**Affinity 2020 CIC – Complaints Policy**



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| **Summary**  | Complaints Policy   |
| **Responsible Person**  | CEO  |
| **Accountable ELT Member**  | CEO  |
| **Applies to**  | All staff  |
| **Groups and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy**  | CEO/Directors   |
| **Ratifying committees and date of final approval**  | CEO to Directors   |
| **Version**  | 4  |
| **Available on**  | Teams /website    |
| **Related documents**  | Placed within the document   |
| **Disseminated to**  | All staff  |
| **Date of implementation**  | 1st September 2024  |
| **Date of next formal review**  | Yearly review 1st September 2026  |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 At **Affinity 2020 CIC**, we are committed to providing a high standard of service and maintaining positive relationships with all service users, staff, Directors, and stakeholders. However, we understand that concerns or complaints may occasionally arise. This policy outlines the procedure for making and handling complaints.

1.2 A complaint can be made verbally or in writing and may be lodged against a student, member of staff, Director, or a stakeholder involved with Affinity 2020 CIC.

1.3 We encourage anyone with concerns about the services or conduct of individuals involved in Affinity 2020 CIC to raise these concerns as early as possible with the relevant person or team.

1.4 Complaints are taken seriously and will be dealt with in a timely, fair, and transparent manner in accordance with this procedure.

**2. Aims and Objectives**

2.1 To handle complaints in a fair, open, and honest manner.

2.2 To resolve complaints swiftly and constructively through clear communication and mutual understanding.

2.3 To ensure the interests of any young person involved are prioritised at every stage of the complaint process.

2.4 To provide ample opportunity for discussion and resolution before escalation.

**3. Complaints Procedure**

The complaints process consists of **informal** and **formal** stages, with escalation routes where necessary.

**3.1 Initial Discussion (Informal)**

A concern should be raised informally first, where possible. This can be done in person, via telephone, or in writing. The concern will be discussed with an appropriate staff member to seek a resolution. If no resolution is reached, the complainant should indicate within 24 hours whether they wish the matter to move to Stage 1.

**3.2 Stage 1 – Informal**

An appropriate person will be allocated to investigate the concern. This may involve a face-to-face or telephone meeting to gather more detail. A response will be provided, and efforts made to resolve the issue.

**3.3 Stage 2 – Informal (Senior Staff Involvement)**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may request escalation within one week. A senior staff member or the Principal will further investigate the issue and aim to resolve the complaint following a meeting or additional correspondence.

**3.4 Stage 3 – Formal (Director Involvement)**

Should the issue remain unresolved, the complainant may contact the Board of Directors within one week of the Stage 2 outcome. A Director not previously involved will handle the formal complaint. The complaint must be submitted in writing, outlining the issue and actions taken thus far.

**3.5 Stage 4 – Appeal (Independent Review)**

If the complaint is still not resolved, an appeal may be made. This will be handled by two members of the Board or an agreed independent professional not previously involved. The complainant will be invited to present their case, and a final decision will be communicated in writing.

**4. Suspension or Serious Complaints**

4.1 If a complaint involves serious allegations or risks to a young person’s wellbeing, temporary suspension of a student may be considered for up to 3 days while an investigation is conducted. This decision must be authorised by a Director.

4.2 In cases where a student’s continued placement is in question, Affinity 2020 CIC will consult with the Local Authority (LA) and may request a statutory review of the young person’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) if applicable.

**5. Complaints Against Staff or Directors**

5.1 Complaints about staff should be directed to the Principal or senior staff member.

5.2 If the complaint is about the Principal, it should be addressed to a member of the Board of Directors.

5.3 The Director or Principal will attempt to resolve the issue through dialogue. If unsuccessful, a formal complaint may be submitted in writing to the Board.

5.4 The Board will consider the written complaint within three weeks, arrange a meeting (with at least three days' notice), and inform the complainant of the outcome in writing.

**6. Monitoring and Review**

6.1 All complaints and their resolutions will be logged by the Principal or designated complaints officer.

6.2 The Board of Directors will monitor this log termly and review trends, actions taken, and resolutions reached.

6.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by legislation or internal review.

6.4 A copy of this policy will be made available to all complainants, and a live version will be accessible via the Affinity 2020 CIC website.

6.5 Paper copies or versions in different languages can be provided upon request.

If a complainant is not satisfied after exhausting all internal procedures, they have the right to escalate the matter to an appropriate external body such as the **Secretary of State for Education** or relevant regulatory authority.