

Last Reviewed: June 2021

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Hackney Foodbank is committed to delivering a high standard of service to anyone who engages with our work.

We believe that the best way to improve our service is by learning from the people who use it. We welcome comments, compliments and complaints from clients, referral agencies, volunteers, and anyone else we come into contact within our work. These help us to see what we are doing well and where we can make improvements.

We aim to promote an environment where people are encouraged to raise and discuss issues informally and, where necessary, seek solutions to prevent them developing into problems or complaints.

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, Hackney Foodbank has a complaints procedure so that we can work towards a resolution in a fair and transparent manner.

Our promise and commitment

We recognise that there may be times when our services and activities do not meet your expectations. If this happens, it is important that we know about it as soon as possible so that we can deal with the situation effectively to try to prevent it from happening again and to learn from our mistakes. We promise to take all feedback and complaints seriously and to deal with them in a timely manner.

How to register a complaint or give feedback

If you have a complaint, or would like to share a concern, compliment, or comment on any aspect of our service, you can contact us in one of the following ways:

- In person to staff/volunteers at the food bank
- By email: complaints@hackneyfoodbank.org

Please tell us what your complaint or feedback is about and what you would like to see happen as a result. Please also tell us how we may contact you.

Philosophy

Hackney Foodbank undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward as possible.
- Complaints about our service received by the Hackney Foodbank in writing are dealt with promptly, courteously, fairly, and discreetly.

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- Reasonable efforts are made to determine the facts affecting the complaint from both the complainant and the relevant foodbank representatives.
- We will respond decisively to the complainant with an explanation of our actions, an apology where this is appropriate, or information on the outcome of our contact within 28 days of receipt of the complaint.
- We will help the relevant representatives of our foodbank to learn from complaints and use them to make improvements in the ways we work.

We will deal with the complaint as follows:

1. We will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt and provide the complainant with the name of the Hackney Foodbank officer responsible for investigating the matter.
2. The person responsible for the investigation will contact the relevant parties within a following five working days to notify them of the complaint and enquire into the facts surrounding it.
3. The person responsible for the investigation will write to the complainant with their findings and proposed actions or resolution within 28 working days of the complaint being received*.
4. Where Hackney Foodbank has acted fully in accordance with expected standards and procedures, the complainant will be advised of this.
5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and they appeal within 21 days of receiving the first response, then the investigation may be reopened or it may be restated that the food bank has acted properly, as the investigating officer judges appropriate.

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

What will happen after I complain?

We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receipt and we will tell you who will be dealing with the matter and when you can expect a full response.

Wherever possible, Hackney Foodbank will respect your confidentiality and keep your complaint confidential as far as possible. Any information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know in order to help resolve it.

There may, however, be occasions when we cannot provide absolute confidentiality, for example in circumstances where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm.

If you are not happy with the response you receive, you can escalate your concerns to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will also investigate the matter and advise you on the next steps to resolving your complaint.

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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 investigate your complaint and to communicate with you about it. 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 two Foodbank trustees 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 may need to share this information with the Trussell Trust in order to understand what has happened and determine a resolution.

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.