

Policy & Procedure: Complaints & Feedback

1. Policy Scope

- 1.1 The policy covers all those working with or for Julian House including, but not limited to, paid employees, volunteers, students, and contractors. For simplicity, these individuals are referred to throughout this policy as 'staff', although this does not imply an employee/employer relationship.
- 1.2 This policy covers all aspects related to complaints and feedback about Julian House and its services. This includes accommodation-based services, support services, Charity Shops and Bike Workshops. This is referred to as Julian House's Services throughout the policy.
- 1.3 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Julian House, its staff, or those acting on its behalf affecting an individual (client, customer, supporter, other stakeholder) or group of individuals (clients, customers, supporters, other stakeholders).
- 1.4 Feedback is helpful information or constructive criticism that is given to say what can be done to improve performance or customer service as relevant. Feedback can be positive or negative.
- 1.5 This policy does not cover complaints from staff, which should be dealt with through the Grievance policy and procedure, unless it is a genuine concern of malpractice in which case it should be dealt with through the whistle-blowing policy and procedure.

2. The Purpose of our policy

- 2.1. We aim to ensure that there is an organisational culture of encouraging, valuing and learning from complaints and feedback and that clients and customers feel confident and are positively encouraged to do so.
- 2.2. To ensure making a complaint and/or giving feedback is as easy as possible, and policies/procedures are well publicised throughout the organisation.
- 2.3. To ensure that complaints and feedback are heard and dealt with fairly, consistently, within clear timeframes.
- 2.4. That negative feedback, complaint outcomes and lessons learnt are acted upon to improve our services.
- 2.5. Complainants are reassured that making a complaint/giving negative feedback will not harm their future relationship with us.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. Julian House is committed to providing high-quality services in everything we do. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong. When this happens, we want people to tell us, so that we can put things right promptly and learn from the experience. We welcome complaints and feedback and are always grateful to hear from people willing to take the time to help us improve our services.
- 3.2. A complaint can be made by any individual or organisation who wishes to report dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions, or lack of action by Julian House, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual client or group of clients. Everyone who makes a complaint will be treated with courtesy and respect.

4. Procedure

Receiving Complaints and/or Feedback

- 4.1. Complaints and feedback can be made in person to a member of staff, in writing (27 Rosewell Court, Kingsmead, Bath BA1 2AQ), by email (feedback@julianhouse.org.uk) telephone (01225 354650), through our website (<https://www.julianhouse.org.uk/feedback-complaints/>) or by using the Feedback Form which is available within all Julian House premises and projects. The procedure for complaints and feedback will be included in the client handbook and explained to clients during their induction to the service.
- 4.2. An advocate, friend or family member can also complain or give feedback on behalf of another person. In these circumstances, the outcome will only be communicated to the advocate, friend or family member with the written permission of the person to whom the complaint or feedback relates.
- 4.3. When receiving negative feedback, staff should use their professional judgement to determine whether the formal complaints procedure should be applied. This may involve replying to request further information, advising of the complaint's procedure and/or discussing the feedback with the Line Manager to clarify the correct procedure.
- 4.4. Should a negative comment be received on social media, the marketing team will respond with a direct/private message to request further details and advise of the complaint's procedure.
- 4.5. The member of staff who receives the complaint/feedback must forward it to the relevant Manager. If the complaint is about the Manager, it should be sent to the Manager's Line Manager.
- 4.6. If the complaint is from a client, the staff member should record this on the client's Inform Timeline, stating that a complaint has been raised and taken forward. No specific details of the complaint should be recorded on Inform.

Timescales and Responses

- 4.7. Complaints and feedback should be responded to within set timescales. Some complaints may take longer to resolve, and if this is the case staff must keep the complainant regularly updated on action taken and an explanation for the delay. This applies to all stages below.

Feedback

- 4.8. Service Managers/Shop Managers/Bike Workshop Manager should respond to written feedback and suggestions within 10 working days.
- 4.9. A copy of the feedback and response must be sent to the Executive Assistant who will store these in a central file on Share Point.

Complaints

- 4.10. There are 4 stages to the complaints process. It is our aim that most complaints are dealt with in the early stages.

