

Trefoil Guild complaints policy

The Trefoil Guild recognises its responsibility to support its members to attain and maintain standards of personal and organisational behaviour in line with the aims and purpose of the Trefoil Guild. Members are guided in their actions through clear policies and procedures, the Trefoil code of conduct and a supporting infrastructure at national, country, region and county levels.

The Trefoil Guild embraces a culture where all members can speak up about things that concern them and is committed to responding fairly, constructively, and consistently in respect to any expressions of concern or dissatisfaction.

This policy can be used by Trefoil members, prospective members and members of the public should the need arise.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of concern or dissatisfaction about any aspect of the Trefoil Guild including but not limited to our organisational behaviour, our members, our staff, a situation or an event.

Making a complaint

Complaints or concerns should always be raised as soon as possible. If your concerns relate to a safeguarding issue or financial irregularity, they should be raised immediately. Delays in raising your concerns may impact our ability to consider or investigate the issue and may create a risk to the organisation or our members.

Step 1 – informal and local discussions

Most complaints can be resolved locally if you feel comfortable doing so. This is often the quickest and best way to deal with an issue, so talk to your local Trefoil Guild chair or your Trefoil county chair in the first instance. If resolution cannot be reached at local level, or you feel that it is not right to do so, then progress a formal complaint through the national Trefoil Guild office.

Step 2 – raise a formal complaint

If you have been unable to resolve your concerns locally then contact the Trefoil Guild office by email to trefoilguild@girlguiding.org.uk or write to us at The Trefoil Guild, 17–19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT.

You will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your complaint or concern to enable it to be investigated.

Please include the following in your communication:

- Your name and Trefoil membership number if you are a member
 - If you are not a Trefoil member you should describe the context and rationale for raising the complaint
- Clarity as to whether you are making a complaint on behalf of a third party and whether they have your permission to speak on your behalf.
- A brief outline of your concerns or complaint, including steps taken to date to resolve it, together with relevant details, supportive information or evidence and dates.
- A postal or email address where you are happy to be contacted, as well as a contact telephone number.
- Your thoughts count so let us know what you think went wrong, how you feel it could be resolved and describe any impact that this has had on you.

You must ensure that any communication or information sent to us aligns with the General Data Protection Regulation. Any electronic communications containing personal or confidential information should be password protected before sending. Information sent by post should also be secure and sent by tracked and signed for delivery. If you need help or advice, contact the Trefoil office prior to sending anything.

Step 3 – our complaint process

3a We will acknowledge your complaint within 10 working days of receipt.

3b Your complaint or concern will be reviewed by the national chair, the treasurer or chair of finance and general purposes committee as relevant to agree a course of action.

3c If deemed that a local resolution may be possible but hasn't been attempted, we will contact you and offer to put you in touch with the relevant Trefoil member to help you resolve the problem locally.

3d Following review it may be determined that the concern or complaint may be resolved without the need for investigation. You will be updated on those actions before closing the complaint.

3e If a more detailed or formal investigation is needed, an appropriate Trefoil member will be assigned to progress it. Depending on the nature of

the complaint, the lead investigator may be part of the national, country, region or county team.

- The amount of contact between the investigator and the complainant will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved in resolving the problem and the clarity of the information provided.
- The complainant or members mentioned in a complaint may be asked for further details, evidence or may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns.
- At all meetings, members have the option of being accompanied by a third party who is not involved in the complaint.
- The investigator will report their findings and make their initial recommendations back to the national chair, the treasurer or chair of finance and general purposes committee as relevant.
- The aim will be to provide an initial response to the complainant within 28 working days of receipt of the initial complaint with a final report provided within 3 months of receipt. If the investigation may take longer than anticipated to resolve, you will be kept informed of progress and given an estimate as to when you may expect to receive an update on progress.

Complainants should be aware that the Trefoil Guild is a volunteer led organisation and as such timelines for resolution may be impacted by their other personal and work commitments.

Step 4 - the appeals process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution a review can be requested by emailing or writing to the national Trefoil Guild office within 14 days of the date of the communication informing you of the resolution, describing why the response was not acceptable.

- The national chair, the treasurer or chair of finance and general purposes committee as relevant will appoint a Trefoil Guild trustee who was not involved in the primary investigation to lead the review.
- The aim will be to complete the review within 28 working days of the request however if the review is judged to need a longer period to assess you will be advised as to when you can expect to receive further contact.

- The purpose of the review is to ensure that your complaint has been thoroughly investigated and that the decision is based on accurate findings and sufficiently supported.
- The reviewer will report back their findings to the national chair, the treasurer or chair of finance and general purposes committee as relevant to agree a course of action.
- The complainant will be contacted in writing to inform them of the outcome of the review and any further action taken.
- The decision of the reviewer is final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Step 5 – reporting and learning

An anonymised summary of any complaints will be presented to the finance and general purposes committee to record and monitor and to provide reflection on any learning that can be gleaned to improve processes and the experience of members in Trefoil.

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national chair and chair finance and general purposes

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