



# Complaints Policy

<b>Issue Date</b>	February 2026	<b>Reference</b>	P/009
<b>Next Review Due</b>	February 2027	<b>Review Cycle</b>	Annual
<b>Reviewing Panel</b>	Board of Trustees		
<b>Applicability</b>	Sabbatical Officers Executive Committee Members Customers		

## 1. Abstract

- 1.1. Josephine Butler Junior Common Room CIO (“the JCR”) is a registered charity, established for the public benefit and the advancement of education of students at Josephine Butler College.
- 1.2. This Complaints Policy outlines the approach that the JCR shall take to dealing with complaints.
- 1.3. If a JCR member is dissatisfied in their dealings with the JCR, one of its members or officers, they may use the JCR Complaints Procedure.
- 1.4. The JCR strives to uphold its reputation, and as such:
  - 1.4.1. The JCR will take all complaints seriously and view them as opportunities to learn and improve from feedback.
  - 1.4.2. The JCR will deal with complaints promptly and sensitively.
  - 1.4.3. The JCR will act with integrity, consistent with principles of natural justice, when handling complaints.
- 1.5. This Complaints Policy is consistent with the Common Room’s responsibilities under the 1994 Education Act.
- 1.6. This Complaints Policy draws from Durham University’s Recognised Common Room Complaints Procedure, the St John’s Common Room Complaints Procedure for Members, and the St Cuthbert’s Society Junior Common Room Complaints Policy.

## 2. Establishment & Scope

- 2.1. The JCR President will be the designated ‘Complaints Officer’ for the JCR, and as such is responsible for the oversight and execution of this Complaints Policy.
- 2.2. A complaint is defined in this Complaints Policy as an expression of dissatisfaction surrounding actions taken, or a lack of action.
- 2.3. This Complaints Policy addresses:
  - 2.3.1. Complaints against a JCR sport, society, or committee.
  - 2.3.2. Complaints about a JCR event.
  - 2.3.3. Complaints against an individual who has brought the JCR into disrepute.
  - 2.3.4. And in the context of their involvement with the JCR:

- 2.3.4.1. Complaints against non-sabbatical members of the executive committee.
- 2.3.4.2. Complaints against other JCR role-holders.
- 2.3.4.3. Complaints about other JCR members.
- 2.3.4.4. Complaints about non-JCR members, in the context of their involvement with a JCR sport, society, committee or event.

2.4. This Complaints Policy does not address:

- 2.4.1. Complaints against the JCR as an organization
  - 2.4.1.1. These are dealt with through the Organizational Complaints Policy.
- 2.4.2. Complaints against JCR employees.
  - 2.4.2.1. These are dealt with through the Complaints Against Employees Policy.
- 2.4.3. Complaints about and by candidates, campaigners, and/or voters.
  - 2.4.3.1. These are dealt with through the Campaign Regulations as detailed in the JCR Standing Orders.
- 2.4.4. Complaints relating to matters of student conduct or wellbeing where these are not through dealings with services provided by the JCR, or such that the JCR cannot affect a remedy.
  - 2.4.4.1. The Complaints Officer will refer concerns of this nature to relevant Durham University policies and procedures and decline to open a complaint investigation.
- 2.4.5. Complaints of a safeguarding nature.
  - 2.4.5.1. These are dealt with in respect to the JCR's Safeguarding Policy alongside the Josephine Butler College Safeguarding Lead.
- 2.4.6. Complaints raised by students who have opted out of membership, by university staff, or by members of the public.

2.5. This Complaints Policy does not prevent a complainant raising a concern via the complaints procedures of Durham University.

- 2.6. If an individual raises complaint that the procedures outlined in this Complaints Policy have been mismanaged, their complaint will be referred directly to Stage 4 – Independent Review.
- 2.7. The JCR welcomes feedback and will endeavour to address concerns raised by those who are not JCR members.
- 2.8. If a complaint is upheld under this Complaints Policy, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken as outlined in the Discipline Policy.

