



Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

Skylight Circus Arts aims to provide safe, inclusive and high-quality activities and services.

We recognise that sometimes things go wrong. We welcome complaints and will use them to help us put things right and improve what we do.

We will:

- listen and take complaints seriously
- deal with complaints fairly and respectfully
- respond within reasonable timescales
- make our complaints process accessible
- take appropriate action where something has gone wrong.

No one will be treated unfairly for making a genuine complaint or raising a concern.

2. Who can make a complaint?

Anyone affected by Skylight Circus Arts' work can make a complaint. This includes:

- children and young people
- adult participants
- parents and carers

- adults at risk
- visitors and members of the public
- customers, donors and supporters
- partner organisations.

Someone may be supported by a parent, carer, advocate or another person to make a complaint where appropriate.

Staff concerns relating to their employment should normally be dealt with through Skylight's Grievance Procedure. Concerns about serious wrongdoing may be dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy.

3. What can I complain about?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about something Skylight Circus Arts has done, failed to do, or the behaviour of someone acting on behalf of Skylight.

This may include:

- the quality of an activity or service
- behaviour of a member of staff, freelancer, volunteer, trustee or participant
- communication or administration
- accessibility or discrimination
- health and safety
- fundraising
- how personal information has been handled
- how a previous concern has been dealt with.

You do not need to use the word complaint for us to recognise that you are unhappy or concerned about something.

4. How to make a complaint

Complaints can be made:

- in person to a member of staff
- by telephone

- by email
- in writing
- through another person where appropriate
- through the feedback and concerns box in Skylight's foyer.

Contact:

Skylight Circus Arts
St Chad's Fold
Sparrow Hill
Rochdale
OL16 1QT

Telephone: 01706 650676

Email: tellus@skylightcircusarts.com

It is helpful if you tell us what happened, when it happened, who was involved and what you would like us to do.

However, you do not have to provide all of this information before we will listen to your complaint.

Feedback and concerns box

A feedback and concerns box is available in Skylight's foyer for anyone who may prefer to write something down rather than speak to a member of staff.

The box is checked once each week.

The box must not be used if someone is at immediate risk, feels unsafe, or needs help straight away.

In these situations, speak to a member of staff on the day or give the note directly to a member of staff.

People may leave feedback anonymously. However, if they do not provide their name or contact details, Skylight may not be able to contact them about their concern or provide an individual response.

If a note contains a safeguarding concern, it will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and dealt with under Skylight's safeguarding procedures.

Children and young people

Children and young people can raise a complaint themselves and do not need a parent or carer to complain for them.

We will explain what is happening in a way they understand and will offer appropriate support to help them take part in the process.

Accessibility

A complaint does not have to be made in writing.

We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and anyone who needs additional support to use our complaints process.

5. Safeguarding concerns

If a complaint raises concerns that a child, young person or adult at risk may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or harm, **safeguarding takes priority over the complaints process.**

The concern will be passed to Skylight's Designated Safeguarding Lead and dealt with under the relevant:

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy and/or
- Online Safeguarding Policy.

Allegations or concerns about someone working or volunteering with children or adults at risk will also be managed under Skylight's safeguarding procedures.

Skylight will contact external safeguarding agencies or the police where required.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

6. Our complaints process

Step 1 – Informal resolution

Where appropriate, we will try to resolve straightforward concerns quickly and informally.

This might involve:

- speaking to a member of staff
- explaining what happened
- correcting a mistake
- providing information
- apologising where appropriate.

A person does not have to use Step 1 if:

- the issue is serious
- they do not feel comfortable raising it informally
- the complaint is about the person they would normally speak to or
- they would prefer to make a formal complaint.
- If the concern is not resolved, the person can move to Step 2.

Step 2 – Formal complaint

A formal complaint can be made using any of the methods listed in Section 4.

We will normally:

- acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days
- confirm who is dealing with it
- investigate the complaint fairly
- provide an outcome within 20 working days where possible.

If we need more information, we may contact the complainant.

The person investigating the complaint should not be the person being complained about or someone with a significant conflict of interest.

If we need longer than 20 working days, we will explain why and provide an updated timescale.

Step 3 – Review

If the complainant believes their complaint has not been dealt with fairly, they can ask for a review.

A review should normally be requested within 20 working days of receiving the Step 2 outcome.

Where possible, the review will be carried out by someone who was not involved in the original decision. This may be a senior member of staff or trustee.

The review will consider whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly
- relevant information was considered
- the complaints procedure was followed
- the outcome was reasonable.

The review is the final stage of Skylight Circus Arts' internal complaints process.

Complaints about the most senior member of staff will normally be referred to the Chair of Trustees.

Complaints about the Chair will be considered by another trustee who is not involved in the matter.

7. Outcome

We will explain the outcome of a formal complaint and, where appropriate, what we will do as a result.

This might include:

- an explanation or apology
- correcting a mistake
- changing the way something is done
- reviewing a policy or procedure

- training or support
- another appropriate action.

We may not be able to share confidential information about action taken in relation to another person.

8. Fundraising and data protection complaints

Fundraising complaints will be handled under this policy and in line with the current Code of Fundraising Practice.

This complaints procedure also applies to fundraising carried out on Skylight Circus Arts' behalf by third-party fundraisers.

Where appropriate, unresolved fundraising complaints may be referred to the Fundraising Regulator.

Complaints about how Skylight has handled personal information will also be dealt with in accordance with Skylight's Data Protection Policy and current data-protection law.

A person may also raise a data-protection concern with the Information Commissioner's Office.

9. Confidentiality and records

Complaints will be handled as confidentially as reasonably possible.

Information will only be shared where there is an appropriate reason to do so, including to investigate the complaint, safeguard someone or meet a legal or regulatory responsibility.

Skylight will keep an appropriate record of complaints, actions taken and outcomes.

Records will be stored securely and managed in line with our data-protection and record-retention arrangements.

10. Learning from complaints

Skylight will use complaints to identify learning and improvements.

Significant or recurring issues will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees where appropriate.

11. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside Skylight Circus Arts':

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Antibullying Policy
- Online Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media and Digital Communications Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Grievance Procedure.

12. Review

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the complaints process.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in legislation, guidance or Skylight's practice.