



Compliments & Complaints Policy & Procedure

Introduction

Parent Carers Together (PCT) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) established to improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND and their families.

PCT is committed to operating for the benefit of the community it serves. We strive for high standards in the participation, engagement, and involvement of our representatives and those who work with or for us.

We welcome feedback from individuals, and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our activity. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our services and community impact.

This policy applies to Parent Carers Together forum representatives, staff and volunteers.

The objectives of PCT Compliments and Complaints Policy are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear timeframes.
- Provide those we engage with a fair and effective way to complain about our activity.
- Ensure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our activity.
- Support transparency, accountability and learning in line with PCT's responsibilities as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

PCT Directors & Steering Group will ensure that we:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible.
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame.

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- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented to ensure that there is no recurrence.
- Report to the membership the number of compliments and complaints received on an annual basis.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual group or member, whether justified or not. A person may make a complaint if they feel a PCT representative has:

- Failed to meet the PCT Code of Conduct.
- Has made a mistake in the way they have engaged or represented parent carers.
- Failed to act in a proper way.

Compliments and Complaints Procedure

Any verbal or written compliments will be recorded by the person who receives the compliment and passed to the chair and administrator for recording on the Contract Monitoring form. Informal complaints can be made at any time. The person you speak to will try to resolve it immediately. You can ask to speak to the chair if you wish. If you feel that your complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, you can make a formal complaint. You can make a formal written complaint at any time. However, we will only investigate complaints about our current work, or incidents within 3 months of the date of complaint. Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days. The complaints will be fully investigated usually by the chair and a written response provided to the complainant within 28 working days. If the complaint involves the chair they will not be involved in the investigation, and either another steering group member or administrator will be involved in investigating the complaint. Individuals will be advised that if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint, they may appeal within 14 working days, we will advise you how to appeal at that time. Occasionally, investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent within 20 working days and a final date given for a conclusion being reached.

Anonymous Compliments and Complaints

Compliments and complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

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Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints

PCT is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, consistently and transparently. However, in rare circumstances, a complaint may be considered vexatious or unreasonable where an individual:

- Persists with a complaint that has already been fully investigated and responded to
- Seeks to prolong contact unreasonably or repeatedly raises the same issue without new evidence
- Uses abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour towards staff, volunteers or representatives

In such cases, PCT may limit further contact, decline to re-investigate the complaint, or implement appropriate boundaries on communication.

Any decision to apply this approach will be made proportionately and with oversight from Directors to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability in line with PCT's responsibilities as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

Data Protection

To process a complaint, PCT will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. PCT will hold this data securely and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by PCT. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies, or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Related Policies

This should be read alongside the following PCT policies, which provide further guidance on specific areas of practice. All representatives must ensure they are familiar with and adhere to these policies.

Code of Conduct

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Safeguarding Policies & Procedures

Confidentiality Policy

Data Protection Policy

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Volunteer Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy

Social Media Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors and updated as necessary in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, guidance and good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness. The Steering Group may contribute to policy reviews and provide recommendations.