Last reviewed May 2021

Handling Complaints: Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

The Chipping Barnet Foodbank is committed to working in an open and accountable way that secures the trust and respect of stakeholders, and as such recognises the role of an effective complaints policy in fostering transparency, fairness, and a culture of continuous improvement.

Philosophy

The Chipping Barnet Foodbank undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward as possible.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously, and discreetly – confidentially when appropriate.
- We will respond decisively with an explanation, an apology where we have been at fault, or information on the outcome.
- We will learn from complaints and use them to make improvements in the way we work.

We hope that the majority of complaints can be dealt with informally, but in cases in which the formal procedure is more appropriate, we request that they are submitted in the following format:

- In writing, addressed FAO Victoria Miller, Complaints Officer, Chipping Barnet Foodbank, C/O Mary Immaculate and St Peter, 63 Somerset Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 1RF OR by email to info@chippingbarnet.foodbank.org.uk with 'Complaint' in the subject line.
- It should include a full explanation of the problem, how it occurred, and the effect on you.
- Describe what you think we should do to put things right.

We will deal with your complaint as follows:

1. We will acknowledge your complaint within 10 working days of receipt and provide you with the name of the person responsible for investigating the matter on your behalf.
2. The person responsible for the investigation will write to you with their findings and proposed resolution within twenty eight days from receipt of the complaint*.
3. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation you may appeal: letters must be received within twenty one working days of the date on the correspondence notifying you of the outcome of the first investigation.
4. The complaint will be reinvestigated, and you will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days*.

* unless the complaint is particularly complex or time-consuming, in which case you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and notified of the expected date of completion.

Other information

Complaints about **staff behaviour or attitude** will be handled by the team leader of the staff member in question, and disciplinary action will be taken, if appropriate. You will not be given details of the action we have taken as such information is confidential.

If you wish to make a complaint **anonymously** or do not provide contact details, then we will treat it as a comment and will be unable to advise you of the outcome of the investigation.

If your complaint contains abusive or offensive language, then we reserve the right to not respond. We reserve the right to report any such communication to the Police.

Please be aware that during the investigation of any complaint, consideration will be given as to whether the Chipping Barnet Foodbank has a duty to report the matter to a relevant regulator, such as the Fundraising Regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office, or the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Where appropriate, complaints will be escalated to one of these bodies.

Data Privacy Statement

We collate and analyse data about complaints so that we can improve the services we provide. We will collect personal information including your name and contact details, including postal address, telephone number, email address and social media contact information, in order to be able to communicate with you about your complaint. We will also collect sufficient information about the situation that you are contacting us about to be able to understand what has happened. We may need to request further information depending on the nature of your complaint. We have a legitimate interest in holding this information in order to be able to monitor and improve our services.

Information gathered is accessed by Chipping Barnet Foodbank employees and may be shared with advice agencies or professional services firms only if appropriate, for example if your complaint relates to safeguarding and we seek guidance as to next steps.

We keep this information for 2 years after your complaint has been closed, unless we have a requirement to keep it longer, in which case we will inform you of this. After this time the data will be aggregated and anonymised.