COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Creative Makers CIC

Version: 2.0

Policy Owner: Rebecca Knee

Approved by: Rebecca Knee, Director

Date Approved: 3 July 2026

Review Date: 3 July 2027

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1. Overview

Creative Makers CIC Complaints Handling Policy

Creative Makers CIC believes that concerns and complaints provide an opportunity to improve the quality of our provision, strengthen relationships with children, families and commissioning organisations, and continually develop our practice.

We are committed to dealing with complaints fairly, openly and promptly. Wherever possible, we aim to resolve concerns informally before they become formal complaints.

Our policy is to:

- provide a clear, fair and accessible complaints procedure for anyone wishing to raise a concern or complaint;
- ensure that children, parents, carers, referring schools, local authorities and other stakeholders understand how to make a complaint;
- ensure all staff know how to respond appropriately when a complaint is received;
- investigate complaints fairly, objectively and without unnecessary delay;
- resolve complaints wherever possible while maintaining positive working relationships;
- learn from complaints to improve our provision, policies and practice;
- maintain accurate records of all complaints and their outcomes.

Creative Makers CIC is committed to treating everyone making a complaint with dignity, courtesy and respect.

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2. Definition of a Complaint

2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, regarding any aspect of Creative Makers CIC, its services, staff, volunteers, directors or activities.

2.2 Complaints may be received from, but are not limited to:

- children and young people attending our provision;

- parents or carers;
- referring schools;
- local authorities;
- commissioning organisations;
- partner agencies;
- professionals working with children;
- members of the public;
- volunteers;
- staff members;
- contractors.

2.3 Complaints may be made:

- verbally;
- by telephone;
- by email;
- in writing;
- during meetings.

Where appropriate, complainants may be asked to provide their concerns in writing to ensure the complaint is recorded accurately.

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3. Confidentiality

Creative Makers CIC will handle all complaints sensitively and confidentially.

Information relating to complaints will only be shared with those who need to know in order to investigate and resolve the matter.

All complaint records will be managed in accordance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Creative Makers CIC Data Protection Policy.

Where a complaint identifies a safeguarding concern, confidentiality may be overridden where necessary to protect a child or vulnerable person.

Complaints involving safeguarding will be managed under the Creative Makers CIC Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy rather than this complaints procedure.

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4. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Board of Directors of Creative Makers CIC.

The Director is responsible for:

- ensuring complaints are recorded;
- ensuring complaints are investigated appropriately;

- maintaining the Complaints Register;
- reporting significant complaints to the Board where appropriate;
- ensuring learning from complaints informs future practice.

Where a complaint concerns the Director, responsibility will pass to another Director who has had no prior involvement in the matter.

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5. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- regulatory guidance changes;
- learning from complaints indicates improvements are required;
- significant organisational changes occur.

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6. Complaints Procedure

6.1 Written complaints should be addressed to:

Rebecca Knee

Director

Creative Makers CIC

Email: **creativemakersfrome@gmail.com**

Telephone: **07549 289423**

6.2 Verbal complaints may be made to any member of staff or volunteer.

The person receiving the complaint must make an accurate written record and pass it to the Director within one working day.

6.3 Complaints relating to safeguarding, allegations against staff or child protection concerns will immediately be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6.4 Where the complaint concerns another organisation (for example a referring school or local authority), Creative Makers CIC will cooperate fully whilst investigating matters relating to its own provision.

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7. Receiving Complaints

Complaints may be received through any reasonable communication method.

The member of staff receiving the complaint should:

- listen carefully and remain professional;
- record the facts accurately;
- obtain the complainant's name and contact details;
- establish the nature of the complaint;
- ask how the complainant would like the matter resolved;
- explain the complaints procedure;
- advise the complainant of expected timescales;
- pass the complaint to the Director without delay.

Where appropriate, the complainant may be invited to submit additional information in writing.

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information has been provided to enable an investigation.

8. Resolving Complaints – Stage One

8.1 Informal Resolution

Creative Makers CIC believes that many concerns can be resolved quickly through open and respectful communication.

Where appropriate, the person responsible for the area concerned will attempt to resolve the issue informally.

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, or the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, the complaint will progress to the formal complaints procedure.

8.2 Logging the Complaint

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Director will:

- record the complaint in the Complaints Register;
- acknowledge receipt within **two working days**;
- confirm who will investigate the complaint;
- explain the investigation process;
- provide an expected timescale for responding.

The acknowledgement will normally be made in writing.

8.3 Investigation

The investigating officer will:

- review all available evidence;
- speak with relevant staff where appropriate;
- review policies, procedures and records;
- obtain further information if necessary;
- ensure that all parties have the opportunity to provide their account.

Investigations will be conducted fairly, objectively and without prejudice.

If the complaint relates to a specific member of staff, volunteer or contractor, they will be informed of the complaint and given an appropriate opportunity to respond before conclusions are reached.

8.4 Timescales

Creative Makers CIC aims to:

- acknowledge complaints within **2 working days**;
- begin investigating promptly;
- provide a full written response within **20 working days**.

Where this is not possible, for example because additional enquiries are required, the complainant will receive a written update explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised timescale.

8.5 Outcome

The written response will include:

- a summary of the complaint;
- how the complaint was investigated;
- findings of the investigation;
- whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- any actions taken;
- any service improvements identified;
- information about Stage Two if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

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9. Resolving Complaints – Stage Two

9.1 Requesting a Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage One, they may request a Stage Two Review.

The request should normally be made in writing within **20 working days** of receiving the Stage One outcome.

9.2 Independent Review

Stage Two complaints will be considered by a Director who has had no previous involvement in the complaint wherever possible.

The reviewer may:

- examine all documentation;
- speak with relevant individuals;
- request additional evidence;

- seek independent advice where appropriate.

The purpose of Stage Two is to determine whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly;
- the conclusions were reasonable;
- appropriate procedures were followed;
- any further action is required.

9.3 Response

Creative Makers CIC will aim to provide a written Stage Two response within **20 working days**.

The response will explain:

- the outcome of the review;
- reasons for the decision;
- any further actions to be taken;
- whether the complaints procedure has now been exhausted.

The Stage Two decision represents Creative Makers CIC's final internal response.

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10. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

Creative Makers CIC reserves the right to vary this procedure where there is a legitimate reason to do so.

Examples include:

- conflicts of interest;
- complaints concerning the Director;
- complaints involving multiple organisations;
- safeguarding concerns;
- ongoing legal proceedings.

Any variation will be proportionate, fair and clearly communicated to the complainant.

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11. Complaints to External Organisations

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting Creative Makers CIC's complaints procedure, they may choose to contact an appropriate external organisation.

Depending upon the nature of the complaint, this may include:

- Somerset Council;
- the commissioning Local Authority;
- the referring school;
- the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (CIC Regulator);

- the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), where the complaint concerns the handling of personal information.

Creative Makers CIC will cooperate fully with any lawful investigation undertaken by an appropriate regulatory or statutory body.

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12. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Creative Makers CIC views complaints as an opportunity for learning and continuous improvement.

The Director will maintain a confidential Complaints Register recording:

- the nature of complaints;
- dates received;
- investigations undertaken;
- outcomes;
- actions taken;
- lessons learned.

Complaints will be reviewed annually to identify:

- recurring themes;
- areas for improvement;
- training needs;
- policy changes;
- opportunities to improve children's experiences.

Where improvements are identified, appropriate action plans will be implemented and monitored.

Complaints That Fall Outside This Procedure

The following matters are managed under separate Creative Makers CIC policies and procedures:

- safeguarding and child protection concerns;
- allegations against staff;
- whistleblowing disclosures;
- staff grievance procedures;
- disciplinary matters;
- subject access requests;
- Freedom of Information requests (where applicable).

Where there is uncertainty regarding which procedure should apply, the Director will determine the most appropriate process.

Equality, Diversity and Accessibility

Creative Makers CIC is committed to ensuring that this complaints procedure is accessible to everyone.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to enable children, young people, parents, carers or professionals to make a complaint.

Complaints may be received in a variety of formats, including verbal communication, where this is necessary to meet individual needs.

Associated Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Document Control

Policy Title: Complaints Handling Policy

Organisation: Creative Makers CIC

Policy Owner: Rebecca Knee

Approved by: Rebecca Knee, Director

Date Approved: 3 July 2026

Review Date: 3 July 2027

Version: 2.0

Signed

Rebecca Knee

Director

Creative Makers CIC

Signature: R Knee

Date: 03/07/2026

8. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS – STAGE ONE

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DOCMLAINT CONTROL

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SIGNED

Rebecca Knee
Director
Creative Makers CIC

Signature: Rebecca Knee

Date: 3 July 2026

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

