



## Service Charter

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If you have questions about our Service Charter, please contact Jan O'Day, our Director of Corporate Services and designated Data Protection Officer: [joday@ch1889.org](mailto:joday@ch1889.org)

## 1. Statement

- a) Cambridge House is an independent social action charity:
  - Website: [www.ch1889.org](http://www.ch1889.org)
  - Address: Cambridge House, 1 Addington Square, London SE5 0HF
  - Tel: 0207 358 7000
  - A company limited by guarantee no.105006 and a registered charity no.265103.
- b) We pursue a vision of a society without poverty where all people are valued, treated equally and lead fulfilling and productive lives.
- c) Our values include:
  - i) Delivering excellence in all that we do
  - ii) A culture of continuous improvement
  - iii) A belief in collective action
  - iv) Social justice and inclusion
  - v) Making a positive difference to people's lives
  - vi) Taking a holistic approach to people's needs
  - vii) Empowering people and making voices heard
  - viii) Building social cohesion and inclusion
  - ix) Maintaining our independence
  - x) Reinvesting our financial surpluses so that we can develop our reach and impact.
- d) The purpose of this Service Charter is to set out the standards our services users, funders and partners should expect from us.
- e) The Charter sets out clear levels of expectations, to ensure:
  - i) User-focused services are created and maintained.
  - ii) Effective communication exists between our organisation and our service users.
  - iii) We deliver solution-focused services that respond to identified needs.
  - iv) The level of service we deliver meets or exceeds our service users' needs.
  - v) We deliver the required standards of service within suitable time frames.
  - vi) We operate independently.

## 2. Service ethos

We work to ensure all our services are:

- a) **Safe:**
  - Providing safe spaces that are inclusive, non-judgemental, uplifting, respectful, empathetic, nurturing, warm, challenging and genuine.
- b) **Authentic:**
  - Building association and trust with service users by ensuring they see themselves reflected throughout the structure of the organisation.
- c) **Respectful:**
  - Valuing our service users' voice by involving them in all stages of service development, delivery and evaluation.
- d) **Diverse:**
  - Facilitating different service entry pathways to meet different levels of skill, capability and confidence.
- e) **Welcoming:**
  - Promoting services in accessible, non-stigmatising and non-threatening ways.
- f) **Positive:**
  - Using strength-based approaches that focus on service users' skills as their starting point and supporting people's independence, resilience, ability to make choices and wellbeing.
- g) **Empowering:**
  - Enhancing service users' ability to solve problems for themselves and build their self-sufficiency and resilience.
- h) **Self-determined:**
  - Building peer to peer and self-reflective approaches.
- i) **System changing:**
  - Capturing the creativity and valuing the life experiences of our service users so that they are empowered to contribute to democratic processes and hold decision-makers to account.
- j) **Wraparound:**
  - Supporting service users to identify barriers to them achieving their life goals, and facilitating access to the community-based, statutory or multiagency services they need to secure positive sustainable outcomes for themselves.

### **3. Our commitments to service users**

- a) We will:
  - i) Explain our role and what we can and cannot do.
  - ii) Treat you with courtesy and respect.
  - iii) Make sure our service is easily accessible to you and give you support and help if you need it.
  - iv) Look after the information you give us.
  - v) Listen to your feedback and use it to improve our service.
  - vi) Apologise if we make mistakes, and put things right.
  - vii) Publish information regularly on our website about our performance.
- b) If you have a complaint about our services, we will:
  - i) Listen to you to make sure we understand your complaint.
  - ii) Explain the specific concerns we will be looking into.
  - iii) Explain how we will do our work.
  - iv) Gather all the information we need, including from you and the organisation you have complained about, before we make our decision.
  - v) Share facts with you, and discuss with you what we are seeing.
  - vi) Evaluate the information we've gathered and make an impartial decision on your complaint.
  - vii) Explain our decision and recommendations, and how we reached them.

### **4. Our commitment to quality assurance**

- a) We are committed to offering high quality service user care and continuously seek innovative ways to meet the needs of our service users.
- b) We consider our service users to be members of the Cambridge House family and endeavour to seek their advice and suggestions.
- c) Three key elements underpin our commitment to service user care:
  - i) Set and monitor service standards, including:
    - Benchmarking service standards to best practice
    - Seeking externally assessed professional accreditations, quality marks and impact assessments
  - ii) Provide customer service training for our staff and relevant suppliers.
  - iii) Seek feedback from service users to:
    - Ensure services are appropriate
    - Improve service delivery.

## 5. Maintaining our independence

- a) Cambridge House exists because people with shared values came together in 1889 to tackle poverty and social injustice independently of government and private business. To live up to this history and our values, and to maintain the trust of our services users and the general public, we treasure and protect our independence.
- b) Independence enables us to be accessible to all sections of the community, seen by the public as part of the community they live in, and reflect the experiences of our service users.
- c) To maintain this independence, we must behave in ways that enable us to listen to our service users carefully and impartially.
- d) Our ability to speak up independently on behalf of sometimes unpopular causes or marginalised groups is critical to the way we work and we aim to present the lived experience of our service users in an evidence based way.
- e) We demonstrate independence of action by designing and delivering services that best meet the needs of the people they serve, and through innovation that leads to better services and solutions.
- f) Independence means we:
  - i) Speak out to support our aims, values and our services users, regardless of our funding sources and partnerships.
  - ii) Fulfil the role of critical friend to statutory and public agencies and our partners:
    - Providing honest and critical feedback
    - Observing and listening
    - Asking provocative and stretching questions
    - Balancing support, challenge and contextual understanding
    - Providing different perspectives and critiques utilising our community-based knowledge including the experiences and views of our service users.
  - iii) Are clear about how our independence is preserved when we take on commissioned work.
  - iv) Diversify our income sources so we are not dependent on a single funder.
  - v) Walk away from inappropriate or poorly funded grants and contracts.
  - vi) Resist funders influencing the direction of our strategy.

## 6. Our policies

- a) The organisational policies that support this charter include:
  - i) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - ii) Health and Safety
  - iii) Ethical Fundraising
  - iv) Data Protection and Privacy
  - v) Safeguarding
  - vi) Whistleblowing
  - vii) Serious Incidents
- b) The procedures that support this charter include:
  - i) Complaints
  - ii) Service delivery handbooks