



## GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINTS POLICY

Revised: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Update: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

Prout Bridge Project is committed to listening to the views and opinions about its services and will aim to enable anyone wishing to comment to feel confident to raise issues and concerns in an appropriate manner.

Prout Bridge Project will try to resolve a complaint as informally and quickly as possible and always make clear what action, if any, is being taken. All informal complaints should be raised in the first instance with your direct line manager. The Director will then consider complaints where it has been impossible to resolve them at Manager level. If a suitable solution cannot be achieved or if the complaint concerns the Director, it will be referred to the Trustees.

If a complaint is brought to the attention of an individual member of the Trustees, they should make sure that the complaint is dealt with under the correct complaints procedure.

### Definition of terms

- A customer is the term used to define those who access Prout Bridge Project and support.
- A comment is a statement on the part of the customer, either verbal or written which inform the staff when customers think they are doing things right.
- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response or may lead to an investigation. It may also be a perceived injustice/failure of reasonable expectations on the part of the customer about a specific issue or issues.

All anonymous complaints will be treated as comments on the basis that the matter has no recourse to a complainant. However, if the comment has potential implications for future criminal investigations relating to the individual concerned, the Director and Trustees will take appropriate action which may involve external bodies.

### Principles

This Complaints Policy aims to facilitate the Prout Bridge Project in the pursuance of its commitment to provide services to the highest standards:

- Reflect the values associated with the Prout Bridge Project
- Be simple, efficient, accessible, and respect confidentiality.
- Treat everyone with openness, honesty, courtesy, equality and inclusiveness.
- Identify and respond to the needs of our customers.
- Provide a mechanism within which any issue identified by customers can be quickly and effectively addressed.

#### Purposes

- Address all issues arising from a complaint in a fair and confidential manner within the time-scale set out in the Policy.
- Inform the complainant of progress and the final outcome of the investigation.
- Enhance customer confidence and satisfaction.
- Provide guidance and protection for staff, parents/guardians and members of the public.

#### Time frame for dealing with complaints

- Acknowledge written and email generated complaints within 5 working days. In the event of a complaint not being acknowledged within the time-scale, the Senior Manager or Director will investigate the particular circumstances relating to the delay.
- Respond to the complaint within 3 weeks (15 working days). If this is not possible the complainant will be informed within 15 working days as to when a response might be forthcoming.

#### Who deals with comments and complaints?

- A formal complaint should be made in the first instance to the Director unless the complaint is about the Director in which case, the complaint should be made directly to the Chair of Trustees.
- All other staff or members of the Trustees approached by a complainant should refer them to the Director.

#### Responding to a comment/complaint

- All points and issues raised in a complaint will be addressed.
- Written replies will be in a jargon-free language.
- If the Director does not hear from the complainant within 3 weeks (15 days) of the date of the issue, the matter will then be deemed closed.

#### Complaints involving other agencies

A complainant may involve the Prout Bridge Project and/or one or more agencies. If the Prout Bridge Project, as the lead body, subsequently identifies that the complaint is the responsibility of another agency, the complainant will be formally transferred to that body and the Prout Bridge Project will undertake to inform the complainant.

#### Complaints relating to child protection

The Prout Bridge Project acknowledged its responsibility, under the Children (NI) Order 1995 to work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary bodies to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

When the Prout Bridge Project receives a complaint/concern, which may be a Child Protection issue, the complaint/concern will be dealt with under the Prout Bridge Project's Safeguarding policy. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be passed to the Local Authority designated Officer, who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

#### Access to the policy

The policy is available from the Prout Bridge Project upon request and is also on the website [www.proutbridgeproject.com](http://www.proutbridgeproject.com)

#### Monitoring the policy

The Director will monitor complaints received and report to the Trustees on an annual basis on the implementation of the policy and procedures. This will give details of:

- The number and types of complaints
- The average time taken to respond
- The number of satisfied customers

#### Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be treated with discretion. It is vital that parents/guardians of children and young people feel confident that their complaint will not penalise their child when accessing activities provided by the Prout Bridge Project. However, a complainant will need to be aware that some information will have to be shared with those involved in order that the complaint can be investigated.