



Complaints Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, promptly, and constructively. We are committed to maintaining high standards across all of our activities and view complaints as an opportunity to improve our services and governance.

Lead Trustee

A lead trustee will be appointed to provide oversight of safeguarding and to lead on any incident investigation and reporting.

Lead Trustee

Louis Edmonds

Applicability

This policy applies to anyone working on our behalf, including trustees and volunteers, as well as to complaints made by members of the public, donors, adopters, foster carers, partner organisations, and other stakeholders.

Partner organisations will be expected to have their own complaints procedures that meet, as a minimum, the standards outlined in this policy.

Complaints handling should be reflected in other relevant policies and procedures.

Principles

We believe that:

- Complaints should be taken seriously and handled with fairness, respect, and confidentiality
- Complaints should be acknowledged, investigated, and responded to within a reasonable timeframe
- Individuals should not be treated unfairly as a result of making a complaint
- Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved quickly and informally
- Complaints provide valuable insight to improve our services and governance

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our organisation, its activities, services, volunteers, or representatives that requires a response.

This policy does not cover:

- Safeguarding concerns (which must be handled under the Safeguarding Policy)
- Whistleblowing (covered under a separate policy where applicable)

Reporting Concerns

Complaints can be made:

- In writing (email or letter)
- Verbally to a member of the organisation

Complainants should, where possible, provide:

- A clear description of the issue
- Relevant dates, names, and details
- Any supporting evidence
- A preferred resolution or outcome

Complaints Procedure

Step 1: Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, concerns should be raised directly with the individual involved to seek a prompt and informal resolution.

Step 2: Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is not possible or satisfactory, a formal complaint should be submitted to a trustee or designated lead.

Step 3: Investigation

A trustee or designated individual will investigate the complaint. This may include:

- Gathering statements
- Reviewing documentation
- Speaking with those involved

Step 4: Response

A written response will be provided within 14 working days, outlining:

- Findings of the investigation
- Any actions to be taken
- Reasons for decisions made

Step 5: Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing within 10 working days. The appeal will be reviewed by an independent trustee or panel not previously involved. A final decision will be issued within 14 working days of receiving the appeal.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled in the strictest confidence and in accordance with data protection requirements. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.

Responsibilities

Trustees. This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually.

Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and in a timely manner
- Providing oversight of serious or escalated complaints
- Ensuring lessons learned are identified and acted upon
- Ensuring appropriate records are maintained

Everyone.

Everyone is responsible to:

- Treat complaints seriously and respond appropriately
- Cooperate with any investigation
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process

Monitoring and Review

All complaints will be recorded and reviewed periodically to:

- Identify trends or recurring issues
- Improve service delivery and governance
- Inform training and development

Working With Other Organisations

In working with partner organisations, we will:

- Clarify how complaints should be handled
- Ensure responsibilities are clearly defined
- Cooperate in resolving cross-organisational complaints

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	May 2025	Initial draft approved	Annually
1.1	Board	March 2026	Reviewed, updated and reformatted	Annually

Statutory Guidance

[Charity Commission – Complaints procedure](#)

[GOV.UK – Complain about a charity](#)

[Charity Commission – Raising a concern \(CC47\)](#)

Useful Links

[GOV.UK – Report serious concerns about a charity](#)

[Charity Commission complaints form](#)