

Complaints Procedures

Introduction

Since it was founded in 1983, the Journey of a Lifetime (JoLt) Trust has prided itself on the quality of its work and the care provided to youngsters during the selection process, on expeditions and at JoLt events. The Trustees welcome feedback in order that we can continue to improve on what we do. If youngsters, parents or guardians, adults making nominations or organisations with whom JoLt works have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the charity in accordance with this procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If you have a complaint you should contact the Chair of Trustees. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the complainant's satisfaction.
- The Chair will make **a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. Should the matter not be resolved within three months or in the event that the Chair and the complainant **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2** of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the person making the complaint should **put their complaint in writing** to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair will decide the appropriate course of action to take. If the complaint is about the Chair of Trustees, the complaint should be sent to the Treasurer
- In most cases, the Chair & Treasurer will meet the person making the complaint (or, if distances are too great, a conference call will be organised) **within 42 days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage
- It may be necessary for the Chair & Treasurer to carry out further investigations
- The Chair & Treasurer will **keep written records** of all meetings, telephone conference calls and interviews held in relation to the complaint
- Once the Chair and Treasurer are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and complainant will be informed in writing. The Chair and Treasurer will give reasons for their decision.
- **If the complainants are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3** of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If the complainants seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Treasurer, who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.** The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, **one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the charity. Each of the panel members will be appointed by the trustee board.** The Treasurer, on behalf, of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within 42 days**.
- If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than ten days prior to the hearing.
- **The complainants may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This may be a relative, friend or teacher. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it is carried out. After due consideration of the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete **within 21 days** of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the complainants informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent to the Complainants, the Chair, the Trustees and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Complainants can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. However in the event that a crime may have been committed the Trustees reserve the right to inform the Police. If there are concerns regarding child protection issues, the Trustees are required to refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.

All key policies are normally reviewed every two years as 'journeys of a lifetime' are held every two years. However policies can be reviewed more frequently and this will normally happen after a complaint is received to ensure that procedures can be improved and strengthened.

Reviewed March 2018

Proposed Complaints Panel

Convenor and Secretary to the Panel: The Treasurer

Possible Complaints Panel members

Lindsay Driscoll
Dorothy Dalton

Former Trustee
Former Chair of Trustees