



Complaints Policy

Introduction

At The Joshua Tree we recognise that:

- It is important for The Joshua Tree to aim to act to the highest standards with respect to all activities it undertakes;
- everyone who uses our support centre and uses our services has the right to a high standard of service;
- those who use our services or our support centre have the right to complain if they are not happy with the standard of service they receive;
- learning from complaints helps us to improve the service we provide.

Policy

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- help us to provide a service of the highest standard to all those who come to The Joshua Tree support centre and use our services;
- help us to ensure that children and families using or wishing to use our services know they have a right to complain about our service if they need to;
- help us to deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our service;
- set out the issues that could be covered under this procedure;
- set out the steps that children, young people and their families should take if they wish to make a complaint;
- set out how we can deal with complaints in a fair and consistent way.

This policy applies to all children, young people and families supported by or wishing to be supported by The Joshua Tree as well as other organisations who we come into contact with in respect of our activities

It is not intended to be used by staff or volunteers who are unhappy about their own experience in the workplace. In these circumstances, staff should use the Raising a Concern Policy or Grievance Policy.

It is also not intended to cover concerns that staff or volunteers may have about issues of possible malpractice or wrongdoing in the workplace. These should be dealt with under the Whistleblowing policy.



If anyone, whether staff member, volunteer, child/young person or family member, is concerned that a child or children may be at risk of harm, they should use The Joshua Tree's Safeguarding policy rather than this complaints policy or procedure.

We will seek to deal with complaints by:

- defining clearly what we mean by a complaint;
- setting out a procedure that can be easily followed and understood (please refer to the procedure set out below);
- making sure that everyone knows about the Complaints Policy;
- reassuring people that they will not be penalised in any way for using the complaints procedure and that we will respond positively to any complaints made in good faith;
- offering extra support to those who need help to make a complaint;
- taking a staged approach to complaints that takes account of the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolution at different points;
- investigating each complaint as objectively and fully as we reasonably can;
- keeping the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and of the outcome of his/her complaint;
- keeping clear records of complaints and of how they are resolved.

What do we mean by a complaint?

A complaint is a statement from someone that they are not happy about the service provided to them, or activity undertaken by The Joshua Tree and would like this to be improved.

The complaint might be about:

- the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer (if this relates to allegations that someone may have harmed a child or be at risk of doing so, child protection procedures should be used);
- the behaviour of other children and young people in the group;
- the level of service received;
- the type of service received;
- being refused a service altogether;
- the building or facilities;
- written information;
- service received over the telephone;



- a child, young person or family member feeling that he or she has been treated unfairly or in a way that is discriminatory;
- a specific activity or outing;
- anything else related to the service provided at The Joshua Tree.

Making a complaint about The Joshua Tree

There are three stages that can be used to try to resolve a problem.

If a complaint is about the CEO then it should be addressed to the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees (marked private and confidential). Please contact the Operations Manager should you require contact details for the Chair of Trustees.

Stage One (Informal)

- To make an initial complaint (Stage 1), please speak to or email the individual(s) concerned or their line manager and we will endeavour to satisfy your complaint and let you know of any remedial action that is to be taken.
- If you don't know who to contact or do not wish to contact the individual involved, please email office@thejoshuatree.org.uk or contact the Operations Manager.
- All complaints will be acknowledged by the member of staff to whom you communicated your complaint or by the CEO within three working days from the date it is received.
- In order for us to resolve your issue to the best of our ability, please include as much detail as possible regarding your complaint, including any relevant communications or documentation.

We will respond to Stage 1 complaints within 7 working days

Stage Two (Formally registering a complaint)

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, or you would prefer your complaint to be formally investigated, you can request your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2 directly to the CEO, unless the CEO is the subject of the complaint and then this should be forwarded to the Vice Chair of Trustees.

- Please submit the details of your complaint verbally by telephone or in person, electronically by emailing the CEO or in writing
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- A member of the Senior Management Team will be assigned to investigate your complaint and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days from the date of the acknowledgement.



- If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you will be given the opportunity to speak to a Trustee at The Joshua Tree and given the option to appeal

Stage Three (Appeal)

- To appeal, please outline the reasons for your dissatisfaction in writing or electronically to the Chair of Trustees
- This will be the final decision of the complaints process and will ensure the Chair has reviewed the investigation, made any further enquiries and then delivers the reason for the final decision.
- The Chair will write within 30 working days of receiving the appeal and their decision is final.

Where there are persistent and unnecessary complaints not made in good faith by an individual the trustees can suspend the procedure where they consider that no further resolution can be reached and refer the complainant to the Charities Commission

Charity Commission

If you are dissatisfied with The Joshua Tree's complaints process, you can contact the Charity Commission, who will be able to advise on the matter. The Charity Commission can be contacted at:

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/Contacting_us/default.aspx

This policy was reviewed: February 2022

Next review date: February 2024