **Complaints**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by anyone using our services whether justified or not, as a company and/or to an individual member, and that requires a formal response. Any individual or organisation can make a complaint if they feel the BPCF have:

- Failed to provide a service or adequate standard of service.
- Delayed in providing a service.
- Made a mistake.
- Provided an unfair service.
- Failed to act in a proper way.

Many complaints can be resolved informally. In the first instance the Complainant is invited to meet with Chair and/or Vice Chair and/or Secretary of the Management Committee and is offered support, i.e. a buddy, to make their complaint confidently and clearly in person.

If the complaint directly relates to one of the Officers, the Complainant will be supported to speak to them directly. Otherwise, the other Officers will hear their complaint. The Officers may then lead a review of The Code of Conduct at the next meeting to improve the BPCF leadership. The results of the review will be recorded and reported back to the Complainant. (see Failure to Follow Code of Conduct, Page 3 of CoC).

Where the BPCF are unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint informally, then they will direct the Complainant to the formal complaint procedure.

### **Formal Complaints**

Should the Complainant feel that they wish to make a formal complaint, they should do so, in writing marked private and confidential, for the Chair's attention and sent to the email address [Info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:Info@birminghampcf.org)

Please ensure you include your name, address, telephone number and email and if appropriate, the organisation you represent. We cannot accept anonymous complaints. Please give as much detail as possible.

Please note we will only investigate complaints about our current services, or incidents occurring in the six months prior to the date of the complaint.

In their letter, the Complainant should set out the details of their complaint, the consequences for them as a result, and the remedy they are seeking. If their complaint concerns a Committee Member or member, they should state the name of the individual concerned.

### **Responsibilities**

The BPCF intends that the formal complaints procedure ensures that it handles all complaints fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the Complainant's satisfaction. As such, we will:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing or via email directly to the Complainant.
- Respond within a stated period.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Act where appropriate.

We will acknowledge all complaints upon receipt and aim to respond to them within 10 working days. This acknowledgement will outline who is dealing with the complaint and when the Complainant can expect a response.

Ideally, the Complainant should receive a response to their complaint within 20 working days of receipt. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the Complainant will receive an interim response describing what the BPCF is doing to deal with the matter, when the Complainant can expect a full reply and from whom.

On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaint logbook. They will then delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific Committee Member or member, that Committee Member or member should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

### **Appeals**

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can request a review by emailing [Info@birminghampcf.org](mailto:Info@birminghampcf.org) marking it private and confidential. You must do this within 28 days of the written response.

The Chair will normally respond within 15 working days to inform the Complainant of the action which will be taken to investigate the complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. The appeal review will be carried out by two other BPCF members not involved in the previous investigation. The purpose of the appeal panel is to ensure your complaint was dealt with properly and fairly and whether an appropriate decision has been reached, not to reinvestigate the complaint.

Within 28 working days, the investigating individuals will make a decision, which is final, and no further correspondence will be entered into. We will write to you to tell you of our decision and our reasons for making it.

At any stage, the Complainant may be assisted and/or accompanied by another person.

If a complaint is made about an individual member of the BPCF they will be supported throughout this process by another member or independent person.

The outcome of the investigation will represent the BPCF's final response.

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The BPCF may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. For example, in the event of a complaint about the Chair as an individual, it would be inappropriate for the Chair to investigate or review the complaint.

### **Outside agencies**

There may be occasions when the BPCF is required by law to report the complaint to law enforcement or other legal bodies such as safeguarding. At all times legal, statutory, and professional investigations will overrule this complaints procedure. BPCF will not undertake any actions that may compromise these investigations.

- The BPCF may take action to protect the BPCF and its members by suspending the member until investigations are complete.
- It will complete all immediate actions but then suspend the complaints process until external investigations are complete.
- Full and accurate records of all actions will be kept.

### **Data Protection**

BPCF will keep all data related to the complaint secure and confidential. The identity of the person making the complaint will be known only to those who are investigating the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. There may be exceptions to this confidentiality where legislation is involved, or allegations have been made regarding the conduct of a third party.

BPCF will normally destroy its complaints, comments, and compliments file after 5 years.

### **External Stage: Complaints to the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies**

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the BPCF's final response, and if they are an eligible Complainant, as defined by the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (RCIC), they can refer their complaint to the RCIC, free of charge.

For more information, please contact the RCIC at:

The Regulator of Community Interest Companies  
2nd floor  
Companies House  
Crown Way  
Cardiff  
CF14 3UZ

Tel: 029 2034 6228. This is a 24-hour voicemail service.

E-mails should be sent to: [cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk](mailto:cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk)

### **Confidentiality:**

Except in exceptional circumstances, the BPCF and the Complainant should make every attempt to maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit).

Should this be the case, the BPCF will explain such a situation to the Complainant.