



## **Customer and Beneficiary Complaints Policy**

The Matrix Trust (hereafter Matrix) and The Pavilion Hub CIC (hereafter The Hideaway) know there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. When this does happen we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it happening. We consider 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] that has made the complaint.

### **Our Commitment**

We aim to provide an excellent service for all customers and beneficiaries. We recognise that this may not always be the perceived experience of those we interact with and therefore this policy aims to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- Make sure everyone at Matrix and The Hideaway know what to do if a complaint is received
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Matrix or The Hideaway work, encompassing both our fundraising and youth project work as well as our customer facing social enterprise work.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Matrix or The Hideaway (including the general public if something is perceived to be improper). A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email, in writing or via a social media direct message. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the Matrix or The Hideaway policy.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant Data Protection and GDPR requirements.

## **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees of Matrix and the Board of Directors of The Hideaway.

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Those wishing to register a complaint can do so in several ways:

- 1) Send a letter to The Matrix Trust, The Hideaway Café, Allen House Pavilion, Eastgate Gardens, Guildford, GU1 4AZ
- 2) E-mail the team at info@matrixtrust.com
- 3) By phone to 01483 574900 (9am-5pm. Mon-Fri)
- 4) In person to any of the Matrix or Hideaway staff or trustees at the same address as above or at any of our events or projects

All complaints should include your name, address and contact telephone number so that we can get back in touch with you easily.

## **Receiving Complaints**

Individuals can contact us in whichever way is most convenient to them and therefore complaints may arrive through a variety of channels, including those not publicised (see above). We will endeavour to respond via the same method unless instructed otherwise. However, we recognise that a conversation is usually the most effective way of fully understanding a complaint.

We will keep complainants informed about our progress, and provide them with a prompt response, telling them who to go to if they want to escalate their complaint further.

### **Complaints received by telephone or in person**

We will always treat complainants with courtesy and respect and listen to what they say.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Thank the person who has contacted us about their problems, concerns or worries
- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Matrix or The Hideaway, e.g. donor, volunteer, customer, parent
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure and where to find it on our website
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take (referring to this policy)

- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words
- All complaints should be passed to a member of SLT in the first instance who will allocate a relevant team member to respond, depending upon the severity of the complaint

### **Complaints received by email or by letter**

- Written complaints should be passed to a member of SLT to be dealt with and all details read must remain confidential.
- All complaints should be passed to a member of SLT in the first instance who will allocate a relevant team member to respond, depending upon the severity of the complaint.

### **Resolving Complaints**

We endeavour to respond fully and conclusively to all complaints within a month. However, you will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within the first working 5 days of receipt. Wherever possible we will deal with it more quickly, if we think it will take longer we will let you know.

In more complex situations where an immediate response is not possible, we will investigate the matter and get back to you as quickly as we can. We will record the complaint and with the complainant agree on the best way and time to get back in contact.

Complainants are encouraged to let us know how you think a situation could be resolved. We want to reach the best possible outcome and two heads are better than one.

### **Stage One**

#### **Initial Response**

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, the team member is encouraged to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved the Project Lead must be informed as soon as possible after the event and they should pass the complaint information to the SLT within 48 hours. It will be held on file in the incident folder on the SLT drive.

### **Resolved Complaints**

If the Project Lead and SLT deem the issue to be resolved it will be filed and no further action will be taken.

### **Unresolved Complaints**

If the issue has not been resolved, SLT will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to recommend appropriate action. All actions must be approved by a member of SLT.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working 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 procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified 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.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Board of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent 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. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **Complaints about Individuals**

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

### **Choosing not to respond to a complaint**

From time to time we receive complaints that do not relate directly to something that Matrix or The Hideaway has done or that we are not in a position to comment on. As a charity with limited resources, we must use these in the best way possible and this can mean not engaging in lengthy debates on issues that are unrelated to Matrix or The Hideaway's work.

There may also be other occasions when we chose not to respond to a complaint at all. These include:

- When a complaint is about something that Matrix or The Hideaway has no direct connection to. We may choose to reply to clear our name but we are not obliged to.
- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to. They will be given escalation points but we may choose not to reply again, we will always inform you of our decision to do this.
- When a complainant is being obviously abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email. In this instance we can choose whether it is necessary for us to reply or not.
- Matrix or The Hideaway cannot respond to complaints made anonymously. However, we will investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

### **Unresolved Complaints**

However if after contacting our Team you are still unhappy then you can write, either by letter or email, directly to our Chair of Trustees here;

Simon Slater

The Hideaway Café

Eastgate Gardens

Guildford

GU1 4AZ

[chair@matrixtrust.com](mailto:chair@matrixtrust.com)

Please outline the details of the complaint, why you have not been satisfied with our response up to now and what you would like us to do to put things right.

Matrix or The Hideaway is committed to the highest standards in fundraising practice. If your complaint is to do with fundraising and you feel that it has been unresolved by us then the Fundraising Regulator can investigate your complaint. You must contact them within two months of receiving your response from us.

Contact can be made via the online complaints form [here](#) or via telephone: 0300 999 3407. They can also be contacted at the address below:

Fundraising Regulator  
2nd Floor, CAN Mezzanine  
49-51 East Road  
London, N1 6AH  
[www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

Alternatively, if your complaint is related to another area of our work and you do not feel completely satisfied by our response then you can contact The Charity Commission at the address below.

The Charity Commission  
PO Box 1227  
Liverpool  
L69 3UG  
0845 3000 218  
[www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)