### **3. Raising a Complaint**

- 3.1. The JCR accepts complaints within 30 working days of the concern.
  - 3.1.1. The Complaints Officer has the discretion to accept late complaints in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2. To raise a complaint, complainants must email the Complaints Officer at [butler.jcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:butler.jcr@durham.ac.uk). This email should:
  - 3.2.1. Clearly indicate that it is a complaint
  - 3.2.2. Give as much detail into the concern as possible
  - 3.2.3. Give the date or timeframe in which the concern occurred
  - 3.2.4. Provide any detail about any previous attempts to informally rectify the concern if there have been any
  - 3.2.5. What remedy you think may be appropriate
- 3.3. The JCR will not accept complaints which are anonymous, malicious, or vexatious.
- 3.4. Complainants are expected to complain personally, and the Complaints Officer has discretion to reject complaints made on behalf of another party, or without probable cause.
- 3.5. In some cases, the JCR may be unable to assist complainants with procedural or pastoral support due to an organizational conflict of interest.
- 3.6. At formal stages of a complaint process, complainants and those complained about have the right to be accompanied to meetings by a supporter.
- 3.7. Legal representation is not permitted.

## **4. Stage 1 – Informal Discussion**

- 4.1. The Common Room welcomes the opportunity to discuss a complaint informally with a concerned member, where possible. Not all complainants will take this opportunity, and this is understood and accepted.
- 4.2. The Complaints Officer also has discretion to decide that the complaint is inappropriate to consider in informal discussion and may refer the matter straight to Stage 2.
- 4.3. The JCR will not consider participation in informal discussion as material in subsequent stages of complaint.

## **5. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

- 5.1. The Complaints Officer will commence an investigation within 10 working days in accordance with the following:
  - 5.1.1. They will offer an opportunity to the complainant to discuss their complaint in a face-to-face or online interview but may proceed with the investigation without one if necessary.
  - 5.1.2. They may conduct further interviews or request correspondence from parties relevant to the complaint, all of whom are expected to fully cooperate.
  - 5.1.3. They will determine findings of fact, consider mitigation, review relevant policies and procedures, and decide on the balance of probabilities whether the complaint should be upheld.
  - 5.1.4. A report should be prepared including all evidence and statements gathered over the course of the investigation, the relevant policies and procedures, the conclusion of the investigation, and a proposed remedy. This should be presented to the relevant disciplinary bodies as outlined under the Discipline Policy (P/026).
  - 5.1.5. If they uphold a complaint, they will refer the matter to the Discipline Policy (P/026).

- 5.1.6. The complainant should be asked their view on an effective remedy, but this is only advisory and not binding upon the Complaints Officer.
  - 5.1.7. A remedy is only binding once agreed by the relevant disciplinary body as outlined under the Discipline Policy (P/026)
  - 5.1.8. Once the investigation under the Discipline Policy (P/026) has been completed, the complainant and the subject of the complaint will be advised in writing as to the outcome of the complaint investigation and the determined effective remedy.
  - 5.1.9. Information may be shared with the police if necessary.
- 5.2. Possible remedies that could be recommended unilaterally by the Complaints Officer, in line with the Discipline Policy (P/026), may include:
- 5.2.1. Formal apology
  - 5.2.2. Mediation
  - 5.2.3. Community service
  - 5.2.4. Suspension from an SSC (up to 2 terms)
  - 5.2.5. Barring from JCR social events (up to 2 terms)
  - 5.2.6. Any other disciplinary action which could reasonably be considered commensurate in magnitude with the actions listed above.
- 5.3. Possible remedies that could be recommended by the Complaints Officer in conjunction with the JCR Disciplinary Panel may include:
- 5.3.1. Change to a policy or procedure
  - 5.3.2. Remedial costs
  - 5.3.3. Suspension of office
  - 5.3.4. Suspension of membership
  - 5.3.5. Ban from attending an SSC
  - 5.3.6. Suspension of an SSC
  - 5.3.7. Ban from attending JCR social event
  - 5.3.8. Ban from running for JCR positions

