

Brixham Future CIC Complaints Procedures Policy

Brixham Future CIC aims to provide high quality services which meet our community needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we are getting it right please let us know.

In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know of for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with our organisation.

If you are not happy with us please tell us

- * If you are unhappy about any service, please speak to the relevant staff member, manager or Director.
- * If you are unhappy with a Director, volunteer, an individual in our employment sometimes it is best to tell him or her directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to the staff member's manager or the Administrator.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.

Making a written complaint

If you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to the Administrator/Director. (If your complaint is about the Director, please write to the Chair.)

All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within three working days.

The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within ten working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

If after we have responded you are not satisfied, please write to the Chair who will report the matter to the next Board meeting, which will decide on any further steps to resolve the situation. Finally, please also let us know if you are happy with any of our services.

Reporting a Suspected Malpractice (Whistle Blowing)

It is the duty of every member of staff and volunteer to speak up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of a legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, and the cover up of any of these in the workplace. It applies whether or not the information is confidential.

We are committed to ensuring that any volunteer or staff concerns of this nature will be taken seriously and investigated. A disclosure to *us will* be protected if the member of staff has an honest and reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur. Staff and volunteers who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly will not be penalised in any way.

Who this policy is for?

This policy is for people employed by or volunteering with us. For the purposes of this policy only, this is someone who is:

- A Director, employee on a permanent or fixed term contract of employment;
- On secondment;
- On a temporary contract or employed through an agency to work for us;
- A consultant, a volunteer, contractors and suppliers of services

Procedure

Any individual who has reasonable suspicions of malpractice should initially take their concerns to their line manager. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, they should approach the Chair /Administrator or if their concern is related to the Chief Officer, they should contact a Board member. It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure

may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by their trade union representative or colleague at any stage of this procedure. All reported incidents will be investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff that need to know, being informed.

The Co-ordinator or Board Member will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff or volunteer will be informed in writing.

The Chair will be informed of all reported disclosures and the actions being taken. In the case of disclosures on alleged fraud and corruption, *the* auditors will be informed by the Directors.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chair of Board who will arrange any further investigation as he/she thinks appropriate. The Chair will send a written response to the individual concerned.

Guiding principles

To ensure that this policy is adhered to, and to assure staff that the concern will be taken seriously, *Brixham Future CIC* will:

Not allow the person raising the concern to be victimised for doing so;

Treat victimisation of whistle blowers as a serious matter that may lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal;

Not attempt to conceal evidence of poor or unacceptable practice;

Take disciplinary action if an employee or volunteer destroys or conceals evidence of poor or unacceptable practice or misconduct;

Ensure confidentiality clauses in employment contracts do not restrict, forbid or penalise whistle blowing;

Liaise with the other organisations (see below) to whom staff report malpractice.

Independent advice and further reading

Employees or Volunteers who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work (<http://www.pcaw.org.uk>) on 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk. Their lawyers can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

Free information and advice can also be obtained from the Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) – Telephone: 08457 47. You may feel that it is more appropriate to report a matter to another organisation. Other organisations concerned with standards include:

- The Charity Commission - 0845 300 0218
- Audit Commission for local authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales – 0844 798 3131_
- Health & Safety Executive – contact on-line;
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm> or in emergency 0845 300 9923
- NHS Fraud & Corruption Reporting Line – 0800 028 40 60
- Public Concern at Work and ACAS can advise on the circumstances when it is more appropriate to contact an outside body.