Stage 1- Complaint (10 working days)

- 4.11. In most cases, a complaint is best resolved by the Service Manager/Shop Manager/Bike Workshop Manager responsible for the service being complained about. If the complaint is about a manager a suitable delegate will be identified. If the complaint is about the CEO, it will be sent to the Chair of our Board of Trustees (Chair@julianhouse.org.uk).
- 4.12. If the complaint is of great complexity or seriousness, additional support will be made available from Regional and Senior Regional Managers.
- 4.13. The manager responding to the complaint must acknowledge it within 2 working days ([appendix 2](#)), investigate the complaint as appropriate and respond with an outcome letter ([appendix 3](#)) within 10 working days of receipt.
- 4.14. A copy of the outcome letter must be sent to the Executive Assistant alongside the original complaint who will store these in a central file on Share Point.
- 4.15. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at stage 1 they must respond to the outcome letter (verbally or in writing) within 10 working days to advise they want to appeal it alongside the grounds for their appeal and what outcome they are seeking. This must be forwarded to the investigating manager's line manager.

Stage 2 – Appeal (10 working days)

- 4.16. The Regional Manager/Area Manager of the service or project will deal with a stage 2 complaint, except where they are the subject of the complaint or dealt with stage 1, in which case their Line Manager or an appropriate delegate will investigate the complaint.
- 4.17. The member of staff receiving the stage 2 complaint must acknowledge it within 3 working days ([appendix 2](#)), investigate the complaint as appropriate and respond with an outcome letter ([appendix 4a](#)) within 10 working days.

- 4.18. A copy of the outcome letter alongside the appeal must be sent to the Executive Assistant who will store these in a secure central file on Share Point.
- 4.19. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at stage 2 they must respond to the outcome letter (verbally or in writing) within 10 working days to advise they want to escalate it to stage 3. This must be forwarded to the staff member's line manager.

Stage 3 – Final internal stage (10 days)

- 4.20. The relevant Senior Regional Manager or equivalent of the service or shop will deal with a stage 3 complaint, except where they are the subject of the complaint or dealt with stage 1 or 2, in which case their Director, the CEO or an appropriate delegate will review the complaint.
- 4.21. The member of staff receiving the stage 3 complaint must acknowledge it within 3 working days ([appendix 2](#)), review the complaint as appropriate and respond with an outcome letter ([appendix 4b](#)) within 10 working days.
- 4.22. A copy of the outcome letter alongside the second appeal must be sent to the Executive Assistant who will store these in a central file on Share Point.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at this final stage, they should be directed to external complaints procedures.

Stage 4 - External

- 4.23. If a complainant has exhausted our internal complaints process and still wishes to pursue the matter, they may have recourse to other external complaints procedures.
- 4.24. Clients who are unhappy with a service we are commissioned to provide by a Local Authority may complain directly to the Local Authority.
- 4.25. Supported Housing clients who are tenants of another Registered Social Landlord can complain directly to the relevant Registered Social Landlord.
- 4.26. Clients may also complain to the Local Government Ombudsman <http://www.lgo.org.uk/> or the Housing Ombudsman Service <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

5. Unreasonable Complaints

- 5.1. Complaints will be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Julian House reserves the right not to investigate unreasonable complaints. This decision can only be made by a Senior Regional Manager or Director. When a decision has been made not to investigate a complaint, the complainant must be informed of this and the reasons for this in writing within 5 working days of receipt (appendix 5).
- 5.2. Unreasonable complaints include persistent, abusive complaints or where the complainant is acting in a manner that is deemed unacceptable or unreasonable due to hindering the organisation's consideration of their or other people's complaints. These behaviours by the complainant may occur at any time before, during and after

a complaint has been investigated. Making a complaint itself does not constitute unreasonable behaviour.

- 5.3. Examples of unreasonable or unacceptable behaviours during a complaints process include (not exhaustive):
- Not specifying the grounds of the complaint
 - Refusing to accept that an issue within a complaint is not within the scope of Julian House or the complaints procedure.
 - Refusing to accept the decision, repeatedly arguing points with no new information.
 - When a complainant is being abusive, prejudiced, or offensive in their manner.
 - When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
 - When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
 - Making excessive demands on time and resources.
 - Adopting a scatter-gun approach to change an agreed and investigated outcome.
 - Submitting information known to be false.
- 5.4. We cannot respond to complaints made anonymously. However, we will investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

6. Investigating the complaint

- 6.1. Investigating the complaint should be thorough but proportionate to the complaint. This may include meeting with the complainant, reviewing case files, relevant policies and procedures and interviewing witnesses as appropriate.
- 6.2. The complaint should be kept confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.
- 6.3. The purpose of these investigations is to gain all the relevant facts so that a fair and informed decision can be made about the best resolution and next steps.
- 6.4. The investigating manager is responsible for completing the investigating and writing to the complainant with their findings.

