

Complaints Policy

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1. Purpose

Creative Alliance values feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve. We are committed to addressing complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. This policy outlines how complaints should be raised and how they will be handled, ensuring a constructive process that respects all parties involved.

2. Policy Commitments

Our commitments are to:

- Provide a clear, accessible, and fair complaints procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- Ensure all staff understand their roles in the complaints process.
- Investigate complaints thoroughly, fairly, and promptly.
- Resolve complaints wherever possible and use them as learning opportunities.
- Maintain a respectful and inclusive environment throughout the process.

3. Expected Behaviour

We expect all individuals involved in the complaints process to:

- Treat others with respect and consideration.
- Communicate professionally and constructively.
- Understand that the complaints process is intended to be fair and respectful for everyone involved.

4. Principles of the Complaints Process

The complaints process will:

- Be impartial and fair to all parties involved.
- Aim for timely and effective resolution.

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- Ensure accessibility for those with communication challenges or other difficulties.
- Maintain confidentiality, sharing information only with those who need to know.
- Be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

5. Learner Feedback Opportunities

Creative Alliance is committed to creating a positive and enriching learning experience. To support this, we offer multiple opportunities for learners to provide feedback throughout their programme. These opportunities include:

- **Start and End Surveys:** Learners are encouraged to complete surveys both at the beginning and at the conclusion of each course. These surveys provide valuable insights into their experience and help us identify areas for improvement.
- **Regular Reviews:** Throughout the programme, learners will have scheduled reviews with their Development Coaches to discuss their progress, address any concerns, and provide ongoing feedback.
- **Development Coaches:** Learners can provide feedback at any time through their Development Coaches, who are available to support them throughout the course.

Immediate Feedback Process:

- Creative Alliance provides an immediate route for learners to offer feedback via surveys conducted at both the start and end of their course.
- This feedback is reviewed daily by our Administration Team, including Senior Managers. In cases of dissatisfied feedback:
 1. **Follow-up Offer:** Learners are asked if they would like a follow-up call to expand on their experience and provide further context.
 - Learners who accept will be contacted by a member of the Administration Team to arrange a call.
 - Learners who decline will still have their feedback reviewed and addressed by the appropriate team.
 2. **Visibility:** Dissatisfied feedback is shared with the Development Coaches and Senior Managers for visibility and appropriate action.
 3. **Administration Team:** Feedback is forwarded to the relevant team for further discussion with the learner or relevant stakeholders.

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6. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response. It can be either:

1. **Informal Complaint:** Where the service user does not wish to pursue a formal process but wants their concern acknowledged and addressed.
2. **Formal Complaint:** A written complaint that follows the outlined procedure.

All formal complaints must be submitted using the Creative Alliance Complaints Form. Complaints cannot be processed without a completed form.

7. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may be raised by any learner, employer, freelance associate, client, partner organisation, or member of the public engaging with Creative Alliance. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the Disciplinary and Grievance policies.

8. Timescale for Making a Complaint

Complaints should be made within one month of the incident occurring or becoming known. Exceptions may be made at the Director's discretion in cases of serious concerns or vulnerable individuals. Complaints generally will not be accepted after four months.

9. Access to the Complaints Procedure

The process is designed to be accessible to all. Complainants can seek support in completing the form, and they are entitled to attend any meetings with a friend or representative.

10. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled with confidentiality, and information is shared only with those directly involved in the process, in line with data protection regulations.

11. Complaints Procedure

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

- **Email:** info@creativealliance.org.uk
- **Phone:** 0121 753 0049
- **In Person:** At any Creative Alliance office.

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Receiving Complaints:

- Complaints must be submitted using the official complaints form, which will be provided upon request or can be downloaded from the Creative Alliance website.
- When a complaint is received, the person receiving it must:
 - Write down the facts of the complaint.
 - Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number.
 - Note the relationship of the complainant to Creative Alliance (e.g., learner, employer, client).
 - Inform the complainant of the complaints procedure.
 - Send the complainant the official complaints form, which must be completed and returned to info@creativealliance.org.uk.
 - Explain the next steps and the expected timeline for a response.

Stage One: Initial Resolution

- Once the complaint form is received, the complaint will be logged and acknowledged within two weeks.
- The complaint will be reviewed by an assigned staff member who was not directly involved in the issue. This staff member will investigate the complaint, gathering any necessary evidence and speaking with relevant parties.
- The investigation should aim to be completed within four weeks. If this is not possible, a progress report will be provided to the complainant with an updated timeline.
- After the investigation, the complainant will receive a detailed response outlining the findings, any actions taken, and the rationale for the decision.
- If the complaint is resolved at this stage, the resolution will be recorded, and the case will be closed.

Stage Two: Senior Management Team (SMT) Review

- If the complainant feels that the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they may request a review by the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Upon receiving the request, the SMT will assign two members who were not involved in the initial investigation to review the complaint and the initial response.
- The SMT review should be acknowledged within two weeks, with a response provided within four weeks, unless further investigation is required. In such cases, the complainant will be informed of the expected timeline for a final response.

- The SMT's decision will be communicated clearly to the complainant, including any further actions to be taken.

Stage Three: Board-Level Review

- If the complaint is still not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, they may request a review at the Board level. The complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Board or another designated senior Board member.
- The Board review request should be acknowledged within four weeks, and a thorough review will be conducted.
- The Board's final decision will be communicated within eight weeks unless further time is needed. If additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reasons and the expected timeline for the final decision.
- The decision at this stage is final unless the Board opts for external assistance.

12. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are regularly reviewed to identify trends, learn lessons, and improve our services. Feedback from learners, employers, and other stakeholders is crucial in helping Creative Alliance refine its practices and enhance the quality of service delivery.