



## Complaints Policy and Procedure

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### **1. Introduction**

innov8 Workshops always aims to be impartial and non-adversarial in addressing concerns and complaints. This Complaints Policy and Procedure is based on Guidance for independent schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education set out in The Independent School Standards – Guidance for independent schools 2019. It also meets the standards set out in Part 7 of The Education (Independent Schools Standards (England) Regulations 2014.

This policy does not cover complaints relating to staff grievances or staff discipline. These procedures can be found in the Staff Handbook.

innov8 Workshops CIO is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales. Registered Charity Number 1202112.

Registered office address: Woodlands Business Park, Rougham Industrial Estate, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP30 9ND

### **2. The purpose of this policy**



This policy is intended to set out how innov8 Workshops deals with complaints. All concerns or complaints are important to us and will be investigated with urgency and thoroughness. All complaints will be reviewed with senior leaders to ensure that innov8 Workshops can improve practice and to prevent similar issues from being replicated.

### **3. Aims**

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To provide an accessible and easily understood procedure for complaints
- To encourage all our service users to express their views at the earliest opportunity and through the appropriate channels.
- To increase mutual understanding between all parties
- To create an ethos where all are committed to working together for the benefit of all staff and service users.

### **4. Confidentiality**

Whether a complaint is made informally or formally, all parties involved should ensure that every effort is made to respect confidentiality and ensure that all documentation remains confidential to those parties directly involved in the complaint being investigated.

innov8 Workshops will keep secure records of all complaints.

### **5. Who can make a complaint**

This complaints procedure is not limited to our service users, parents or carers of children that access the innov8 Workshops provision. Any person, including members of the public may make a complaint to innov8 Workshops about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

### **6. Definitions - Concerns, complaints and allegations**

innov8 Workshops defines a **concern** as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

innov8 Workshops defines a **complaint** as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action, or a grievance of a situation or circumstance that is perceived as unacceptable'.



innov8 Workshops defines an **allegation** as ‘an accusation that is not based on fact’.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns, and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaint’s procedure. innov8 Workshops takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, innov8 Workshops will attempt to resolve the issue, through the stages outlined within this procedure.

## **7. How to raise a concern or make a complaint**

Complaints can be made in person, by telephone or in writing directly to the person involved or to the Complaints Co-ordinator. The Complaints Co-ordinator is the Head of Provision/Designated Safeguarding Lead (Daniela Symons).

Where the complaint involves the Head of Provision or a Trustee, complainants should be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Phil Shelley [phil@innov8workshops.com](mailto:phil@innov8workshops.com)

When investigating a complaint, we aim to clarify

- What has happened
- When it happened (dates/times)
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

### **Stage one – Informal resolution**

Informal resolution means options for resolving a complaint that does not involve an investigation.

In most cases, a problem can and should be resolved by contacting the member of staff directly involved with the problem. Communication may be in person, by telephone or by letter/email. Communication in person must be non-confrontational and conducted in a calm and professional manner.

The informal resolution process will be concluded by one of the following:

- A decision to stop further action on the informal complaint



- A resolution of the informal complaint by agreement of the involved parties
- Initiation of the Formal Resolution process

## **Stage 2 – Formal resolution**

Formal resolution means that the complaint will be heard by and investigated by a senior member of staff. If a complainant seeks to pursue the formal resolution route, complaints may be made in person, by telephone or by letter/email.

Formal complaints should be directed to: Daniela Symons (Head of Provision) or in an instance where the Head of Provision is the subject of the complaint it should be addressed to Phil Shelley (Chair of Trustees).

The complainant will receive notification that their complaint has been received within 5 working days of receipt.

- Complaints will be investigated and notification of an outcome within 14 working days of receipt, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, an appeal against the decision must be made in writing within 14 days of the initial outcome.
- innov8 Workshops will provide a written response to the complaint within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints that are made in accordance with these procedures, including whether they are resolved following a formal procedure to a panel hearing. The record will also note actions taken by innov8 Workshops because of the complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld.
- innov8 Workshops will also provide for any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State for Education or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

## **Stage 3 – Panel hearing**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, a further appeal can be made, in writing, to the Chair of The Board of Directors, Phil Shelley. This must be received no later than 10 working days from the published date of the written response to the appeal.

- The panel hearing will consist of three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Usually, this would be the Operations Director; The Chair of the Trustees and an additional panel member who is independent of the management and the running of innov8 Workshops.



- The panel will make findings and recommendations. These will be provided to the complainant and where relevant, to the person the complaint is related to.
- A written record will be kept of the complaint and the panel outcome
- Complainants may attend a panel hearing and be accompanied at that panel hearing if they wish. This does not confer a right on a complainant to have legal representation to make representations on their behalf at the hearing.
- If a complainant does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove innov8 Workshops' obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its Complaints Policy. innov8 Workshops' arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable to facilitate the complainant exercising the right of attendance.

## **8. Persistent Complaints**

All complaints raised will be treated seriously; however, there are occasions when complaints may become unreasonable.

A complaint will be deemed as unreasonable if the person has:

- made the same complaint as one previously resolved following innov8 Workshops' Complaints Procedures
- makes a complaint that is obsessive, harassing, or defamatory
- knowingly provides false information
- pursues a complaint that is unfounded as established by innov8 Workshops' Complaints Procedure
- pursues a complaint in an unreasonable manner.

An unreasonable manner may include: refusing to articulate the complaint; refusal to cooperate with the complaints procedure; insisting on complaint being dealt with in a way that is not in line with the innov8 Workshops procedures; changes the complaint as it is being investigated; makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands or seeks unrealistic outcomes that cannot be justified.

## **9. Safeguarding allegations**

SOURCE: Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) » Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership ([suffolksp.org.uk](http://suffolksp.org.uk))

Working together to safeguard children refers to the local authorities having a designated officer or team of designated officers involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children.



If you have concerns about an adult working with a child under the age of 18 that you would like to report, please follow this link for Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children -

<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/procedures-practice-guidance-and-one-minute-guides/managing-allegations-against-those-who-work-or-volunteer-with-children-2/>

The LADO has management and oversight of the investigation process from beginning to end following an allegation against people in a position of trust who work with children. The LADO is not the decision maker – this remains with the employer, but they will provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaise with police and other agencies and

monitor progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough process. The LADO process applies to everyone who works or volunteers with children.

Signed

Date:

Review date: 01/08/26.

Phil Shelley

Chair of Trustees

innov8 Workshops CIO