

Finchley Foodbank Client Complaints' Policy and Procedure

Introduction

At Finchley Foodbank, we aim to deliver a high quality service where clients (the people who visit us) are at the heart of everything we do. We welcome all feedback, positive and negative, and aim to deal with concerns in a fair and consistent way.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of a service or with the attitude or behaviour of a member of our staff or volunteer team.

Our policy and procedure

We promote the right of our clients to raise a concern or make a complaint if they think something has been done incorrectly. Similarly, they may complain if they feel something that ought to have been done has not been done.

This procedure below is designed to:

- be accessible and uncomplicated so that making a complaint is as easy as possible
- deal with complaints promptly, politely and, confidentially
- promote satisfaction with the foodbank
- learn from our mistakes use them to improve our service

Key principles

A client or someone acting on their behalf has a right to:

- complain
- be listened to
- have their concerns taken seriously
- have their complaint investigated and resolved as quickly as possible

Complaints will be investigated promptly, objectively, fairly, and thoroughly in a positive problem-solving manner. No service will be delayed, suspended, or withdrawn because a complaint has been made.

We aim to promote an environment where people are encouraged to raise issues and seek solutions to prevent them developing into problems or complaints. **We hope that most issues can be dealt with informally on the day by talking to the session leader.**

However, we recognise that there may be situations where people are not happy with the outcome of an informal discussion or feel that the issue needs to be taken further. In these cases, Finchley Foodbank has developed the complaints procedure below so that we can work towards a resolution in a fair and transparent manner.

How to make a complaint - our procedure

A client (or someone on their behalf) who is raising an issue, should, **in the first instance, do so either in person to a volunteer or the session leader to try and reach a solution.** Clients can ask someone to support them through the process if they wish.

Alternatively a client (or someone on their behalf), can contact us by:

- Telephone or text: [07849 558307](tel:07849558307)
- Email: feedback@finchleyfoodbank.org.uk
- In writing: Finchley Foodbank c/o St Mary's church, 279 High Road, London N2 8HG

What happens next?

If an informal discussion does not resolve the issue, we will:

- 1. Send/give you a copy of this complaints' policy and procedure and a complaint form.**
- 2. Record your complaint:** you can complete the complaint form and send /give it to us. Alternatively, the person receiving your complaint will write down what you tell us and share the record with you.
- 3. Acknowledge your complaint:** whenever possible your complaint will be dealt with at the first point of contact. If this is not possible your complaint will be acknowledged within five working days, and you will be given the details of the person looking into the matter.
- 4. Respond to your complaint:** the person dealing with your complaint will contact you to agree on the best way forward. Our aim is to give you a full response within 10 working days. If for any reason we cannot do this, we will let you know when you can expect to receive a response, which will be within 20 working days.
- 5. Acknowledge our mistakes:** if we have made a mistake we will apologise and try to put things right. We will explain what actions we will take to make sure the same situation does not arise again for you or anyone else. Any changes and improvements we make as a result of your feedback may be shared anonymously.
- 6. Your right to respond:** once you receive our response you have up to 10 working days in which to decide whether to accept or reject the actions/recommendations we have identified to resolve your complaint.

Time limit for making a complaint

Our aim is to put things right if they go wrong as quickly as possible, therefore **there is a one month time limit for making a complaint.**

However, the time limit may be extended if it is still possible to consider the complaint effectively and efficiently or if there are other circumstances which may enable resolution of the complaint.

What happens if you are not satisfied with our response?

If you are not satisfied with our response, you should contact the person dealing with your complaint and they will discuss the next course of action with the Foodbank Management Group. You may be offered a meeting with members of the management group if appropriate. A member of the management group will share the group's final decision with you.

If you are unhappy with the management group's decision please contact the Chair of Trustees by email at: feedback@finchleyfoodbank.org.uk Further investigation will be carried out if necessary. If the matter cannot be resolved to your satisfaction then we will discuss with you the best way forward.

Exceptions to this policy

- **Unreasonable, intensive and vexatious complainants** - there are occasions when a Foodbank client might act in a way that a member of staff or volunteer considers unacceptable. We expect all our staff and volunteers to be treated in a respectful manner. Whilst it is understood that people sometimes get frustrated, we will not tolerate behaviour which is deemed unacceptable, threatening, abusive or unreasonably persistent.
- **Anonymous complaints** – these are not dealt with through this complaints policy and procedure. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be necessary to investigate the matter in order to protect Finchley Foodbank's interests, especially if the matter could cause serious detriment.
- **Use of social media** - this method of expressing dissatisfaction is becoming a more frequent way to voice concerns. We do not encourage or accept formal complaints via this method, and ask clients to use the ways to make a complaint outlined above. Only the Trustees and the Foodbank Management Group can authorise a response on social media.
- **General correspondence** - this policy does not address general correspondence not directly related to a complaint.

Record Management and Data Protection

All aspects of this procedure meet the requirements of the legislation regarding Data Protection and Freedom of Information. Any personal information obtained in relation to a complaint is only to be used for that purpose.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually.