



## Complaints Policy

The team at Epic Partners views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation making the complaint.

### **Our policy is:**

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone who wishes to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To ensure that everyone at Epic Partners knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information that helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Epic Partners or its work.

### **Where complaints come from**

Complaints may come from any organisation or person who has a legitimate interest in Epic Partners.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing,

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use the Epic Partners' Discipline and Grievance policies.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of Trustees.

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed every three years and updated more often if required.

**Reviewed and agreed by Board of Trustees: April 2022**

## Complaints Procedure of Epic Partners

### Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to:

Epic Partners  
The Oliver Hind Youth Club  
Edale Road  
Nottingham  
NG2 4HT

or by email at [info@epicpartners.co.uk](mailto:info@epicpartners.co.uk).

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0115 837 2021 or in person to any of Epic Partners' staff, volunteers or Trustees, or at any of our events or activities.

### Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person should be recorded.

The person who receives a complaint by phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the details of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Epic Partners
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

### Resolving Complaints

#### Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the CEO, his Deputy or a Trustee at Epic Partners within one week.

On receiving the complaint, the above person should make and retain a record of the details. If the complaint has not been resolved, an appropriate person should be delegated to investigate and take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week of receipt. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this procedure should be attached.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken

to investigate the complaint and the conclusions from the investigation, as well as any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the nominated Trustee.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within one week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Trustee who receives Stage Two complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx)

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the nominated trustee should not also have that nominated trustee as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

## **Appendix 1 –Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen – allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to “let off steam”
- Don’t debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before taking personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person’s feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) – you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation, e.g. “I understand that this situation is frustrating for you”
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Do not promise things that you cannot deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal