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| <b>COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE</b> | <b>POL-026: Rev. 0</b> |
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| <b>KEY DETAILS</b>          |                      |
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| <b>Policy prepared by</b>   | <b>A Warden, CEO</b> |
| <b>Approved by Board on</b> | <b>27 June 2022</b>  |
| <b>Next review date</b>     | <b>27 June 2023</b>  |

| <b>RELATED DOCUMENTS</b>      |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Handling of Complaints Policy | POL-025 |

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

Comrie Development Trust (CDT) 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 who has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- a. To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- b. To make sure everyone at CDT knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- c. To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- d. To make sure that complaints are, whenever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- e. To gather information which will help us to improve what CDT does and, hopefully, to avoid a repetition of such complaints in the future.

**2. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, with any aspect of CDT's work, and/or concerning any one or more individuals involved with CDT in any capacity.

### **3. SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS**

Complaints may come from any individual(s), volunteer(s) or organisation(s) who have a legitimate interest in CDT, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

- 4.1 All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know, and following any relevant data protection requirements.
- 4.2 Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees of CDT.

### **5. CONTACT DETAILS FOR COMPLAINTS**

Written complaints may be sent to CDT at Unit 3, Cultybraggan Camp, Comrie, Perthshire PH6 2AB, or by e-mail to [admin@comriedevtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@comriedevtrust.org.uk). Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01764 670769 or in person to any of CDT's Trustees or employees.

### **6 RECEIVING COMPLAINTS**

- 6.1 Complaints may arrive by post, email or phone, or in person. Complaints are not encouraged to be made through social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded as per 6.2.
- 6.2 The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:
  - a) write down the facts of the complaint;
  - b) take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
  - c) note down the relationship of the complainant to CDT (e.g., donor, volunteer, sponsor, service-user);
  - d) tell the complainant that CDT has a complaints procedure, and ensure that the complainant receives a copy of this Complaints Policy and Procedure;
  - e) tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take; and
  - f) where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is formally received and recorded in the complainant's own words.

### **7. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

#### **7.1 Stage One**

- 7.1.1 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 it is possible and appropriate to do so. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within five business days.
- 7.1.2 On receiving the complaint, the Chair must record it in CDT's Complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they must themselves investigate it, or delegate an appropriate person to investigate it, and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person,

that person should be informed and given a fair opportunity to explain and respond.

- 7.1.3 Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 7 days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Policy and Procedure should be attached (if not already provided). Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 30 days. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation cannot be reasonably completed within that timeframe, a progress report should be sent to the complainant, with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

## **7.2 Stage Two**

- 7.2.1. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint be reviewed at Board level.
- 7.2.2. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within seven days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the complaint and when the complainant can reasonably expect a reply.
- 7.2.3. The Board may investigate the facts of the complaint itself or may delegate a Trustee, or suitably senior executive to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the complaint and speaking (i) with the person(s) who dealt with the complaint at Stage One and (ii) any person(s) involved in the circumstances of the complaint. The person(s) who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.
- 7.2.4 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- 7.2.5 Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply from the Board within 30 days. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not reasonably been completed within that timeframe, a progress report should be sent to the complainant, 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 (including any changes in procedure to ensure that a recurrence of that issue is less likely). The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate thereafter to seek any external assistance with resolution.

## **8. EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS**

- 8.1 As CDT is a registered Scottish charity, the complainant may complain to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the OSCR can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity>.

8.2 If the complaint relates to the handling of personal information the complainant may complain to the Information Commissioners Office at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone 0303 123 1113.

**9. VARIATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Board of Trustees may vary the procedure where there is good reason to do so. This may be necessary, for example, to avoid a conflict of interest, where the complaint about a Chair or Trustee should not also have the Chair and/or that Trustee involved in the Stage Two review. Where any variation is agreed by the Board this should, where applicable, be communicated to the complainant.

**10. POLICY ENFORCEMENT**

Any breach of this policy will be investigated by the CDT Board and may result in disciplinary action.

**11. POLICY REVISION CONTROL**

| <b>REVISION CONTROL</b> |               |             |                    |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <b>Revision</b>         | <b>Author</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Changes</b>     |
| Rev.0                   | A Warden      | 27.6.2022   | Approved by Board. |
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