

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC

Effective Date: 7 June 2026

1. Policy Statement

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC is committed to providing high-quality services, programmes, activities and engagement opportunities.

We recognise that, despite our best efforts, concerns or complaints may occasionally arise.

We welcome feedback and regard complaints as an opportunity to:

- Improve services.
- Learn from experience.
- Strengthen organisational practices.
- Improve participant experiences.
- Enhance accountability and transparency.

All complaints will be taken seriously and handled fairly, respectfully and appropriately.

2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear complaints procedure.
- Encourage concerns to be raised.
- Ensure complaints are handled consistently.
- Promote fairness and transparency.
- Support learning and improvement.
- Maintain confidence in organisational processes.

3. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to complaints made by:

- Participants
- Trainees
- Volunteers
- Supporters
- Donors
- Partners
- Visitors
- Suppliers
- Members of the public
- Organisations engaging with Evolve Denim Atelier CIC

The policy applies to concerns relating to:

- Programmes
- Workshops
- Events
- Volunteers
- Communications
- Customer service
- Organisational conduct
- Website content
- Partnership activities
- Service delivery

4. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction regarding:

- Services provided.
- Organisational decisions.
- Behaviour of representatives.
- Communication practices.
- Administrative processes.
- Delivery of activities.
- Failure to meet reasonable expectations.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.

5. What Is Not a Complaint?

The following may be managed through separate procedures:

- Safeguarding concerns.
- Whistleblowing disclosures.
- Employment grievances.
- Contractual disputes.
- Criminal allegations.
- Data protection requests.
- Subject Access Requests.

Where appropriate, individuals will be directed to the relevant procedure.

6. Complaints Principles

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC is committed to ensuring that complaints are:

- Taken seriously.
- Handled fairly.
- Considered objectively.
- Managed confidentially where appropriate.
- Resolved promptly.
- Used as opportunities for learning and improvement.

Individuals making complaints will be treated respectfully throughout the process.

7. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised informally.

Many issues can be resolved quickly through discussion and clarification.

Informal resolution may include:

- Discussion with a representative.
- Clarification of information.
- Apologies where appropriate.
- Corrective action.
- Practical solutions.

Where informal resolution is unsuccessful, a formal complaint may be submitted.

8. Submitting a Formal Complaint

Complaints may be submitted:

- By email.
- In writing.
- Through website contact forms.
- By other reasonable means where accessibility requires.

Complaints should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Description of the complaint.
- Relevant dates.
- Individuals involved where known.
- Desired outcome where appropriate.

Complaints should normally be submitted as soon as reasonably possible after the event giving rise to the concern.

9. Acknowledgement of Complaints

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC will normally acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 5 working days.

The acknowledgement may:

- Confirm receipt.
- Explain the process.
- Identify the person handling the complaint.
- Request additional information where necessary.

10. Investigation Process

Complaints will be reviewed fairly and proportionately.

The investigation may include:

- Reviewing documentation.
- Speaking with relevant individuals.
- Reviewing communications.
- Gathering evidence.
- Seeking clarification.

The scope of the investigation will depend upon the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

11. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled sensitively.

Information will only be shared with individuals who need access for legitimate purposes.

Absolute confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed where:

- Safeguarding concerns arise.
- Legal obligations apply.
- Regulatory reporting is required.

12. Timescales

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC aims to investigate complaints promptly.

Where possible:

- Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
- Investigations will be completed within 20 working days.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed.

13. Outcomes

Complaint outcomes may include:

- No further action.
- Clarification of information.
- Apology.
- Corrective action.
- Review of procedures.
- Additional training.
- Service improvements.
- Other appropriate actions.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint.

14. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The organisation is committed to treating all complainants fairly.

However, complaints may be considered unreasonable where individuals:

- Act abusively.
- Make repeated complaints without new information.
- Harass representatives.
- Refuse reasonable resolutions.
- Use threatening or discriminatory language.

Appropriate measures may be taken to manage such situations while maintaining fairness.

15. Accessibility and Support

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where individuals require support to submit a complaint.

This may include:

- Alternative communication formats.
- Additional assistance.
- Accessible information.
- Flexible arrangements.

The aim is to ensure that the complaints process is accessible to all.

16. Review of Complaints

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they may request a review.

A request for review should normally be submitted within 20 working days of receiving the complaint outcome.

The review request should explain:

- Why the complainant remains dissatisfied.
- Any additional information they wish to provide.
- Any concerns regarding the investigation process.

The review will normally be undertaken by an individual not directly involved in the original complaint where reasonably practicable.

17. Final Decision

Following a review, Evolve Denim Atelier CIC will issue a final response.

The final response may:

- Uphold the complaint.
- Partially uphold the complaint.
- Not uphold the complaint.
- Recommend further action.
- Confirm previous findings.

The final decision will conclude the internal complaints process.

18. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Complaints provide valuable opportunities for learning.

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC will seek to use complaint information to:

- Improve services.
- Improve communications.
- Improve procedures.
- Improve participant experiences.
- Strengthen organisational practices.
- Reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising.

Where appropriate, lessons learned may be incorporated into future planning, training and policy development.

19. Record Keeping

Appropriate records will be maintained in relation to complaints.

Records may include:

- Complaint details.
- Correspondence.
- Investigation notes.
- Evidence reviewed.
- Decisions made.
- Actions taken.
- Outcomes achieved.

Records will be retained in accordance with applicable legal, operational and data protection requirements.

Access to complaint records will be restricted to authorised individuals.

20. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be considered where sufficient information is provided.

However, anonymity may limit the organisation's ability to:

- Investigate concerns fully.
- Verify information.
- Provide updates.
- Communicate outcomes.

Each anonymous complaint will be assessed on its individual merits.

21. Complaints Involving Safeguarding Concerns

Where a complaint includes safeguarding concerns, the safeguarding elements will be managed in accordance with the organisation's Safeguarding Policy.

Protection of children, young people and adults at risk will always take priority.

Complaints procedures will not prevent appropriate safeguarding action being taken.

22. Complaints Involving Data Protection Matters

Where complaints relate to personal information, privacy or data protection rights, matters may also be managed in accordance with:

- Privacy Policy
- Data Protection procedures
- UK GDPR requirements

Individuals may also have the right to contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

23. Complaints About Website Content

Complaints relating to website content may include:

- Inaccurate information.
- Broken links.
- Accessibility concerns.
- Outdated content.
- Technical issues.

The organisation will seek to investigate and address website-related concerns appropriately.

24. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Oversight of complaints handling.
- Monitoring complaint trends.
- Supporting organisational learning.

Staff, Volunteers and Representatives

Responsible for:

- Responding appropriately to concerns.
- Following complaints procedures.
- Cooperating with investigations.

Complainants

Responsible for:

- Providing accurate information.
- Treating representatives respectfully.
- Cooperating with reasonable requests during investigations.

25. Monitoring and Review

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC will periodically review complaints information to identify:

- Recurring themes.
- Service improvements.
- Training needs.
- Policy improvements.
- Risk management considerations.

The organisation is committed to continuous improvement and accountability.

26. Contact Information

Complaints should be submitted to:

Evolve Denim Atelier CIC

Unit A, 82 James Carter Road

Mildenhall

IP28 7DE

Email: info@evolve-denim.org

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Approved By: Board of Directors, Evolve Denim Atelier CIC