



# COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

## INTRODUCTION

Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation is committed to providing a high-quality service for all our donors, grant-seekers and other stakeholders.

BLCF welcomes feedback regarding its work with donors, grant recipients as well as with the wider community. Feedback is a useful tool which helps us to monitor and improve our approach, as the interests of all our stakeholders are important to the Foundation.

This policy does not cover staff grievances (see BLCF Disciplinary & Grievance Policy) but is intended to cover complaints from external sources regarding any service provided by the Foundation. The complaints procedure is not a Grant Appeals Process, which has a separate procedure.

A complaint may come from any source. A complaint may be received in writing, by email, in person or by telephone. All complaints will be treated seriously, and the complainant offered prompt and courteous attention. We can learn from complaints and use them to improve our service.

## Definition of A Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about services received from Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation.

A complaint arises when a donor, grant-seeker, service partner (for example the Local Panel or an individual member) or other service recipient is dissatisfied with the service they have received from BLCF.

## What to Do If You Have A Complaint?

As an initial step, you should discuss the nature of your complaint with the staff member you usually deal with.

If you are not satisfied with the response, details should be sent in writing to the Chief Executive, unless your complaint concerns the Chief Executive of the BLCF in which case you should send your complaint to the Chair of Trustees. Your letter should state

- You are following the Complaints Policy on the BLCF website
- What the complaint is about

- Member(s) of staff, or governing committee involved
- When the event about which you are complaining occurred and if it is still happening
- What action / remedy would you expect to see as an outcome

## What will happen when your complaint is received?

- You will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days advising you who is dealing with your complaint and when you may expect a more detailed report.
- The person dealing with your complaint will investigate all aspects of your complaint, allowing others who are directly involved to make their contribution. This may mean further information or evidence is sought from you.
- They may also seek an independent review by a third party
- A brief report, together with details of any action taken or recommendations for further action, will be sent to you within 30 working days of receipt of the original correspondence reaching our office. If it is not possible to provide a full report within this time you will be advised, and an interim report given including details of action still to be taken.
- Complaints will be monitored and information from this will be incorporated within the planning process as appropriate.

A record of this stage of the complaint investigation including correspondence and research notes will be kept.

## Second Stage Investigation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at the first stage, they should let BLCF know within 5 days of receiving the report by letter or by email.

The Chief Executive will review the complaint in consultation with appropriate staff and Trustees. S/he will check that the fundamental point of the complaint has been addressed and will respond to any outstanding issues raised by the complainant. From time to time it may be necessary to obtain further information from a third party.

A written response will be sent within 10 working days. It will comprise of an explanation, an apology if required, information about remedial actions and an assurance that the complaint has been fully investigated.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, then the matter should be referred to the Governance Committee of the Trustee Board.

A record of this stage of the complaint will be kept.

## Final Investigation Stage

The Governance Committee will undertake a review of the complaint and the outcomes up to stage two and the complainant will be notified of the Committee's decision by the Chair of the Governance

Committee. Where the Committee considers it appropriate to do so, an investigation will be carried out by the Chair together with two nominated Trustees.

The Chair of the Governance Committee, supported by two Trustees (who may be co-opted for the purpose) will arrive at a decision, which will be final, within 15 working days of receiving the complainant's response to stage two. The Chair will notify the complainant of their conclusions and will provide a clear explanation of the reasons for reaching them.

A record of this stage of the complaint, the correspondence and action taken will be kept.

## Additional Information

- BLCF will maintain a Complaints Register
- This is reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and where appropriate, the Chief Executive will make recommendations for changes in policy or practice

## Reporting Compliments or Positive Stories To Us

In addition to complaints, BLCF wants to hear positive comments you may have. For example, we want to know about any particularly significant, positive experiences you've had as a result of being involved with BLCF as a panel member, local stakeholder, grant recipient or beneficiary of a project or funded activity.

Telling us your positive stories will enable other Communities to benefit from any ideas or approaches that have been particularly successful.