Complaints Policy

Ascend Adventure

Ascend Adventure is committed to providing safe, inclusive and high-quality services. We recognise that from time-to-time concerns or complaints may arise, and we view these as opportunities to learn, improve and strengthen our work.

We aim to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, transparently and promptly.

Who Can Make a Complaint

This policy applies to complaints made by:

- Participants and service users
- Children and young people (with appropriate support)
- Parents or carers
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Partner organisations or members of the public

Our Commitment

Ascend Adventure will:

- Take all complaints seriously
- Treat complainants with respect and fairness
- Handle complaints sensitively and confidentially
- Ensure no individual is treated unfairly for raising a concern in good faith

How to Raise a Complaint

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing.

1. **Initial Stage**
   Complaints should be raised with the relevant group leader or manager wherever possible.
2. **Escalation**
   If the complaint relates to a leader or manager, or if the complainant feels unable to raise it with them, the complaint will be referred to a Director of Ascend Adventure.

3. **Acknowledgement**
   All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within **five working days**, outlining how the complaint will be handled.

4. **Response**
   A response or outcome will normally be provided within **30 working days**.
   If this is not possible, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and reasons for any delay.

5. **Further Review**
   Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, Ascend Adventure may identify an appropriate independent third party or external body for further consideration, where appropriate.

Safeguarding Concerns

If a complaint involves:

- The safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult
- Allegations of abuse, harm or neglect

It will be managed in line with Ascend Adventure's **Safeguarding Policy** and may be referred to the appropriate safeguarding authorities.

Whistleblowing

Concerns relating to serious misconduct, malpractice or risks to safety may be raised under Ascend Adventure's Whistleblowing procedures.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with due regard for confidentiality and data protection. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Monitoring and Review

Complaints will be recorded and reviewed to identify learning and improve practice. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and appropriate.