

ELLINGHAM COMMUNITY TRUST



Policy: Serious Incident Policy

Date: 25th February 20

Purpose

The purpose of this Serious Incident Policy is to provide guidance and procedures for identifying, reporting, managing, and reviewing serious incidents within Ellingham Community Trust in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Charity Commission.

Definition of Serious Incidents:

Serious incidents are defined as any significant event or circumstance that threatens the reputation, finances, or operations of Ellingham Community Trust, or has the potential to harm its beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or assets. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Fraud or financial mismanagement
- Safeguarding concerns
- Criminal activity
- Significant breaches of policies or procedures
- Loss or damage to assets
- Any incident resulting in substantial media coverage or public scrutiny

Identification and Reporting. All trustees and volunteers have a duty to promptly report any serious incident or concern to the Chair or Board of Trustees. Incidents can be reported verbally or in writing and should include all relevant details and evidence available.

Response and Management. Upon receipt of a report of a serious incident, the Chair and Board of Trustees will initiate an immediate response within 48hrs, which will include:

- Implementing emergency measures to mitigate harm or further risk
- Notifying relevant authorities or regulatory bodies as required by law
- Conducting internal investigations to gather additional information and assess the impact of the incident
- Engaging external experts or advisors for support and guidance

- Put in place a communication plan for the public.
- Review what happened and prevent it from happening again.

How we will report. The Chair of Trustees will normally report serious incidents to the Charity Commission using its [online reporting form](#) no later than 48hrs from the event. However, in their absence or a delayed response is anticipated, any of the Trustees are empowered to report a serious incident. If the information provided particularly sensitive or confidential or if a particular exemption applies, we will inform the commission and explain our reasoning.

Communication and Transparency. Ellingham Community Trust is committed to maintaining transparency and open communication throughout the handling of serious incidents. Where appropriate and in accordance with legal obligations, stakeholders such as beneficiaries, funders, partners, and the Charity Commission will be informed of significant developments and outcomes.

Review and Learning. Following the resolution of a serious incident, Ellingham Community Trust will conduct a thorough review to identify any weaknesses or gaps in policies, procedures, or internal controls that may have contributed to the incident. Lessons learned will be documented and used to strengthen the organization's resilience and risk management practices.

Documentation and Record-Keeping. All reports, investigations, communications, and outcomes related to serious incidents will be documented and securely maintained in accordance with data protection laws and regulatory requirements. Access to this information will be restricted to authorised personnel only.

Review and Approval. This Serious Incident Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis or as needed to ensure alignment with best practices and regulatory standards.

The charity is required as part of its annual return, to sign a declaration confirming there were no serious incidents during the financial year that should have been reported to the commission. If incidents did occur, but were not reported at the time, we will submit these before we file our charity's annual return, so that we can make the declaration and meet our legal reporting requirements. Dave

By adhering to this policy, Ellingham Community Trust demonstrates its commitment to accountability, integrity, and the well-being of its stakeholders, in compliance with the guidelines established by the Charity Commission.