 Formal Complaint & Appeal Policy

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| Last updated | December 2018 |

**Scope of the policy:**

The policy is in place to ensure that Formal Complaints and Appeals received by OutdoorLads are handled in a professional and sensitive manner and that the any Formal complaints or Appeals received are given due consideration.

Formal complaints can result from informal complaint situations which were not successfully resolved at the time in discussion between the complainant and any appropriate person with responsibility in the OutdoorLads group (the Leader of an Event, or a Co-ordinator/Organiser, Member of Staff, or Trustee).

Under specific circumstances, an Appeal can be made to the outcome of a Formal complaint. An Appeal can be made by emailing any member of the Board of Trustees.

The Formal Complaint and Appeal Policy is owned by the Trustee Board and is reviewed annually.

**To be considered, formal complaints must be submitted using the online complaints form at** [**https://www.outdoorlads.com/governance**](https://www.outdoorlads.com/governance) **so that the complaints process can be fully monitored.**

**Complainants using other means to raise a formal complaint will be advised to submit their complaint via the online complaints form.**

**The Formal Complaint Process**

1. Formal complaints are initially handled by members of the OutdoorLads staff, except in cases where:
   1. the complaint is about a staff member or when there is limited staff availability to handle the complaint promptly, in which case the Formal complaint will be handled by a Member of the Trustee board (but not the Treasurer, Vice-Chair or Chair).
   2. the complaint is about a Trustee, or a Trustee was involved in the informal complaint, unsuccessful resolution of which led to the Formal complaint, in which case the Formal complaint will be handled by the Treasurer or Vice-Chair.
2. Within two working days of making Formal complaint, the complainant will receive email acknowledgement detailing which member of staff (or Trustee) will be investigating and responding to it.
3. Formal complaints will be investigated and, if required, further information will be gathered by speaking with appropriate people, which may include:
   1. The complainant
   2. The subject of a complaint
   3. Event leader/s
   4. Other members
   5. Organisers, regional co-ordinators, or trustees
   6. Other third parties, such as event providers or public servants
4. The member of staff (or Trustee) will aim to email their response to the formal complaint with ten working days. The complainant will be informed if this timeline cannot be met and reasons why will be explained.
5. During the investigation, the Formal complaint may, depending on its the scope and seriousness, be escalated to the Treasurer or Vice-Chair of the board. Examples could include Formal complaints involving:
   1. An OutdoorLads staff member
   2. An OutdoorLads Trustee
   3. A serious incident on an event
   4. Criminal incident or suspected activity
   5. Significant financial, reputational or legal risk

If the complaint is escalated, the person then handling the complaint will aim to email their response to the Formal complaint within ten working days of the escalation. The complainant will be informed if this timeline cannot be met and reasons why will be explained.

**The Appeal Process**

1. An Appeal cannot be a restatement of the Formal complaint. An Appeal will only be considered if either:
   1. the complainant can show that the investigation and response did not follow the procedure outlined above  
      or
   2. new and relevant evidence or information becomes available that was not previously considered
2. A member of the Trustee Board will be assigned to review this Appeal. This can include the Treasurer, Vice Chair or Chair. The Trustee assigned will not:
   1. have been the subject of the Formal complaint.
   2. have been involved in providing evidence or input to the investigation of the Formal complaint
3. The assigned Trustee will investigate the grounds listed in the Appeal by reviewing the Formal complaint and speaking with appropriate people, which may include:
   1. the complainant
   2. the person who handled the Formal complaint
   3. other relevant people who can add context to any additional information provided in the Appeal
4. The assigned Trustee will aim to email their response to the Appeal within ten working days. The complainant will be informed if this timeline cannot be met and reasons why will be explained. The outcome of the Appeal is final and no further communication will be responded to in regards to the Formal complaint or the Appeal.