



Feedback and Complaints Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Bedford Creative Arts.' commitment to engage fully with the community with whom we work and to demonstrate that we welcome and encourage feedback about the projects we provide.

2. Policy Statement

Bedford Creative Arts is committed to providing an excellent standard of service in the most effective and efficient way possible and strives to work in partnership with our community to ensure that the programme we deliver is of good quality and appropriate to the local need.

We are keen to know what our community thinks works well and to learn about areas where we could improve.

Our feedback and complaints procedures are a means of ensuring that we have processes in place to engage with our customers and to hear, consider and act on any feedback or complaints they may have cause to raise with us.

Positive feedback helps us to know we are providing good services that people need and value. This both helps to inform our future plans and funding conversations and is taken into consideration when we are planning, delivering and evaluating our work.

However, if things have not gone as well as we would hope and/or individuals are unhappy with the service they have received (or not received) we are committed to carrying out a review of the circumstances to resolve any issues as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

At Bedford Creative Arts, we take complaints seriously, and appreciate that whilst they are not always easy for an individual to raise and sometimes uncomfortable for us to hear, they enable us to learn how well our processes and procedures operate in practice and can be opportunities to develop and improve service delivery.

We further recognise that the raising of a complaint does not automatically mean that wrongdoing has occurred and we will review any such comments received with an open mind.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Bedford Creative Arts policies mentioned at the end of this document. It is not intended that anything in this Policy affects an individual's statutory rights.

3. Scope

This policy refers to Feedback and Complaints from people who use our services.

Feedback or Complaints from staff should be addressed by reference to the relevant HR policy.

Feedback or Complaints from Funders or Commissioners should be addressed to the Director.

4. Policy Guidance

The Board of Trustees delegate responsibility to the Director and their team to develop any detailed guidance and work instructions necessary to ensure the full implementation of this policy.

It is the intention of Bedford Creative Arts' Trustees that the following principles, approach, aims and objectives are observed:

- We will actively seek feedback and comments on all our projects.
- Customers and participants will be able to access information about how to give feedback or to make a complaint and will be supported to do so if required.
- All Feedback and Complaints will be welcomed and given proper consideration.
- No-one will be treated differently as a consequence of providing feedback or raising a complaint.
- Where positive Feedback refers to specific members of the team it will be shared with them.
- Complaints will be resolved as quickly and as near to the point of delivery as possible unless it is considered to be a potentially serious incident or it is otherwise inappropriate to do so.
- We will be consistent and fair in the review of any complaints and to allow for escalation of concerns if not satisfied at first investigation.
- Where necessitated by the circumstances of the issue, or where required by Commissioners, referral will be made to an appropriate external body (e.g. Police, Disclosure and Barring Service, Service Commissioner etc.).
- We will seek to learn from all feedback and complaints received as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.
- Feedback received, together with any Complaints received and remedial action undertaken will be reported to the Board of Trustees at the following relevant Board meeting.

The *Complaints Procedure* outlined at **Appendix A** is an indicative process only. It does not form part of the Policy and may be updated by the Director as needed, provided that the replacement process complies with the intention of this policy.

5. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring Bedford Creative Arts has a legally compliant *Feedback and Complaints Policy* in place and that it is reviewed regularly.

The Director has responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy and for ensuring that clear procedures and guidance supporting the application of this policy are in place, available to all staff and regularly reviewed.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of their duties under this policy and for ensuring that service users are aware of the process and supported to access it if necessary.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed *3 years* after the date shown on the front page or when necessary following changes in legislation or other relevant events.

7. Other Relevant Policies

- Code of Conduct

- Equality and Diversity Policy

8. Legal Framework

- Equality Act, 2010
- Charities Act, 2011

Appendix A - Complaints Procedure

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service at Bedford Creative Arts, please let us know. Your concerns will always be taken seriously and any matter you raise will be considered carefully.

Making a complaint will not affect your right to engage with Bedford Creative Arts' nor the standard of the care you receive.

If you want to make a complaint, there are three ways you can raise this. You can:

- Speak to the member of staff concerned;
- Speak to a member of staff you feel comfortable with;
- Email or write to the Director

What happens next?

If we can put matters right quickly, we will aim to do so and check with you that you are happy that your concerns have been resolved.

For more complex or serious matters or if the issue is not resolved, we will carry out an investigation and will send you a written response within 14 days letting you know what we have found out, and what we are going to do about the issue you raised.

Bedford Creative Arts take all complaints very seriously. We try to deal with the complaint quickly, confidentially and discreetly. However, if the complaint involves other people, it may be necessary to discuss the complaint with them, to get the whole picture. We will let you know if we are going to do this.

If you are still unhappy...

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, or have reason to be concerned that your complaint will not be listened to using these routes you may instead write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees directly.

The Chair will consider all the points you raise, will review the actions taken so far and will reply to you in writing, usually within 14 days of receiving your complaint.

How do we learn from complaints?

Senior managers and the Board of Trustees at Bedford Creative Arts review the outcome of every complaint to see whether we need to make changes to the way we do things. For example, we may decide to change procedures, re-train people, update our information or change the way we communicate with people.

All complaints and responses are reported to and scrutinised by the Board of Trustees.