



# Complaints Policy v3.0

<b>Purpose:</b>	To inform volunteers, supporters, people referred to the Foodbank and the general public of the processes in place for handling complaints about North Cotswold Foodbank		
<b>Date:</b>	August 2024	<b>Approved:</b>	3 October 2024
<b>Contact:</b>	Alexia Monroe, Chairman		
<b>Version:</b>	v3.0	<b>For Review:</b>	August 2026

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0	TT Template	Jan 2018	
2.0	Alexia Monroe	May 2020	Formatting changes. Spelling and typographic corrections
2.1	Lorna Shawcross	July 2024	Updated e-mail address for complaints
3.0	Alexia Monroe	August 2024	Section 2 Major update to wording  Para 4.1 clarified who can manage an informal complaint  Para 4.2 clarified personal information to be collected  Para 4.3 added  Para 4.4 - 4.7 added to quote privacy policy  Para 5.2 replaced and with and/or. Replaced" delegated trustee" with "designated trustee"  para 5.5 amended to include response by e-mail  Para 5.7 amended to clarify timescale for closure of complaints

			<p>Para 6.1 clarified that appeal is to the first investigation. Inserted postal address and email for submission of appeals. Added that response may be sent by e-mail.</p> <p>Para 6.3 amended wording</p> <p>Para 6.4 replaced “Trust Board” with “full North Cotswold Foodbank Board of Trustees” for clarity on who the appeal is to. Clarified that appeal to the full Board of Trustees must be by letter or e-mail and that we may respond by e-mail.</p> <p>Para 6.5 replaced Trust with North Cotswold Foodbank for clarity</p> <p>Section 7 - updated to bring in line with Privacy Policy v 2.0 (approved August 2024)</p>
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## 1. Related policies

Version	Policy Name	Purpose	Approved
2.0	Privacy Policy	Outlines how North Cotswold Foodbank collects, stores, uses, shares and protects personal data and what rights users have with respect to their data	1 August 2024
3.0	Discipline and Grievance Procedures	Sets out how issues of poor behaviour or performance by employees are to be dealt with to ensure a fair and consistent	September 2022

		approach with an emphasis on improvement not punishment	
2.2	Volunteer Handbook Appendix 1 Problem Solving	Procedure to be followed by a volunteer making a complaint or a volunteer manager when there is poor performance	January 2024
	Referral Agency Handbook	Information and guidance for referral agencies on their role and responsibilities	Under review (contact <a href="mailto:info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk">info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk</a> )

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. The North Cotswold Foodbank is committed to working in an open and accountable way that secures the trust and respect of everyone we come into contact with, and as such recognises the role of an effective complaints policy in fostering transparency, fairness, and a culture of continuous improvement.
- 2.2. This policy applies to people who use our foodbank, supporters, donors, and anyone else we come into contact with during our work.
- 2.3. Members of staff who wish to make a complaint must follow the steps in the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures document; volunteers who want to make a complaint must follow the procedure in the Volunteer Handbook; and staff or volunteers of our referral agencies with a complaint must use the procedure detailed in the Referral Agency Handbook.'

## 3. Philosophy

- 3.1. 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

- 4.1. We hope that the majority of complaints can be dealt with informally, by a conversation with the Foodbank Manager or a Trustee. If this is not satisfactory, the formal complaints procedure is available.

- 4.2. Where complaints are raised informally person-to-person or over the phone, the person hearing the complaint notes as set out in [Para 7.2](#) below to carry out further investigation and respond to you. Your concern will not be recorded or pursued as a formal complaint unless it is received in writing, as detailed in Section 5 below.
- 4.3. Personal information will be deleted after 2 years. Anonymised information on the nature of the complaint and actions taken will be kept for up to 6 years.
- 4.4. As set out in our [Privacy Policy v2.0](#) we will process the personal information that is provided to us to manage and resolve the complaint or appeal.
- 4.5. This may include sharing relevant information with the Trussell Trust or person that the complaint has been made about.
- 4.6. Our legal basis for using personal information for this purpose is legitimate interest.
- 4.7. If you make a complaint about an individual and this forms part of their personal data and the individual requests access to it, we will seek to remove personal information identifying you first. In some situations, we may be obliged to provide your personal data. We will seek your consent before providing the information but may be required to provide this even if you do not consent.

## 5. Formal Process

- 5.1. 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 [info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@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 reasonably do to put things right
    - your contact details for a response
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. We will deal with formal written complaints as follows:
  - 5.3.1. 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 and/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 and/or attitude of Foodbank staff will be handled by a designated member of the Trustees
  - appeals will be handled by a designated member of the trustees
  - safeguarding concerns will be handled by the designated Safeguarding Officer
  - criminal offences will be reported to the appropriate authorities
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. The person responsible for the investigation will inform you by letter or email of 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.
- 5.6. 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.
- 5.7. Unless you appeal in writing or by e-mail within ten working days, we will assume that you are satisfied with the outcome and close the matter.

## 6. Appeals Process

- 6.1. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the first investigation you may appeal by letter or email and this must be received in writing to North Cotswold Foodbank, Unit 2, Glebe Farm Buildings, Guiting Power GL54 5TZ or by email to [info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@northcotswold.foodbank.org.uk) within **ten working days** of the date on the letter or email 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.
- 6.2. The complaint will be re-investigated by a designated 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, by letter or by email, of the progress of the investigation and notified of the expected date of completion.
- 6.3. Unless you ask for the full Board of Trustees to re-consider the matter, as stated in paragraph 6.4 below, we will assume that you are satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, and the complaint will be closed.
- 6.4. If you remain dissatisfied you may ask, by letter or e-mail, for the matter to be considered by the full North Cotswold Foodbank Board of Trustees and you should do this within **ten working days** of the date on the letter or email notifying you of the outcome of the appeal.
- 6.5. The Board of Trustees 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 North Cotswold Foodbank but you are free to contact the Charity Commission for their advice.

## 7. Data Privacy

- 7.1. 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 and [North Cotswold Foodbank Privacy Policy](#).
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. 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.
- 7.4. Complaints are reviewed annually and personal information will usually be deleted after 2 years unless we have a requirement to keep it for longer in which case we will inform you of this . Anonymised information on the nature of the complaint and actions taken will be kept for up to 6 years. After this time the data will be aggregated and anonymised. If your complaint involves a safeguarding matter we will retain the information for 75 years after last contact with the subject of the concern.
- 7.5. For further information about how we use your personal information see our [Privacy Policy](#)

**This policy was approved by the Trustees:**

<b>Name:</b> Alexia Monroe	<b>Signed:</b> Alexia Monroe
<b>Position:</b> Chair	<b>Date:</b> 3 October 2024

## Appendix 1 - Information to be recorded for formal complaints

Date complaint received	
Name of complainant	
Contact details for complainant	
How the complaint was made - phone, e-mail, etc	
Description of the complaint	
Name of person dealing with the complaint	
Actions taken and outcome	
Any outstanding issues still to be addresses	
Date the complaint was closed	