7. Outcomes

- 7.1. There can be 3 outcomes to a complaint:
1. **Upheld:** The investigating manager feels there were legitimate grounds for all aspects of the complaint.
 2. **Partially Upheld:** The investigating manager feels there were legitimate grounds for some aspects of the complaint.
 3. **Not upheld:** The investigating manager feels there was no legitimate grounds for the complaint.
- 7.2. Wherever a complaint is Upheld or Partially Upheld, the investigating manager must consider what can be done to prevent a similar complaint from reoccurring, such as

training or further support needed. In certain situations, they will also need to consider whether further action is required in respect of Julian House's disciplinary policy.

8. Recording Complaints and Feedback

- 8.1. All complaints and feedback must be logged on the [Complaints & Feedback Microsoft Form](#) (Appendix A shows the questions on the form). For complaints, this must be completed by the investigating manager once an outcome has been reached. A separate entry should be made at each stage of the complaint. For feedback this should be completed by the member of staff receiving the feedback.
- 8.2. As above in 4.12, 4.16 and 4.20, copies of all correspondence relating to the complaint, including response letters, must be sent by the person investigating the complaint to the Executive Assistant.

9. Monitoring and Learning

- 9.1. All Managers will ensure, through team meetings and supervision, that lessons learnt from complaints and feedback are shared with the service and any required actions are implemented across the relevant service and if appropriate the organisation. If any actions are not implemented the manager must email the Client Services Director to inform them of this and the reasons.
- 9.2. The Executive Assistant will review the Complaints & Feedback form records on a quarterly basis providing a report to the Senior Leadership Team which monitors: number of complaints, compliance with response timescales, common themes and % of actions implemented. Any common themes will be shared with the Senior Regional Managers to ensure these are addressed.
- 9.3. The Client Services Director will produce an annual report covering complaints and feedback from all Julian Houses services to ensure that any trends are identified and that all lessons have been captured. This should also capture instances where recommendations have not been implemented and the reasons for this. This information will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team, Board of Trustees and shared with clients and staff.

Appendix 1 Complaints & Feedback Form

<p>Overview</p> <p>1. Name of person completing this form and job title *</p> <input type="text" value="Enter your answer"/>	<p>4. Who is this information from? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Service User</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Friends/Family of Service User</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Customer (Bike Workshop/Charity Shop)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Partner Organisation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Neighbour</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Landlord</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other <input type="text" value=""/></p> <p>5. Date Received *</p> <input type="text" value="Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)"/>
<p>2. What Service and location does this relate to? *</p> <input type="text" value="Enter your answer"/>	<p>6. Please provide detail of the complaint/feedback/appeal: *</p> <input type="text" value="Enter your answer"/>
<p>3. What are you logging? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Feedback</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Complaint</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Complaint Outcome Appeal</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other</p> <p>Next</p>	<p>7. Are you reporting a complaint or appeal? *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p>Lessons Learnt</p> <p>8. Are there any lessons learnt/actions to be taken as a result of the complaint/feedback?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>9. What are the actions/lessons learnt?</p> <input type="text" value="Enter your answer"/> <p>10. When will these actions/lessons learnt be implemented by?</p> <input type="text" value="Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)"/> <p>Back Next</p>	<p>AoB</p> <p>11. Is there any other information you would like to add?</p> <input type="text" value="Enter your answer"/> <p>Back Submit</p>

Appendix 2 – Complaint Acknowledgement Template

[address]

Julian House
27 Rosewell Court
Bath
BA1 2AQ

01225 354650

[Insert date]

Dear [Insert complainant name]

Please take this [letter/text/email] as acknowledgement that we have received a complaint from you on [xx/xx/xxxx].

This will be investigated, and we will respond to you with a formal outcome within 10 working days of today's date.

If there is a delay for any reason, we will contact you as soon as possible with an explanation for the delay.

