

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Document Control

<b>Person Responsible</b>	Business Support Team	<b>Review Frequency</b>	2 years
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### Introduction

Justlife is a homeless charity that supports vulnerably housed adults. Justlife aims to ensure that everyone we support receives a professional and quality service. However, we are aware that every now and then individuals may feel that they did not receive the best service Justlife could have delivered and unfortunately these things happen.

We know we are not perfect but we aim to be and we want to improve. That's why we have a complaints procedure. Sometimes we can put things right. Sometimes we can only explain ourselves and apologise. But we do want to learn from our mistakes. We will treat your complaint confidentially, seriously and quickly.

### Our Aim

Justlife aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve the services that we provide is by listening and responding to the views of our clients, partners and stakeholders and in particular responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

### We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a prompt response
- We deal with it promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially
- We will respond in the correct way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology or information on any action taken
- We will learn from complaints and use them to improve the services that we offer
- Review our complaints policy and procedures

## **Definition**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with our services; whether justified or not; with Justlife, with a member of staff, or with a Justlife Trustee, that relates to Justlife and that requires a formal response.

## **Purpose**

Justlife's complaint procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

### **Justlife's responsibility will be to:**

- Respond within a stated period of time
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
- Take appropriate action if required

### **The complainant's responsibility is to:**

- Raise their concerns promptly and directly with the person concerned
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
- Allow Justlife a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter as detailed in the procedure
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Justlife's control

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

The Board of Justlife will receive regularly an anonymized report of complaints made and their resolution.

## **Confidentiality**

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Justlife maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## **Principles of the Complaints Policy**

- If a complaint cannot be resolved informally it will be managed using a three-stage process which is set out below
- The Complaints Policy will apply to all the services that Justlife provides
- If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise that warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings, or through a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded.

- Similarly, the complaints procedure should be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress
- Where a complaint is against a member of staff they will be informed of the support services available to them
- Records of all complaints should be kept and provided to the Chief Executive to enable them to monitor progress and report to the board
- Justlife may, at any stage of the formal complaints procedure, review a complaint and give a decision, without a formal investigation, where a member of the Senior Leadership Team deem the complaint to be deliberately repetitive or intentionally troublesome. Examples of such complaints being: unsubstantiated or repetitive complaints against an individual or service, or where a complaint has previously been investigated and appropriate action taken
- When appealing against a previous decision, the complainant will be asked to state why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled

## **Justlife Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1 - Investigation**

It is important to let the staff involved know that you are unhappy and to give them the chance to put things right. Don't be afraid to speak to the manager– she or he might be able to sort out the problem straight away. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the following formal complaints procedure should be followed.

- 1.1.** If you are unable to resolve the issue satisfactorily with the member of staff a formal complaint should be made, which will be investigated by the manager of the project your complaint relates to.
- 1.2.** There are several ways to make a complaint. You can put the information in a letter or email and send it to the project that you are complaining about or drop it. You can tell the project on the phone or face-to-face that you want them to investigate your complaint. If you make your complaint on the phone or face-to-face the person you speak to will record the details and let you check them to make sure they've correctly recorded the points you wanted to make.
- 1.3.** We should let you know we've received the complaint within 5 working days of receipt.
- 1.4.** We will allocate a member of staff to manage your complaint and let you know who it is, and when we expect the investigation to start and finish. Your complaint will be investigated. If either party thinks it would be helpful there may be a meeting to discuss the complaint.

- 1.5. You should get a response within 10 working days of the investigation starting. If as a result of the complaint we intend to take any further action or change anything about our services we'll explain this in the response.
- 1.6. You have 28 days to let us know if you think the response is unsatisfactory, and to ask for the complaint and response to be reviewed (Stage 2).
- 1.7. If you are unsure which member of Justlife staff to address to, your complaint should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Justlife Centre, 1479-1489 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester, M11 1HH.
- 1.8. The Justlife Board received anonymized reports on all complaints, so will be informed of the complaint at the next board meeting.

## **Stage 2 – Review by Senior Leadership Team**

- 2.1. If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response to your complaint then you can ask that the response is given further consideration. It will then be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.
- 2.2. As with a Stage 1 complaint you can send us a letter or email, or you can explain verbally and we'll record the points you make. If you are complaining in writing it should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer, Justlife Centre, 1479-1489 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester, M11 1HH or handed in to your local project.
- 2.3. We should acknowledge your request within 5 working days of receipt.
- 2.4. We will allocate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to manage your complaint and let you know who it is, and when we expect the review to start and finish. They will review the original complaint, the Stage 1 investigation, and your Stage 2 complaint.
- 2.5. A written response will usually be provided within 20 working days. Justlife aims to resolve all matters as quickly as possible, however, if a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.
- 2.6. You have 28 days to let us know if you think the response is unsatisfactory, and to ask for the complaint and response to be reviewed (Stage 3).
- 2.7. The Justlife Board received anonymized reports on all complaints, so will be informed of the complaint at the next board meeting.

## **Stage 3 – Independent Adjudication**

- 3.1. If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response to your complaint then you can ask that the response is reviewed independently.

- 3.2.** As with a Stage 1 or 2 complaint you can send us a letter or email, or you can explain verbally and we'll record the points you make. If you are complaining in writing it should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer, Justlife Centre, 1479-1489 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, Manchester, M11 1HH or handed in to your local project.
- 3.3.** We should acknowledge your request within 5 working days of receipt.
- 3.4.** A review will be carried out, by an independent individual who hasn't been involved to date. This could be one of the volunteers who form the Justlife Board, or someone else who has been identified as having relevant knowledge and experience, for example a senior manager at another service in the local area. We will agree this with you, and confirm when we expect the review to start and finish.
- 3.5.** The investigation will involve a review of the complaint to date, including all investigations that have taken place. Meetings may be held with those involved if helpful.
- 3.6.** A written response will usually be provided within 20 working days. Justlife aims to resolve all matters as quickly as possible, however, if a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.
- 3.7.** Stage 3 is the final stage of the Justlife complaints procedure. You will be informed of your right to seek legal redress or to make representation to any appropriate statutory body if you are still dissatisfied.
- 3.8.** The Justlife Board received anonymized reports on all complaints, so will be informed of the complaint at the next board meeting.