

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

1. This document provides information to anyone who wants to complain about the work of Path Hill Outdoors. This includes the work of permanent staff, freelance staff and volunteers. It also sets out the way in which Path Hill Outdoors will manage the complaint process.
2. This Complaints Policy does not cover:
  - Complaints about an issue that is already the subject of disciplinary proceedings or Standards of Conduct, will not be investigated until such proceedings have been concluded.
  - Complaints that are being pursued through litigation.
3. It is our aim to:
  - Deal with complaints efficiently and fairly.
  - Keep complainants fully informed of progress with their complaint.
  - Achieve a resolution that is satisfactory to both the complainant and Path Hill Outdoors.
4. We are committed to the principle of openness and transparency.
5. All complaints will be treated confidentially. This means that the complaint will be seen only by the people who are directly involved in processing, handling and responding to the complaint.

### **Types of Complaints**

This policy covers:

- Complaints about the way Path Hill Outdoors has acted, or failed to act in the exercise of its duties.
- Complaints about any member of Path Hill Outdoors, its staff, volunteers or clients.
- Complaints from the public about the content (including accuracy and objectivity) of a published Path Hill Outdoors report, press release or website content.
- Complaints about goods or services provided to the public.
- Complaints about the way Path Hill Outdoors has managed the recruitment of its direct employees.

### **How Path Hill Outdoors deals with complaints**

- Where possible, individuals should complain to Path Hill Outdoors in writing by letter or other written form by using the form provided. This provides a formal written record or 'paper trail' of the complaint. Complaints can be sent to Path Hill Outdoors by post or email.
- If a complainant is unable to write to Path Hill Outdoors, other arrangements will be made, for example receiving the complaint over the telephone with a suitable person to transcribe the complaint to paper or an interview with amanuensis help equality of access to the complaints process.
- Complaints can be made up to six months from the date of the incident. Thereafter, complaints will only be considered at the discretion of the Directors.
- A Director will be the first point of contact for all complaints. The relevant details will be entered on to a complaints database. This data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- A Director will send a written acknowledgement to a complainant within three working days of the complaint being received at Path Hill Outdoors.

### **The Path Hill Outdoors complaints process**

The Path Hill Outdoors complaints process has two stages.

#### **Stage 1:**

- Complaints will be forwarded to the most appropriate Director.
- If a Director has been directly involved in the complaint, another Director will investigate.
- A letter containing Path Hill Outdoors' official response will be sent to the complainant from the Director within 20 working days of the initial complaint arriving at Path Hill Outdoors.

#### **Stage 2:**

- If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of his or her complaint and contacts Path Hill Outdoors again, another Director will handle the complaint process.

- A response will be sent to a complainant within 20 working days of Path Hill Outdoors receiving the second letter.
- If a complainant wishes to take legal action and notifies Path Hill Outdoors of this intention, the complaints procedure will be stopped at that point.

#### **ADDITIONAL ADVICE WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT**

When making a complaint by letter, you should try to include:

1. your name and contact details
2. who or what you are complaining about.
3. when and where the event happened.
4. what outcome you desire from the process.

You also should keep accurate records of:

1. telephone calls related to the complaint. Who you spoke to, when and what the calls were about
2. all your papers and correspondence relating to the complaint
3. details of any visits or meetings

#### **COMPLAINT FORM**

##### **NOTES ON FILLING IN THIS FORM**

You can use this form to write down the complaint you have about the work of Path Hill Outdoors its staff or Volunteers.

Please fill in as much as you can on the form, and send it to the Path Hill Outdoors head office – address below. We may need to contact you for more information.

Thank you

**PATH HILL OUTDOORS COMPLAINTS FORM**

**Details of the person making the complaint:**

Name of person filling in the form .....

Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / other (please circle)

Address

.....  
.....  
.....

Post code .....

Daytime telephone number .....

Date .....

Are you writing on behalf of someone else?      Yes/No

If you are writing on behalf of someone else, we may need to ask consent from that person, before we are able to investigate the complaint. Who are you writing on behalf of?

Name .....

Relationship to you .....

**The complaint**

To help us investigate the complaint, please try and answer the questions below.

What is your complaint about? Please use extra paper if needed.

.....  
.....

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.....

Was anyone else involved?                      Yes / No

If yes are you able to provide their names?

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Where did the incident or problem happen?

.....

When did the incident or problem happen?

.....

Is there anything else you want to add and what would you like to happen? Please use a separate piece of paper if needed.

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Signed by:..... Date: .....

**Path Hill Outdoors, Path Hill Farm, Goring Heath, Nr. Pangbourne, Reading RG8 7RE**

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