

Complaints Policy

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Version | 3 |
| Updated | January 2024 |
| Date of approval | |
| Approved by | <i>Board of Trustees</i> |
| Date of review | January 2025 or following changes to legislation |

Introduction

1. This document provides information to anyone who wants to complain about the work of Greenpath Ventures. This includes the work of Greenpath Ventures staff (both paid and voluntary) and clients of Greenpath Ventures. It also sets out the way in which Greenpath Ventures will manage the complaint process.
2. This Complaints Policy does not cover:
 - Complaints or concerns about other organisations which we work with. These should be dealt with by the organisation concerned;
 - Complaints about an issue that is already the subject of disciplinary proceedings or Standards of Conduct (such complaints will not be investigated until such processes have been concluded);
 - Complaints that are being pursued through litigation.
3. This document is organised into three sections which address the type of complaints Greenpath Ventures deals with, the aims and principles the Charity will work to in dealing with complaints, and how complaints are dealt with.

Types of Complaints

4. This policy applies to all verbal and written communication about the work of Greenpath Ventures, its staff (both paid and voluntary) and clients where there is a clear indication that the person or organisation wishes to make a formal complaint. When it is not clear in a letter, email or telephone call that a person wants to make a complaint rather than express a concern or offer constructive comments, Greenpath Ventures will ask the person how she or he wants the communication to be treated.
5. This policy covers:
 - a. Complaints about the way Greenpath Ventures has acted, or failed to act in the exercise of its duties;

- b. Complaints about the way any member of Greenpath Ventures, its staff (both paid and voluntary) or clients have acted in the exercise of their duties, for example:
 - i. the manner in which an individual has been treated by the Charity, its staff (both paid and voluntary) or client such as unfair treatment or decision making;
 - ii. the general or observed behaviour and competence of individuals employed by the Charity (either in a paid or voluntary position). The policy also covers those working on behalf of Greenpath Ventures who are not technically Greenpath Ventures staff (both paid and voluntary), e.g., staff from other organisations or clients;
 - iii. the way in which any complaint has been handled. This will be dealt with at the second review stage.
- c. Complaints from the public about the content (including accuracy and objectivity) of a published Greenpath Ventures report or press release on a report on any subject.
- d. Complaints about goods or services provided to the public (for example publications, conferences, events, recruitment days).
- e. Complaints about the way Greenpath Ventures has managed the recruitment of its direct employees.

Aims and Principles

- 6. It is Greenpath Ventures' aim to:
 - a. Deal with complaints efficiently and fairly;
 - b. Keep complainants informed of progress with their complaint;
 - c. Achieve a resolution which is satisfactory to both the complainant and Greenpath Ventures.
- 7. Greenpath Ventures is committed to the principle of openness. Where it is established that a mistake has been made, Greenpath Ventures will acknowledge this.
- 8. Complaints can be a valuable source of information about the way an organisation is working. Greenpath Ventures will do its best to use the principles derived from complaints as a tool to improve practices, without breaching confidentiality.
- 9. All complaints will be treated confidentially. This means that the complaint will be seen only by the people who are directly involved in processing, handling and responding to the complaint.

10. Should there be a legitimate reason to breach confidentiality (such as a safeguarding risk, serious crime, or threat of harm) this will be done in accordance with legal compliance.

How Greenpath Ventures deals with complaints

11. Where possible, we aim to resolve complaints informally. So we would encourage addressing concerns, complaints, or feedback to the responsible adult on site. However, we recognise that you may not feel comfortable to do so, and therefore ask you to call the Chair / Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees.
12. If a more serious issue has arisen, you may wish to formally complain in writing. If so, please email us the completed complaint form or email body. If you are unable to write to Greenpath Ventures, other arrangements, for example receiving the complaint over the telephone, will be made to ensure equality of access to the complaints process.
13. Complaints can be made up to six months from the date of the discovery of the incident. Thereafter, complaints will only be considered at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.
14. The Operations Manager will usually be the first point of contact for all complaints. Where applicable the Manager will inform the complainant that they can submit any complaint directly to the Chair / Vice Chair. Other members of staff (both paid and voluntary) are responsible for ensuring that complaints received elsewhere in Greenpath Ventures are sent to the Operations Manager for logging. This data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. If you would prefer to deal with a female investigator, please say so and we will make every effort to enable this.
15. Where applicable, when a complaint is likely to receive media attention the Operations Manager will immediately inform the Chair and Board of Trustees.
16. Any complaints involving serious allegations should be notified to the relevant statutory body, including the Police. If you have reported an allegation, please do advise us of that within your complaint.
17. The Greenpath Ventures complaints process:
 - a. Once received, your complaint will be allocated to an investigator.
 - b. A written acknowledgement of a complaint will be sent within five working days of it being received.
 - c. If the Operations Manager has been directly involved in the complaint, the Chair / Vice Chair will investigate.

- d. Complaints involving the Board of Trustees or Charity will be investigated by the Chair / Vice Chair.
- e. Complaints involving the Chair will be investigated by the Vice Chair.
- f. A letter containing Greenpath Ventures' official response will be sent to the complainant from the investigator within 30 working days of the initial complaint arriving at Greenpath Ventures. If in exceptional circumstances Greenpath Ventures cannot meet the 30 working day deadline, the investigator will contact you to explain why and give a new deadline for the response.
- g. We may offer you a face to face or online meeting to discuss how the successful the outcome has been, and any ongoing issues arising from your complaint.

If a complainant wishes to take legal action and notifies Greenpath Ventures of this intention, the complaints procedure will be stopped at that point.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT

When making a complaint by letter, you must try to include:

- 1. your name and contact details
- 2. who or what has caused your concerns
- 3. when and where the event happened
- 4. what results you would like to have

You also should keep accurate records of:

- 1. telephone calls related to the complaint. Who you spoke to, when and what the calls were about
- 2. all your papers and correspondence relating to the complaint
- 3. details of any visits or meetings