Feedback & Complaints Policy

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The Trustees in adopting this policy fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of monitoring and implementing the policy within ECI.

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Feedback & Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. ECI believes that responding positively to feedback and complaints:
- is essential to delivering high quality services
- builds greater trust and participation from our stakeholders.
- empowers stakeholders to ask for an explanation and response to concerns or dissatisfaction and the confidence that it will be responded to in an appropriate and timely fashion.

1.2. The feedback and complaints policy outlines the approach Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) takes to feedback and complaints. Whilst feedback and complaints are linked, they require different responses and approaches.

1.3. Feedback can be positive and negative and can take the form of comments, suggestions and concerns. Complaints are formal expressions of someone's concern or dissatisfaction about an aspect of their experience with ECI.

1.4. ECI will ensure that:
- There are a variety of ways in which feedback can be given
- Feedback can be made anonymously
- All feedback and complaints are recorded and acted upon
- Responses are made accessible to all users, staff, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders (except when we need to keep some information confidential, as stated in our confidentiality policy).
- The feedback policy and complaints procedure is publicised as widely as possible in accessible formats.

2. Responsibility for the implementation of this policy

2.1. The CEO, who is accountable to ECI trustees, has responsibility for making sure that ECI effectively manages feedback and complaints and is responsible for matters concerning ECI core business.

2.2. Project Managers are responsible for the operation of policies and procedures within their project. Project Managers will maintain a record of the number of instances and nature of feedback received. This information will be analysed and used to reflect on and improve services.

2.3. All staff and volunteers are required to be familiar with the policy and procedures.

3. Methods for collecting and recording of feedback

3.1. The following methods of collecting and recording feedback will be used where appropriate:
- User surveys on the quality of activities or services
- Comment books and boxes
- Web form on www.eci.org.uk
- Recording conversations

3.2. Wherever possible, there will be the option for feedback to be anonymised

4. What happens to feedback?

4.1. Feedback will be responded to at the appropriate level:
- Project team meetings for immediate discussion and action.
- Management Team meetings where an action has a wider impact or needs an organisational response.
- ECI Council where an action has a strategic impact and needs a longer-term response.

4.2. Feedback received and actions taken will be reported regularly to the Management Team and ECI Council.

4.3. At all stages responses will be recorded and made available to those who gave feedback, as well as to all users, staff, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders (except when we need to keep some information confidential, as stated in our confidentiality policy).

5. ECI Complaints Procedure

We are always looking to improve our services and we are keen to take on board any feedback and will respond to any complaints raised.
In a bid to be proactive, we will always aim to resolve complaints in an informal way if it is appropriate to do so, and so we encourage complainants to speak with a member of ECI staff as their first step.
We recognise that isn't always a suitable option and so, for formal complaints, please follow the steps indicated below.

Stage One

5.1. A complaint or cause for concern may be raised formally with a member of staff, either orally, in writing, or by email.

5.2. Once this has been done, the person making the complaint will be asked to make a written record of the complaint using the Complaints Form, in particular highlighting what outcome they would expect.

5.3. If the person needs help with completing the form, this can be provided by a member of staff.

5.4. The Project Manager/CEO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint or concern and inform the person complaining of how and when the matter will be dealt with.

5.5. The Project Manager/CEO will arrange a meeting with the person complaining to deal with the matter, normally within 10 working days.

5.6. The Project Manager/CEO will then attempt to resolve the issue and provide a written response, normally within 5 working days from the meeting date.

5.7. The written response will explain the action being taken, and the right of the person making the complaint to take it further if they are not satisfied.

Stage Two

5.8. If the person complaining is not satisfied with the response, the complaint may be taken to the Chief Executive who will set up a Complaints Panel made up of the CEO, the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of the Project Committee, and another ECI trustee who is not a member of the Project Committee.

5.9. The Complaints Panel will arrange a meeting with the person complaining, normally within 15 working days, and try to resolve the matter.

5.10. A written response will be provided, normally within 5 working days.

5.11. If the matter concerns ECI core business (and has been dealt with by the CEO at Stage One), the Complaints Panel will be made up of three ECI trustees/Chairs Group members,

and the meeting will be arranged by one of the panel members.

The decision of the Complaints Panel at Stage Two will be final.

Arbitration

5.12. At any stage of this process, the relevant Project Manager, CEO or Complaints Panel, may consider the use of independent arbitration if appropriate.

Meeting Deadlines

5.13. If the normal deadlines for responding cannot be met (e.g. due to staff absence on leave, and where it is not appropriate to ask the CEO or other member of staff to deputise for the Project Manager), then a written explanation for the delay with be provided to the person making the complaint.

Complaints and feedback forms can be found here: Complaints form.docx