

AlchemHer CIC

Complaints Policy

Version 1.0

1. Purpose

AlchemHer CIC is committed to delivering high-quality, trauma-informed support services for women who have experienced domestic abuse, coercive control, or toxic relationships. This Complaints Policy outlines how concerns, complaints, or dissatisfaction will be managed in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Service users
- Members
- Volunteers
- Staff and contractors
- Partner organisations
- Any individual engaging with AlchemHer CIC services (virtual or in-person)

3. Principles

- Accessibility: Complaints can be made verbally or in writing.
- Fairness: All complaints will be handled impartially.
- Safety: Survivors will never be penalised for raising concerns.
- Confidentiality: Complaints will be handled discreetly.
- Timeliness: Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- Accountability: All complaints are reviewed by leadership and reported annually.

4. What Can Be Complained About

Examples include:

- Staff or volunteer conduct
- Service delivery concerns
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Safeguarding issues
- Accessibility or discrimination issues
- Miscommunication or poor user experience
- Failure to follow organisational policy or procedure

5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints may be submitted:

- By email
- Through the web contact form
- In writing
- Verbally during a call or meeting
- Through a representative (advocate, caseworker, support worker)

Information to include:

- Your name (optional for anonymous complaints)
- What happened
- When and where it happened
- Who was involved
- What outcome you seek

6. Complaint Levels

Level 1: Informal resolution

Handled by the staff member or volunteer involved, where appropriate.

Level 2: Formal complaint

Handled by the Director or designated Complaints Lead.

Level 3: Escalation

If unresolved, reviewed by an independent external advisor or board member.

7. Timescales

Acknowledgement: Within 3 working days

Full response: Within 21 working days

Extension (if required for investigation): You will be notified in writing.

8. Investigation Process

- Complaint logged securely
- Investigator appointed
- Evidence gathered (statements, documents, system logs)
- Safeguarding concerns assessed
- Outcome decided and communicated in writing

9. Outcomes May Include

- Apology
- Service changes or improvements
- Staff or volunteer retraining

- Mediation or facilitated conversation
- Safeguarding actions
- No further action (if complaint unsubstantiated)

10. Protection From Retaliation

No individual will ever be treated differently, disadvantaged, or excluded for making a complaint. Retaliation will result in disciplinary action.

11. Safeguarding-Linked Complaints

If a complaint involves:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Threats
- Risk of harm

It will be treated under the Safeguarding Policy and may be referred to:

- Local Authority Adult Safeguarding
- Police
- Relevant international protection authorities (if outside the UK)

12. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints are accepted, though investigation may be limited by the lack of information.

13. Data Protection

All complaint information is stored securely in compliance with GDPR.

Data is retained for 6 years.

14. Monitoring & Review

All complaints are reviewed quarterly to identify patterns and improvements needed.

This policy is reviewed annually.

15. Contact

Director: Shyra-Marie Aaron Pryce

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