Yours sincerely

Staff Member name

Staff Member telephone number

Staff Member email address

Appendix 3 - Stage 1 Outcome Letter Template

Julian House
27 Rosewell Court
Bath
BA1 2AQ

01225 354650

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Complainant Name
Complainant Address

Date

Re: Complaint Outcome

Dear XX,

You contacted us on xx/xx/xxxx to complain about [summary of complaint]. I have been responsible for investigating your concerns. I have now completed my investigation. In this letter I will explain what I found during my investigation, what my conclusions are [insert if relevant: and what actions I am taking as a result.]

To confirm, I have investigated the following issues/concerns/complaints:

1. [enter each issue in the complaint]
2. [enter any issues we have since agreed to include in complaint]

Investigation

To investigate and review your complaint I have taken the following steps:

- [set out steps taken e.g. documents, staff, contractors etc. list each one individually]

Complaint: [insert complaint point 1 from above]

What happened?

[List out the relevant information you have considered – this should include any differing views. Discuss the evidence presented and available from the complainant/records/discussed with staff/communication/policies/procedures/legislation. Always remain objective and not subjective]

What should have happened?

[Identify relevant policy/internal process/procedures that should have been taken into account in relation to the issues of complaints]

Conclusion

In conclusion I have decided to [uphold/partially uphold/not uphold] this part of the complaint. My reason for this is [summarise the complaint, the arguments presented and combine factual points that identify any areas of poor practice. If appropriate, include a genuine apology]

[If warranted provide details of appropriate redress such as compensation, repairs and/or other actions]

[Summarise any learning from the complaint and what changes/improvements will or have already been put in place as a result]

[If appropriate signpost the complainant to other services or sources of advice or support]

[Enter complaint 2 ... follows the same pattern as complaint 1]

Summary of actions/learning points

Action	Completion Date

What happens next?

I am sorry that you had cause to complain to Julian House. I hope this letter shows that your complaint has been fully considered and you are satisfied with the outcome. If there is anything in this letter you would like to discuss with me, please contact me on my contact details which are shown below.

If you are unhappy with this response, you have the right of appeal. To do this you must reply within 10 working days of the date of this letter to explain why you are not happy with the outcome and what you are seeking as an outcome. You will then be contacted by [enter name] who will hear your appeal.

Thank you for the time you have taken in bringing your complaint to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Name

Job Title
Number
Email

Appendix 4a - Stage 2 Outcome Letter Template

Julian House
27 Rosewell Court
Bath
BA1 2AQ

01225 354650

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Complainant Name
Complainant Address

Date

Re: Appeal Outcome

Dear XX,

You contacted us on xx/xx/xxxx to request an appeal to your complaint about [summary of complaint]. I have been responsible for hearing your appeal. I have now completed my investigation. In this letter I will explain what I found during my investigation, what my conclusions are [insert if relevant: and what actions I am taking as a result.]

To confirm, you appealed your complaint outcome on the following grounds:

3. [enter each part of the appeal e.g. outstanding issues and reasons for dissatisfaction]
4. [enter any issues we have since agreed to include in the appeal]

I also understand that to resolve your complaint you are seeking the following outcomes:

- [List any outcomes sought by the complainant]

Investigation

To investigate and review your appeal I have taken the following steps:

- [set out steps taken e.g. documents, staff, contractors etc. list each one individually]

Appeal: [insert complaint point 1 from above]

What happened?

[List out the relevant information you have considered – this should include any differing views. Discuss the evidence presented and available from the complainant/records/discussed with staff/communication/policies/procedures/legislation. Always remain objective and not subjective]

What should have happened?

[Identify relevant policy/internal process/procedures that should have been taken into account in relation to the issues of complaints]

Conclusion

In conclusion I have decided to [uphold/partially uphold/not uphold] this part of the complaint. My reason for this is [summarise the complaint, the arguments presented and combine factual points that identify any areas of poor practice. If appropriate, include a genuine apology]

[If warranted provide details of appropriate redress such as compensation, repairs and/or other actions]

[Summarise any learning from the complaint and what changes/improvements will or have already been put in place as a result]

[If appropriate signpost the complainant to other services or sources of advice or support]

[Enter appeal 2 ... follows the same pattern as complaint 1]

Summary of actions/learning points

Action	Completion Date

What happens next?

I am sorry that you had cause to complain to Julian House. I hope this letter shows that your complaint and appeal has been fully considered and you are satisfied with the outcome. If there is anything in this letter you would like to discuss with me, please contact me on my contact details which are shown below.

