



JRF Complaints Procedure

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) interacts with external agencies and individuals on a regular basis. We aim to treat everyone that we deal with in a consistent, fair and transparent manner and with courtesy, but there may be occasions when we fall short of this aspiration. If you are unhappy with your contact with JRF, we want to hear about it so that, with your feedback, we can improve our performance.

Complaints should be distinguished from criticisms or disagreements with JRF decisions.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is anything that has caused you to be dissatisfied about the service you have received from JRF, an agent or contractor acting on behalf of JRF, or any interaction you have had with us.

We aim to:

- deal with your complaint quickly
- handle it fairly and politely
- deal with it in an impartial and objective manner
- look into it fully
- resolve the problem where possible.

Resolving your complaint

First contact

The first thing you should do is contact a member of staff with responsibility for the area to which your complaint relates. If you do not know who this person is then please contact the Head of Secretariat, (contact details at the end of this leaflet). Please give details of your complaint and what you think we should do to put it right. We will take all reasonable steps to establish the circumstances and facts, by whatever means appropriate, to gain a full understanding of events that have occurred and decisions that have been made by all parties.

We hope that most complaints can be addressed at this point, however, if you do not think your concerns have been addressed satisfactorily you can use our Complaints Procedure which is explained below.

We will tell you if we do not think it is appropriate to deal with your concern via our complaints process and what alternative course of action we will follow outside of our complaints process.

Comments and enquiries

You may wish to make a comment or have an enquiry, but you may not consider or describe this as a complaint. We will consider all the comments we receive and on further consideration of your circumstances, we may choose to deal with the matter within our complaints process. We will acknowledge your comment within 2 working days and tell you what action, if any, will be taken within 10 working days.

Clarification

You may require clarification or an explanation of a policy or a decision we have made. We will acknowledge your request within 2 working days and seek to provide you with a full response within 10 working days.

Stage 1: Making your complaint

Please put your complaint in writing. You can do this by writing a letter or sending an email. All complaints will be referred to the Head of Secretariat.

What you can expect from us:

- We will send you a letter acknowledging your complaint and clarifying the matters of concern that we need to investigate further. You will get this letter within 2 working days of us receiving your complaint. We will tell you:
 - when you can expect a full reply
 - the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint.
- When we investigate your complaint, your identity will only be made known to people who need to know, in order to give your complaint full consideration and to gain a full understanding of events that have taken place and decisions that have been made. In some instances it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality and, if you have requested this, we will discuss this matter with you before taking any further action.
- We aim to give you a full reply within 10 working days from the date of our acknowledgement letter to you. Usually we can do this but if your complaint is complicated, it may take longer. If this happens, we will let you know

within the initial 10 working days (ie from the date of our acknowledgement letter to you) explaining:

- why a full reply will take longer
 - what we are doing to deal with your complaint
 - when you can expect an answer
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- If we agree that you had a good reason to complain, we will apologise and try to put things right as soon as we can. If we disagree or cannot put things right, we will tell you why and give you a full explanation of the course of action we have taken.
 - Complaints about a member of staff will be dealt with by a more senior member of staff.
 - Complaints which are considered to be very serious or complex, (for example a complaint against the Chief Executive or a Trustee), may miss stage one due to the nature of the complaint, and be considered immediately at either stage two or the final stage, and may require the appointment of an independent person to deal with the complaint. We will exercise our discretion and only omit stages in exceptional circumstances. We will explain to you our reasons for omitting any stages of the complaints process.

Stage 2: What to do if you're still not happy

If you are not happy with our reply, please contact the Head of Secretariat in writing. You can email or write a letter. You should explain why you are not happy with our reply and what action you think we should take. We will acknowledge your request within 2 working days.

What you can expect from us:

- We will ask a senior member of staff to take a fresh look at your complaint and carry out an investigation. We will write to you with the results of the investigation within 10 working days from the date of our written acknowledgement of your Stage 2 complaint.
- If we think you had a good reason to complain, we will apologise and take action to put things right as soon as possible.
- If we uphold our original decision a full explanation of the reason why will be included in our written response.
- We aim to give you a full reply within 10 working days from the date of our acknowledgement of your Stage 2 complaint. Usually we can do this but if your complaint is complicated, it may take longer. If this happens, we will let you know within the initial 10 working days (from the date of our acknowledgement of your Stage 2 complaint) explaining:
 - Why a full reply will take longer
 - What we are doing to deal with your complaint
 - When you can expect an answer
- If we agree that you had a good reason to complain, we will apologise and try to put things right as soon as we can. If we disagree or cannot put things right, we will tell you why and give you a full explanation of the course of action we have taken.

Final stage: What to do if you want to take your complaint further

If you are not happy with the reply, please contact the Head of Secretariat who will acknowledge your Final Stage complaint within 2 working days. We will refer your complaint to the JRF Chief Executive or someone independent nominated by the Chair of the appropriate Board.

If the complaint is about the JRF Chief Executive the complaint will be referred to the Chair of Trustees or someone independent nominated by them.

At this stage, depending on the nature of your complaint, the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees may investigate the complaint and the responses you have received so far. The person considering the complaint will take appropriate steps to satisfy him/herself that s/he has a full understanding of the events which have taken place and the decisions made by all parties. You will be provided with a written response containing their conclusions within 15 working days from our acknowledgement of your Final Stage complaint.

In occasional circumstances, you may be invited to attend a meeting. You may bring along someone else to advocate and /or provide support. Where a meeting is required, a date will be identified which is mutually convenient for all participants, and you will be notified of the names and job titles of the people you will be meeting with. Wherever possible, this process – including the meeting and you receiving a written conclusion of the outcome of the meeting – will take place within 6 weeks from the date of our written acknowledgement of your Final Stage complaint.

If the person considering your complaint thinks you had good reason to complain, we will apologise and take action to put things right as soon as possible.

All Final Stage complaints will be reported anonymously to our Board of Trustees regardless of the outcome. This is to ensure that we can monitor and improve our service.

Changes to the procedure set out in this leaflet

Please note that, in exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Trustees may agree changes to the process set out above where deemed appropriate, in order to draw the complaint to a conclusion.

Charity Commission

JRF is regulated by the Charity Commission. The following guidance has been provided by the Commission:-

“The Commission’s powers of intervention are specifically designed for use in the circumstances where there is some grave, general risk to a charity’s interests and are designed principally to protect the charity and its assets. Complaints that the Commission will take up as regulator are, generally speaking, ones where there is a serious risk of significant harm or abuse to the charity, its assets, beneficiaries or reputation; where the use of the Commission’s powers of intervention is necessary to protect them; and where this represents a proportionate response to the issues in the case.”

We deal with all complaints within the principles of the Data Protection Act.

Unreasonably persistent complaints/Unreasonable behaviour of complainants

We reserve the right, in exceptional circumstances, to refuse to deal with complaints that are pursued in an unreasonable way

Further information

If you require any further information or have a query about our complaints process then please contact: Head of Secretariat, JRF, Tel 01904 615989, Email: ros.jahnke@jrf.org.uk, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York, YO30 6WP

In the absence of the Head of Secretariat, please contact the Information Officer at the address above, email info@jrf.org.uk.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Homestead,
40 Water End,
York,
YO30 6WP

Tel: 01904 615989 Fax: 01904 620072

We welcome calls through typetalk

Email: ros.jahnke@jrf.org.uk

www.jrf.org.uk