- 5.3.9. Removal of person from a position of responsibility within an SSC
  - 5.3.10. Abolition of an SSC
  - 5.3.11. Removal of office
  - 5.3.12. Removal of JCR membership
  - 5.3.13. Any other disciplinary action which could reasonably be considered commensurate in magnitude with the actions listed above.
- 5.4. The Board of Trustees also has the power to exercise any remedies that it deems to be in the best interests of the charity.
- 5.5. The JCR hopes that all complaints will be investigated and resolved at stage 2 within 30 working days. Complex complaints or exceptional circumstances may mean that this target is not met, but the investigator will communicate progress throughout the investigation.

## **6. Stage 3 – Complaint Appeals**

- 6.1. The complainant may only appeal if they have evidence of either procedural irregularity in the handling of the complaint, or new relevant evidence which could not reasonably be expected to have been available to the investigator during the initial investigation. For the avoidance of doubt, there are no grounds for appeal if the complainant disagrees with the outcome or disagrees with the recommendation of effective remedy.
- 6.2. The complainant should submit an appeal to the Complaints Officer within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint outcome, making clear the grounds for appeal.
- 6.3. The Complaints Officer/s will appoint another member of the Common Room Executive to consider the appeal, who will not reinvestigate the complaint, but will determine within 10 working days:
- 6.3.1. Whether there is evidence of procedural irregularity, such that they may at their discretion request a new investigation.

6.3.2. Whether new evidence, in their judgement, means that a different complaint outcome is probable, or a different recommendation of effective remedy is appropriate.

## **7. Stage 4 – Independent Review**

- 7.1. If requested, the Complaints Officer will appoint an independent person (“The Supervisor”) to review complaints following an appeal. This would be the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their delegate (trustees.chair@butlerjcr.com)
  - 7.1.1. Their role is not to undertake a new investigation.
  - 7.1.2. They will review the investigation, assure the effective operation of the Complaints Policy and report on what confidence can be placed on the outcome and the effective remedy.
- 7.2. Those who have completed Stage 3 and remain unsatisfied may ask the Complaints Officer to refer their case to the Supervisor.
  - 7.2.1. The Supervisor may request a conversation with the complainant but may also rely on documentary evidence only.
- 7.3. The review should normally be completed within 10 working days.

## **8. Reporting**

- 8.1. The Complaints Officer must maintain records of all complaints received and investigated using this procedure until 31st July in the following academic year, which is a reasonable time frame for analysis and review, or within two weeks of the student ceasing to be a member of Durham University (whichever comes later).
  - 8.1.1. The JCR GDPR, Data Protection, and Privacy Policy (P/003) governs the use of these records.
- 8.2. The Complaints Officer is responsible for providing an annual report to the JCR Board of Trustees on complaints received under this procedure.
  - 8.2.1. A copy of this report will also be provided to the College Principal.

## 9. Implementation

- 9.1. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their deputy, and the JCR President, will ensure that this Complaints Policy is brought to the attention of JCR members and will ensure that they shall feel confident to make complaints when required.
- 9.2. The Board of Trustees shall monitor the implementation of this policy.
- 9.3. Should the JCR President be found to have misused this Complaints Policy, they will be given a formal warning by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 9.3.1. If another misuse of the Complaints Policy occurs, the JCR President will be replaced as Complaints Officer by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their delegate.

## 10. Approval & Review

- 10.1. This Complaints Policy was prepared in December 2025 by the JCR President, on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
- 10.2. This policy shall be reviewed every year by the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the JCR President, and the JCR Executive Committee.
- 10.3. Durham University Council is required to ensure that this procedure exists and is working well and analysis will form part of the annual assurance report received by Council.

**This Complaints Policy has been approved by the JCR President, and the Board of Trustees.**

Signed David Evans  
Signature



Dated Date 21/02/26

Position **Chair, Board of Trustees**

Signed Joshua Barrett  
Signature



Dated Date 18/02/26

Position **JCR President (2025-26)**

