

Policy: Complaints Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of an effective complaints policy is to resolve concerns about the organisation and restore credibility where this has been brought into question. Together is committed to setting and maintaining high standards. A credible complaints policy is central to that aim. A complaint may be made using any form and medium of communication available to Together.

2. Who can make a complaint

Anyone can register a complaint about any issue for which Together is accountable and responsible. Complaints are the responsibility of all staff and trustees, any of whom can be the recipient of a complaint. It is the responsibility of all staff and trustees who receive a complaint to record the matter as soon as is practicable, to ensure adherence to the agreed timescales. The complaints should be co-ordinated by the Director who will notify the nominated person of the Board of Trustees or directly by a nominated person of the Board if in case the complaint is about the Director. A discussion should take place to determine whether to proceed under Stage 1 or Stage 2.

3. The process

Stage 1 resolution

When a complaint is received it will be passed to the Director at the earliest stage. The Director will formally record the details of the complaint and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five working days.

If the complaint is about the Director, the complainant should contact a nominated Trustee on the Board who will formally record the details of the complaint and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five working days.

The Director/nominated Trustee on the Board will endeavour to resolve any complaints at the earliest possible stage by speaking directly with the complainant. A judgement should be formed about whether this could be done best by telephone or inviting the complainant to the Together office to discuss the concern. Where communication is a problem through disability, language etc, every reasonable step will be taken to support the person making the complaint. If the concern is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at this stage, the matter will be fully recorded. This will include full details of the outcome, any action taken and the comments or observations of the complainant.

*Timescale: No longer than **10 working days**.*

Stage 2 resolution

Where it has not been possible to draw the complaint to a satisfactory conclusion the complainant should be informed that the matter will be passed to the Board of Trustees for the matter to be investigated further.

The complaint will be taken up by the Chair who will take responsibility for contacting the complainant and making such enquiries as are necessary to resolve the issue. A brief report will be completed for the Board of Trustees stating whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or no grounds could be accepted. The report will also contain recommendations for action to be taken for redress or any further action that might assist resolution. The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation and that the decision has exhausted the process.

*Timescale: **28 working days** from the date of the complaint being acknowledged.*

4. Organisational learning

The Board of Trustees will regularly review complaints to ensure learning is incorporated into policy and practice.