If you are unhappy with this response, you have the right of appeal again. To do this you must reply within 10 working days of the date of this letter to explain why you are not happy with the outcome and what you are seeking as an outcome. You will then be contacted by [enter name] who will hear your second appeal.

If you remain unhappy with this response, you may also have recourse to other external complaints procedures as below:

- Clients who are unhappy with a service we are commissioned to provide by a Local Authority may complain directly to the Local Authority.
- Supported Housing clients who are tenants of another Registered Social Landlord can complain directly to the relevant Registered Social Landlord.
- Clients may also complain to the Local Government Ombudsman <http://www.lgo.org.uk/> or the Housing Ombudsman Service <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/> . Please be aware that the Housing Ombudsman is unable to consider cases until 8 weeks after this response.

Thank you for the time you have taken in bringing your complaint to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Name

Job Title

Number

Email

Appendix 4b- Stage 3 Outcome Letter Template

Julian House
27 Rosewell Court
Bath
BA1 2AQ

01225 354650

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Complainant Name
Complainant Address
Date

Re: Final Stage Appeal Outcome

Dear XX,

You contacted us on xx/xx/xxxx to request an appeal to your complaint about [summary of complaint]. I have been responsible for hearing your second appeal. I have now completed my investigation. In this letter I will explain what I found during my investigation, what my conclusions are [insert if relevant: and what actions I am taking as a result.]

To confirm, you appealed your complaint outcome on the following grounds:

5. [enter each part of the appeal e.g. outstanding issues and reasons for dissatisfaction]
6. [enter any issues we have since agreed to include in the appeal]

I also understand that to resolve your complaint you are seeking the following outcomes:

- [List any outcomes sought by the complainant]

Investigation

To investigate and review your appeal I have taken the following steps:

- [set out steps taken e.g. documents, staff, contractors etc. list each one individually]

Appeal: [insert complaint point 1 from above]

What happened?

[List out the relevant information you have considered – this should include any differing views. Discuss the evidence presented and available from the complainant/records/discussed with staff/communication/policies/procedures/legislation. Always remain objective and not subjective]

What should have happened?

[Identify relevant policy/internal process/procedures that should have been taken into account in relation to the issues of complaints]

Conclusion

In conclusion I have decided to [uphold/partially uphold/not uphold] this part of the complaint. My reason for this is [summarise the complaint, the arguments presented and combine factual points that identify any areas of poor practice. If appropriate, include a genuine apology]

[If warranted provide details of appropriate redress such as compensation, repairs and/or other actions]

[Summarise any learning from the complaint and what changes/improvements will or have already been put in place as a result]

[If appropriate signpost the complainant to other services or sources of advice or support]

[Enter appeal 2 ... follows the same pattern as complaint 1]

Summary of actions/learning points

Action	Completion Date

What happens next?

I am sorry that you had cause to complain to Julian House. I hope this letter shows that your complaint and appeal has been fully considered and you are satisfied with the outcome. If there is anything in this letter you would like to discuss with me, please contact me on my contact details which are shown below.

Please note you have now exhausted Julian House's internal complaints process. If you remain unhappy with this response, you may have recourse to other external complaints procedures as below:

- Clients who are unhappy with a service we are commissioned to provide by a Local Authority may complain directly to the Local Authority.
- Supported Housing clients who are tenants of another Registered Social Landlord can complain directly to the relevant Registered Social Landlord.
- Clients may also complain to the Local Government Ombudsman <http://www.lgo.org.uk/> or the Housing Ombudsman Service <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>. Please be aware that the Housing Ombudsman is unable to consider cases until 8 weeks after this response.

Thank you for the time you have taken in bringing your complaint to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Name

Job Title

Number

Email

Appendix 5- Vexatious Complaint

Julian House
27 Rosewell Court
Bath
BA1 2AQ

01225 354650

Date

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Complainant Name

Complainant Address

Date

Dear [Insert complainant name]

Since receiving your complaint on [xx/xx/xxxx] I have reviewed this. Please be aware that section 5.1 of our complaints & feedback policy states “Julian House reserves the right not to investigate vexatious complaints”. Having completed my review I have found your complaint to be vexatious for the following reasons:

- [list all reasons why we are not investigating, using the policy]

If you have any questions about this decision, please contact me via the details below.

Yours sincerely

Staff Member name

Staff Member telephone number

Staff Member email address