

Complaints & Feedback Policy - Noa's Place CIO

1. Introduction

Noa's Place CIO is committed to providing a high quality, inclusive, and welcoming environment for neurodivergent and disabled individuals and their families. We value all feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our services, our Halifax hub, and our digital resources.

This policy outlines how individuals can provide feedback or make a complaint, and how Noa's Place CIO will respond.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all feedback and complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and quickly.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all services provided by Noa's Place, including use of the sensory rooms, community café, indoor playground, charity shop, digital tools, and advocacy services. It is available to all service users, families, volunteers, and members of the public.

3. Our Principles

- **Welcoming and Accessible:** We recognise that for many in our community, communication can be a barrier. We welcome feedback in various formats (written, verbal, or via a representative).
- **No masking required:** We encourage honest feedback without fear of judgement or loss of service, recognising that people may communicate distress, discomfort, or disagreement in different ways.
- **Fairness:** All complaints will be dealt with impartially, objectively, and professionally.
- **Confidentiality:** Information will be handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and evolve our community support model.

4. Feedback and Suggestions

We encourage informal feedback at any time. This can be shared:

- In person with staff or volunteers at the Halifax hub.
- Via email at hello@noasplace.org.uk.
- Through our digital feedback tools or suggestion boxes located within the community space.

5. Complaints Procedure

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with our service, staff, or actions.

Safeguarding first

If a complaint includes (or suggests) a safeguarding concern (for example: safety, abuse, neglect, harassment, sexual misconduct, or a risk to a child or adult at risk), it will be handled immediately under our Safeguarding Policy (not through the stages below). Where appropriate, we may also refer concerns to statutory agencies.

Three-stage process

Stage 1: Informal resolution

In the first instance, we encourage individuals to speak directly with the staff member or volunteer involved. Most concerns can be resolved quickly through open, calm communication.

Stage 2: Formal written complaint (Founder/Manager)

If the matter is not resolved informally, or if the individual wishes to bypass Stage 1 due to the seriousness of the matter, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing (email or letter) to the Founder/Manager (Josh Barnes).

- **Email:** hello@noasplace.org.uk

The complaint should include a clear description of the issue, the date it occurred, and the desired outcome.

Noa's Place will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.
2. Investigate the matter thoroughly, which may involve interviewing relevant parties.
3. Provide a full written response within **10 working days**. If more time is needed for a complex investigation, the complainant will be notified of the delay and given an updated timeframe.

Stage 3: Appeal to the Board of Trustees

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response, they may request an appeal. This request must be made within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 decision.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees (or a designated Trustee panel) who has not been previously involved in the matter. The Board may request further information and will provide a final decision within **20 working days** of the appeal request. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final within the organization's internal processes.

6. Accessibility Support

Noa's Place understands that neurodivergent individuals or those with additional needs may require support to navigate this process. We are happy to:

- Accept complaints via video or audio recording.
- Meet with the complainant and a support person/advocate.
- Provide information in Easy Read or large print formats upon request.

7. External Escalation

If the complaint remains unresolved after Stage 3, or if the complaint concerns a serious breach of charity law or a significant safeguarding risk, individuals may contact external bodies:

- **The Charity Commission:** For concerns regarding the administration of the charity or financial impropriety.
- **The Fundraising Regulator:** If the complaint concerns charity shop operations or fundraising activities.
- **Local Authority Safeguarding Team:** If the complaint involves the safety or wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult.

8. Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

While we strive to resolve every concern, Noa's Place reserves the right to limit communication with individuals whose complaints are proven to be malicious, or who become habitually persistent or abusive toward staff and volunteers.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will receive an anonymised summary of all formal complaints and feedback annually. This review ensures that Noa's Place identifies trends and implements necessary changes to maintain our high standards of community support.

Commitment to learning and improvement

We will use feedback and complaints to improve our services and the experience at Noa's Place. Where appropriate, we will:

- identify themes and root causes;
- make reasonable changes to processes, training, or environments (including sensory and accessibility adjustments);
- share learning internally with staff/volunteers and, where helpful, report back to the complainant about what has changed.

Date of Policy Adoption: [19/11/2025]

Date for Next Review: [19/11/2026]