

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

Updated July 2022

### Complaints Policy

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Bridges for Communities is committed to providing a high quality service to all of our service users, staff, volunteers and trustees. Bridges for Communities welcomes feedback on all the services it provides and will take all comments seriously and will take action where necessary to deal with any issues.

This document seeks to make it as clear as possible how to make a complaint and how we will respond to it.

## Complaints Policy

### 1. General Principles

- 1.1 We will actively seek feedback on our services, whether positive or negative, and will seek to provide straightforward ways for people to provide this feedback.
- 1.2 We understand that from time to time a complaint may arise about some aspect of our work, or about an individual volunteer, trustee or member of staff. We will seek to resolve any problems informally, as soon as they occur. However, all complaints will be taken seriously and follow the procedures below.
- 1.3 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with Bridges for Communities' services, a member of staff, a volunteer or trustee (in relation to their work with

Bridges for Communities), whether justified or not, that requires a formal response.

- 1.4 This Complaints Policy and Procedure is aimed at providing a fair and effective complaints framework for service users, volunteers and trustees. It is not for dealing with staff grievances and issues, which should be dealt with through our staffing policies and procedures as detailed in the Employee Handbook.
- 1.5 Complaints are welcomed on behalf of others, provided that the person knows and consents to the complaint being made – or from someone acting on behalf of a person who is unable by reason of physical or mental incapacity to make that complaint themselves.
- 1.6 Trustees of Bridges for Communities will receive an anonymised report of complaints received at each trustee board meeting where applicable.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 Managing Director – General concerns can often be resolved by the staff member responsible for that aspect of the service (see procedures below). However, The Managing Director is responsible for dealing with actual complaints in the first instance. It is also the Managing Director's responsibility to ensure that this policy and its implementation comply with all legal, statutory and good guidance requirements, to monitor the response and investigation of all complaints, and keep the Board of Trustees informed.
- 2.2 Designated Trustees– Requests for reconsideration of a decision made by the Managing Director on a complaint, and complaints relating to the Managing Director (or where there is a conflict of interests due to family relationships) will be dealt with by the Designated Trustees for Complaints (see details below).
- 2.3 Board of Trustees – Final appeals against a complaints decision by the designated trustees will be dealt with by a Committee of not less than 3 members of the Board of Trustees who have not previously been involved with the complaint.
- 2.4 Complaints against a member of the Board of Trustees should also be considered by a similar Committee.
- 2.5 All staff and volunteers are responsible for cooperating with the implementation of the policy and any investigations.

## Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1 | Concerns

- 1.1 Misunderstandings often arise through a simple breakdown in communication, and if we do not know of concerns we can do nothing to resolve them. A straightforward informal discussion between those involved may be all that is needed to set things right, so we would always encourage this as a first course of action. Concerns expressed in this way are likely to be dealt with by the member of staff who is responsible for that activity or service, but may also be facilitated by the Managing Director where considered appropriate following the receipt of a concern.

### Stage 2 | Formal complaints

- 2.1 If it is not possible to resolve the concern informally, and the complainant is not satisfied, complaints can be made verbally or in written form using the attached Complaints Form (see Appendix). The fact a person is unable to record their complaint in a particular way, such as using the written form, will not prevent the complaint from being considered. Where necessary the person wishing to make a complaint should receive support from a volunteer or member of staff to record the complaint in a written form.
- 2.2 To make a formal complaint you can contact Bridges for Communities by phone, letter or email. If you are able to submit your complaint in writing, please do so using the Complaints Form in Appendix 1.

**Tel:** 0781 663 8715 (Dan Green, Managing Director)

**E-mail:** [dan.green@bridgesforcommunities.com](mailto:dan.green@bridgesforcommunities.com)

**Address:** Bridges for Communities, Easton Family Centre, Beaufort Street, Easton, Bristol, BS5 OSQ

**If your complaint is about the Managing Director** (or if there is a conflict of interests due to family relationships) or if you need to contact one / both of our Designated Trustees , please contact:

**Azza Mustafa** | [azzamustafa@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:azzamustafa@hotmail.co.uk)

**Roxanne Bennett** | roxannedbennett@gmail.com

- 2.3 When making a formal complaint, you will be asked to provide the following information:
- The reason for your complaint
  - Where and when it happened
  - The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)
  - What outcome you are hoping for
  - Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email)
- 2.4 The complaint will be passed to the Managing Director who will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days and if necessary seek further clarification from the complainant.
- 2.5 The Managing Director will then arrange an investigation into the complaint. This may involve speaking to the parties involved and/or witnesses not involved and recording the information received. In certain situations, the Managing Director may ask another member of staff to carry out the initial investigation.
- 2.6 The Managing Director will then decide on an appropriate course of action and communicate this to the complainant (and all other parties involved) in writing and verbally using an interpreter where necessary. This process should be completed within 21 days of receiving the complaint.
- 2.7 There is a time limit for making a complaint. Complaints must be made within 6 months of the date of the event that you're complaining about.

### **Stage 3 | Appealing or Escalating**

- 3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response or with the way the complaint has been dealt, or if the complaint relates directly to the Managing Director (or where there is a conflict of interests), the complainant may write to one / both of the Designated Trustees for Complaints to request reconsideration of the complaint. The letter should state the reasons for the complaint and what course of action would be acceptable. Any such request should be sent within 21 days.
- 3.2 The Designated Trustee(s) will consider all of the written evidence recorded by the Managing Director and if necessary may gather further evidence and/or call a



meeting to interview further witnesses. She/he will reply to the complaint within a further 21 days, setting out his/her decision and the reasons for it.

#### **Stage 4 | Final Appeal**

- 4.1 If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the result following consideration of the complaint by the Designated Trustee(s) or if the complaint is against a member of the Board of Trustees, a Committee of at least 3 members of the Board of Trustees (not previously connected to the complaint) should be appointed by the Board of Trustees to hear any final appeal.
- 4.2 The complainant should write to the Board of Trustees stating their reason for the appeal and what course of action would be acceptable. Any such request should be sent within 21 days.
- 4.3 The appointed Committee of the Board of Trustees will consider all of the written evidence recorded previously and if necessary may gather further evidence and/or call a meeting to interview further witnesses. The Committee will reply to the complaint within 1 month setting out their decision and the reasons for it.
- 4.4 The decision of the Committee will be final.

#### **Other Points to Note**

- 5.1 We may refuse to respond if we receive complaints which are:
  - threatening
  - abusive
  - repeated complaints from the same person about the same issue
- 5.2 We will keep your personal information confidential and will delete records of your complaint after 2 years. To find out how we store, use and protect your personal information, read our Privacy Policy.

## Appendix 1 – Complaints Form

Private & Confidential

Please fill in and send back to Bridges for Communities.

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Email address	
Tell us more about your complaint: The reason for your complaint Where and when it happened The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)	
Ideally what would you like Bridges for Communities to do about your complaint?	
Date complaint sent	
Signature	