



# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## 1. POLICY CONTROL

Version	Description	Date
V2	Complaints Policy	27 April 2020
Board Approved:		02 May 2020
For Review:		May 2022

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The North Cotswold 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.

## 3. PHILOSOPHY

The charity undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint against the North Cotswold Foodbank is as straightforward as possible.
- This policy will be made available to any person on their request.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously, and discreetly, and 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.

## 4. INFORMAL PROCESS

We hope that the majority of complaints can be dealt with informally, by a conversation with the Foodbank Manager or another party with a designated role at the foodbank. If this is not satisfactory, the formal complaints procedure is available.

Where complaints are raised informally person-to-person or over the phone, the person hearing the complaint may make notes if appropriate, and may carry out further investigation

and come back to you. Your concern will not be recorded or pursued as a formal complaint unless it is received in writing, as detailed below.

## 5. FORMAL PROCESS

### A. We request that formal complaints are submitted in the following format:

- In writing to North Cotswold Foodbank, Unit 2, Glebe Farm Buildings, Guiting Power GL54 5TZ or by email to [trustees@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:trustees@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk) with the subject heading 'complaint'
- The email or letter should include:
  - a full explanation of the problem
  - a record of relevant facts and events, and the effect on you
  - a description of what you think we should do to put things right
  - your contact details for a response

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

### B. We will deal with formal written complaints as follows:

If your complaint is about a particular member of staff or volunteer, the complaint will be dealt with by someone else who is more senior as follows:

- **the actions or attitude of Foodbank Volunteers** will be handled by the Foodbank Manager
- **Foodbank practice and policy** will be handled by the Foodbank Manager
- **the actions or attitude of foodbank staff** will be handled by a delegated member of the Trustees
- **appeals** will be handled by a delegated member of the trustees
- **safeguarding concerns** will be handled by the designated Safeguarding Officer
- **criminal offences** will be reported to the appropriate authorities

We will acknowledge your complaint within **five working days** and provide you with the name and contact details of the person responsible for investigating the matter on your behalf

The person responsible for the investigation will write to you with their findings and proposed resolution within a further **ten 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.

Where the event involves a safeguarding concern or suspected criminal offence, you will not normally be given details of the action we or the appropriate authorities take as such information is generally confidential.

If you are satisfied with the outcome the complaint will be closed.

## 6. APPEALS PROCESS

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation you may appeal by letter or email and this must be received (as in 5A above) within **ten working days** of the date on the letter notifying you of the outcome of the first investigation. You should state clearly why you are not satisfied with the outcome and what action you think should be taken.

The complaint will be re-investigated by a delegated Trustee who has not previously been involved and you will be informed of the outcome within **ten 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.

If you are satisfied with the outcome of your appeal that complaint will be closed.

If you remain dissatisfied you may ask for the matter to be considered by the full Trust Board and you should do this within **ten working days** of the date on the letter notifying you of the outcome of the appeal.

The Trust Board will consider the investigation material and make a decision within **ten working days** of receiving your second appeal and notify you of the outcome in writing. This decision is final and there is no further appeal process within the Trust but you are free to contact the Charity Commission for their advice.

## 7. DATA PRIVACY

North Cotswold Foodbank is committed to protecting your privacy when using our online services and will process any personal data in accordance with the current Data Protection Legislation.

We use the personal information that you provide in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 to process your complaint. We have a legitimate interest in holding this information in order to be able to monitor and improve our services. 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 and help you seek a resolution to your complaint. Where your complaint relates to services involving our partners, for example a referral agency or the Trussell Trust, then we may need to share your information with a third party. We keep this information for two 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. For further

information about how we use your personal information see our Privacy Policy –available at <https://www.northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk>