

Collectively Diverse CIC

Complaints Policy

1. Policy statement

Collectively Diverse CIC is committed to providing high-quality, inclusive and respectful services. We welcome feedback and recognise that complaints can help us identify where something has gone wrong and improve our practice.

We aim to make it straightforward and accessible for anyone to raise a concern or complaint. Complaints will be taken seriously, considered fairly and responded to respectfully.

No one will be treated unfairly or disadvantaged because they have raised a concern or complaint in good faith.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about Collectively Diverse CIC's:

- training, workshops and community programmes;
- consultancy and educational activities;
- staff, volunteers, freelancers or associates;
- communications and resources;
- accessibility and reasonable adjustments;
- conduct or delivery of our services.

Safeguarding concerns will be dealt with under our Safeguarding Policy. Where a complaint includes safeguarding issues, both policies may apply.

3. Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by anyone who has used, participated in or been affected by our services, including participants, clients, parents or carers, partner organisations and members of the community.

Where appropriate, someone may raise a complaint on another person's behalf with their agreement.

4. Accessibility

We recognise that people communicate in different ways and that formal written complaints may create barriers for some people.

Complaints can therefore be raised in writing or through another agreed method where reasonably possible.

We will make reasonable adjustments to the complaints process and aim to communicate information clearly and accessibly.

A person does not need to use particular terminology or identify their concern as a "formal complaint" for it to be taken seriously.

5. Informal resolution

Where appropriate, we encourage concerns to be raised as early as possible so that they may be resolved quickly and informally.

We will listen to the concern, seek to understand what has happened and, where possible, agree appropriate action.

Informal resolution is not required before making a formal complaint. A person may proceed directly to the formal process if they prefer or if the matter is serious.

6. Making a formal complaint

A formal complaint should include, where possible:

- what happened;
- when and where it happened;
- who was involved;
- how the situation affected the person;
- what they would like us to consider or do in response.

We will not reject a complaint simply because all of this information is not available.

Complaints should normally be made as soon as reasonably possible after the issue arises.

7. Responding to complaints

When a formal complaint is received, we will normally:

- acknowledge it within 5 working days;
- consider the information fairly and objectively;
- seek further information where necessary;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- provide a response within 20 working days where reasonably possible.

If more time is required, the complainant will be informed and given an indication of when a response can be expected.

8. Outcomes

Depending on the circumstances, the outcome of a complaint may include:

- an explanation or clarification;
- an apology;
- action to address an identified issue;
- changes to practice, communication or delivery;
- additional training or guidance;
- review of a policy or procedure;
- confirmation that no further action is required.

We will explain the outcome and, where appropriate, what we have learned or changed as a result.

9. Complaints involving the Founder

Where a complaint relates directly to the Founder, the complainant may raise the matter directly with another Director of Collectively Diverse CIC. The Director will consider the complaint independently and, where appropriate, may involve another Director or suitably experienced independent person.

If the complaint involves more than one Director, or there is a potential conflict of interest, an appropriately independent person will be asked to review the matter. This ensures complaints can be considered fairly, transparently and without avoidable conflicts of interest.

Contact details for another Director will be provided on request where a complaint relates directly to the Founder.

10. Confidentiality and data protection

Information relating to complaints will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to consider the complaint, meet legal or safeguarding responsibilities, or take appropriate action.

Complaint records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with our Data Protection and GDPR Policy.

11. Recording and learning

We will maintain proportionate records of formal complaints, their outcomes and any actions taken.

Complaints and other feedback will be reviewed to identify recurring issues, learning and opportunities to improve our services.

Where possible, learning will be used to strengthen future practice without unnecessarily identifying the individuals involved.

12. Unreasonable or abusive behaviour

We are committed to listening to concerns, including where someone is distressed, frustrated or unhappy with our response.

However, threatening, discriminatory, abusive or persistently harassing behaviour towards anyone working or volunteering on behalf of Collectively Diverse CIC will not be accepted.

Where necessary, reasonable boundaries may be established while ensuring that the underlying complaint is still considered fairly.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if significant changes to legislation, organisational practice or learning from complaints make this necessary.

Date adopted: 27 August 2026

Next review due: 27 August 2027

Approved by: Elizabeth Day, Founder, Collectively Diverse CIC