



## **Complaints Policy 2020**

<b>Policy drafted</b>	<b>January 2020</b>
<b>Board approval</b>	<b>18thMarch 2020</b>
<b>Policy review</b>	<b>March 2021</b>
<b>Policy updates</b>	

## **1. Introduction**

Parks for London aims to provide high quality services to its 'supporters' and other organisations that we collaborate with or undertake work for.

We are always exploring how we can develop as an organisation to provide high quality and appropriate resources for and improve support to London's land managers; in part, we achieve this by undertaking an annual survey of our supporters and others we collaborate with. We believe we provide a valuable quality service and are getting it right most of the time, if we are not then we would like to know. All complaints will be taken seriously and help us to maintain high and improving standards.

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the policy are to:

- define a complaint;
- make it clear how to raise a complaint;
- explain the complaints process and who will deal with the complaint;
- and give details of what to do in the case of a dispute.

## **3. Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is different from an enquiry or a request. A complaint is when someone in receipt of Parks for London's services, contacts us to tell us that they are dissatisfied either with a service provided, actions or lack of action, or other faults.

## **4. What our policy does not cover**

4.1 Parks for London can only deal with complaints directly connected to its services, we cannot for example deal with a complaint about the state of a particular park.

4.2 Unless there are exceptional circumstances we will not deal with a complaint more than 12 months after its occurrence.

4.3 On a small number of occasions we may withdraw the complaints procedure from a complainant whose behaviour is unreasonable (for example if someone keeps raising the same complaint in different ways), or we may have to restrict contact. In such circumstances, we will explain to the complainant or their advocate, in writing, why this action is being taken.

## **5. Making a complaint**

5.1 Complaints can be made by any means, including: by letter, telephone, in person or by email (contact details are given at the end of this policy).

5.2 So that complaints can be dealt with quickly we would ask that the complaint should be kept as short and to the point as possible. Any evidence provided should be of a reasonable length. Excessively long submissions will not be considered and will be returned to the complainant.

5.3 Complaints can be made via an advocate(s) providing they have the complainant's consent.

5.4 Complaints will also be accepted where the client cannot complain unaided and cannot give consent because they lack capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the representative is acting in the client's best interests, for example, where the matter complained about, if true, would be detrimental to the client.

5.5 Anonymous complaints will be investigated and the outcome reported on Parks for London's website.

## **6. Who will deal with the complaint?**

6.1 Generally, complaints will be handled by the Chief Executive (CE)

6.2 If a complaint is made about the CE, the Chair of Trustees will deal with the complaint.

## **7. What happens when a complaint is received?**

7.1 Parks for London will acknowledge the complaint, no more than five working days after its receipt and say who will deal with it. We will always endeavour to resolve a complaint or issue quickly and effectively, as outlined below:

Stage 1: The CE will consider the complaint and may contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and ensure that the issues are fully understood by the CE. Following investigation, the CE will write to the complainant with the result; this will be within ten working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 2: If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved by the CE, he or she will have a period of up to 25 working days to inform the CE and explain why the complaint is still outstanding. The Chair of Trustees will then look at the issue again and will work with the complainant to arrive at an appropriate outcome.

This will usually involve a meeting to which the complainant can bring an advocate or friend to offer support, but the advocate or friend will not be able to act in a legal capacity. Papers prepared for the meeting will also be copied to the complainant and their comments can be submitted for consideration before the meeting if they wish. We will aim to resolve stage two within 20 working days. The Chair's decision is final.

7.2 It should be noted that there may be circumstances where the above timescales may need to be extended, either because the CE or Chair are on leave or it is not possible to arrange a meeting that is convenient for all parties within the timescales. In general, we would always hope to resolve issues within our policy timescales.

7.4 On rare occasions Parks for London may decide to shorten the process under the following circumstances:

- if the complaint is being pursued unreasonably (such as under the circumstances mentioned in 4.3 above);
- where the client cannot be specific about what they wish Parks for London to do and we can add nothing further;
- if the issue raised through the complaint is outside Parks for London's control, or changing a decision is outside of our control;
- if legal action is taken. In this case the process will be stopped to deal with the legal action.

The above list is not exhaustive, we will always explain to the complainant, in writing why the process is being shortened.

## **8. Putting things right**

8.1 Parks for London will take necessary measures to put things right, where we are at fault and make a formal apology. Where a complaint results in a change to a policy or a service, we will inform the complainant of the change.

8.2 Closure of a complaint may take place before a matter is completely resolved and Parks for London may make a commitment to act within a clear timescale.

## **9. Safeguarding complaints**

If a complaint is connected to a safeguarding issue, we would refer the complainant to our safeguarding policy also available on our website.

## **10. Training**

As part of the staff induction process, Parks for London will ensure that its staff are aware of its complaints policy and processes; as well as our commitment to providing high quality services and resources to our supporters and others. We want our clients to feel valued, supported and receive excellent customer care.

Trustees will also be made aware of the Policy.

The Policy will be published on the Parks for London website

## **11. Monitoring and reporting**

All complaints will be recorded, progress monitored and any changes in practices will be reported to the Board of trustees.

The Policy will be reviewed annually.

## **12. Contacts**

Complaints can be:

-emailed to: the CE at: [tony.leach@parksforlondon.org.uk](mailto:tony.leach@parksforlondon.org.uk) or where it is applicable to do so the Chair of Trustees Nigel Thorne, can be contacted at: [Chair@parksforlondon.org.uk](mailto:Chair@parksforlondon.org.uk)

-by letter addressed to Tony Leach, pp19b City Hall, The Queens Walk, London SE1 2AA

-by telephone 020 7983 4495