



Happiness Outdoors Project

Complaints Policy

Whilst HOP makes every effort to meet peoples' expectations, circumstances may arise where an individual has a concern and wishes to bring this to HOP's attention. HOP will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, in everyone's best interests.

For very serious concerns, such as individual's safety being placed at immediate risk, HOP will take such action as is appropriate. For example, by calling the emergency services.

Informal Complaints

Anyone who has a concern should initially raise this with a member of HOP's team at the time, as this enables HOP to respond and deal with an issue quickly.

HOP will seek to resolve this and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have, ideally to their satisfaction. If unable to, HOP will make a note of:

- The complainant's name and contact details, unless they are unwilling to provide these.
- The nature of their concern and anything that they wish to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when and where any action was taken, and the details of others who were present/involved.

The HOP team will advise the complainant that their concern will be passed to the Directors.

Formal Complaints

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, they should be provided with the email address of the nominated lead Director for complaints. Correspondence should be marked private and confidential. The complainant should be provided with a copy of this policy by post or email.

To help resolve the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible, the individual making the complaint should do so as soon as possible and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and email.

- If the complainant does not wish to be contacted in a particular way, they will let HOP know and HOP will respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is the complainant felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What the complainant believes should be done to address the concern.

Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 working days. The complaint will then be investigated. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, the Director will contact the person complaining to request this.

A response will be sent within 14 working days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 14 days advising when HOP estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain HOP's findings and what action HOP will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will not allow HOP to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may appeal the decision, by writing to the Directors again or contacting an appropriate regulatory authority (e.g. a school academy trust or LEA). Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of HOP's response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the complainant feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days and will be final.

Wider Action

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, HOP will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to an appropriate regulatory authority (e.g. Companies House) or the Police.

Consideration will also be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked in to. However, in doing so HOP will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in HOP's work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and HOP will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and their contact details. This will also allow HOP to advise them of the outcome.

Potential Compensation Claims

If a complainant may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal issue, HOP's insurers are to be notified.

Confidentiality

The complaint will be treated as confidential and any communication on this issue, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Availability

This policy is to be made publicly available and given to anyone who advises that they wish to submit a complaint.

Approval and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Directors annually, as part of the financial planning cycle.

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Directors	July 2024	Initial draft approved	Annually
2.0	Directors	September 2025	No main changes made	Annually