Bristol Parent Carer Forum
Shaping the Future Together

EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Version number	Comments	Author/s	Approved Date	Approved by	Review Date
1	Standalone policy created	HH CS	16.05.23	Trustee Board	May 25
2	Policy Review	HH	15.9.25	Trustee Board	May 27

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1 Who are we

Bristol Parent Carers (BPC) is the Parent Carer Forum for Bristol, one of a national network covering each English local authority area. We are all parent carers or close relatives of children and young people (up to 25 years) living with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We want to improve the services for families like ours in Bristol.

2 What we do

We listen to the views of families living in Bristol and represent their voices. We are governed by a Trustee Board and have a team of parent carer and co-production representatives. Our team of representatives works in partnership with service planners, commissioners, and providers to imagine and design better services that meet the needs of families.

3 Who is this policy for

This policy is intended for people from outside of BPC Forum in the event they would like to provide feedback or make a complaint about the forum or one of its representatives. We welcome feedback on all aspects of our work. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our activity. This policy and the procedure(s) that implement it will:

- make sure everyone knows how to provide feedback
- inform people how this feedback will be acted upon
- make sure that complaints are dealt with consistently
- make sure that compliments and complaints are monitored and used to improve our work.

4 Definition of complaint and compliment

4.1 Compliment

A compliment is any expression of satisfaction or approval about the way we have carried out our work or represented parent carers.

4.2 Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the way we have carried out our work or represented parent carers. NB This policy does not cover safeguarding complaints/concerns/incidents which are covered in the BPC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document.

5 Where should I send my compliment?

Compliments should be sent to, info@bristolparentcarers.org.uk with the subject line: Compliment. We will respond to your compliment within 2 working days during the term time and within 5 working days when outside of term time.

5.1 Internal Complaints

Internal complaints are handled under the BPC Team code of conduct. The document outlines that any complaints should be made to your line manager in the first instance. Where your complaint is about your line manager then raise your concerns with an alternative team manager or the CEO, who will bring this to the attention of the chair of the Trustee Board and potentially the wider Trustee Board if necessary.

5.2 External Complaints

An external complaint is a complaint brought by anyone who is not a member of the BPC Team and should be made to the forum CEO in writing via email at; hayley.hemming@bristolparentcarers.org.uk,

5.3 Complaint about the Forum Chair

Where the complaint is about the forum CEO (Hayley Hemming), the complaint should be sent to the forum Chair, Elizabeth Newton, and the subject line should read 'FAO: Trustee Board, confidential, complaint against forum CEO.: liz.newton@bristolparentcarers.org.uk

5.4 Complaint about anyone from the BPC team

Where the complaint concerns the behaviour of anyone from the BPC Team, the complaint must clearly lay out the nature of the concerns and include supporting information if available, being mindful of GDPR processes.

5.5 Acknowledgment

The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days during the term time and within 5 working days when outside of term time. Complaints are treated in confidence and in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) legislation and our safeguarding policy.

6 How will my complaint be handled

In the event of a complaint, generally (depending on the severity of the complaint), the first step will be to talk with the person that the complaint is about, this will be carried out by a line manager and potentially the CEO depending on the nature of the complaint. If necessary, we will also reach out to our Contact lead and/or external HR and community support agencies.

All involved will be asked to focus on solutions to the problem or concern. We encourage BPC team members to put themselves in the shoes of the other person to try to work through concerns and resolutions.

Where this first step does not resolve the problem or is not a suitable due to the nature and severity of the complaint, the next step will be to conduct an independent investigation that will be undertaken by up to 3 members of the Trustee Board. If necessary, and in line with GDPR, we may also reach out to our Contact lead and/or external HR and community support agencies.

You will be sent a letter via email informing you of the process and which members will be investigating the complaint. The investigation will commence 5 working days after the complaint is raised and will be concluded within 25 working days. With more complicated incidents, owing to the part time role of many on the Trustee Board, it may be necessary to extend this period.

Any BPC Team member subject to an investigation will be notified of this by writing via email. It is standard practice to be asked to temporarily stand down until any complaint is resolved. This is

a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the issue can be investigated properly.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, a range of actions may be taken from seeking appropriate training and support for the individual member, to asking them to permanently step down, depending on the severity and impact of any alleged breach.

If BPC Team members are found to have seriously breached this Code of Conduct, BPC may find it necessary to instruct them to step down from their role. Decisions will be taken by the Trustee Board members investigating the concerns and any potential associated agencies.

7 Our promise

We will:

- listen carefully to complaints and treat them as confidential, where possible
- record, store (securely with only SLT access) and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with whatever data protection legislation is in force at the time
- investigate all complaints fully, objectively and within 25 working days, please note the forum is open term time only and we consider a working day to be within school term times
- notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented to ensure that there is no re-occurrence
- report, monthly the number of compliments and complaints received to the BPC trustee board.

8 What happens if a compliment or complaint is made anonymously

We will record and consider the compliment or complaint, but our actions may be limited if further information is required to undertake a full and fair investigation.

9 Agreement to follow this policy

This policy is fully supported by the Trustee Board and BPC trustees and has been agreed upon with all BPC Team members and has been read and agreed upon during the induction process.

10 Review

This Policy will be reviewed every four years by the Trustee Board, or sooner if required.

11 Definitions

BPC Team – Any person, involved in any work for or on behalf of Bristol Parent Carers whether it is paid or unpaid