

Cambridge House Complaints Policy and Procedure

We want to help you resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.



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1. Policy statement

- a) Cambridge House is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. In order to do this, we need you to give us any comments about our service, and to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help you resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.
- b) We treat as a complaint any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response. We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.
- c) A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.
- d) Our policy covers complaints about:
 - the standard of service we provide
 - the behaviour of our staff (though we may consider other policies more appropriate e.g. Safeguarding)
 - any action or lack of action by staff affecting an individual or group
- e) Our complaints policy does not cover:
 - matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure or another policy
 - anonymous complaints
 - complaints already part of another resolution process e.g. legal cases or where the matter has previously been referred to a commissioner or funder
- f) This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Director of Administration and Corporate Services
- g) Associated policies:

Data Protection, Privacy and Confidentiality
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy
Fundraising Pledge
Safeguarding
Service Charter

2. Our standards for handling complaints

- a) we treat all complaints seriously; however they are made
- b) you will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times - we would hope, too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our staff at all times
- c) we will treat your complaint in confidence
- d) we will deal with your complaint promptly - we will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 5 working days, and we will send you a full reply within 20 working days of receipt
- e) if we cannot send a full reply within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint we will tell you the reason and let you know when we will be able to reply in full
- f) we will publish information in our annual report on the numbers and categories of complaints we receive, and the percentage of complaints upheld.

2.1 Confidentiality

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of UK data protection law.

3. How to complain

- a) You can make a complaint by email or post or via a non-legal advocate
- b) You can send an email to feedback@ch1889.org or in writing to: Director of Administration and Corporate Services, Cambridge House, Unit F, Ground Floor, The Print Works, 22 Amelia Street London SE17 3PY
- c) We have a 2-stage complaints procedure. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clear detail as possible, including any documents and correspondence, and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

3.1 The Stages of the Complaints Procedure

a) Stage 1

This is the first opportunity for the department or team to resolve your dissatisfaction, and the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. In the first instance, we will try to get your complaint resolved by the Head or Director of the service or team against whom the complaint has been made. Upon receipt of your complaint we will contact the relevant team Head or Director and ask them to deal with your complaint unless the complaint is specifically about that individual. A complaint response may take the form of a letter, email or telephone call, but the outcome will always be recorded by Cambridge House.

b) Stage 2

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request a review of the response. This review will be conducted by another Director, Head of Service, or the Chief Executive.

3.2 Timescales for handling a complaint:

a) Stage 1 - maximum 20 working days

- acknowledgement within 5 working days
- full response within 20 working days

b) Stage 2 - maximum 20 working days

- acknowledgement within 5 working days
- full response within 20 working days

3.3 Extending time limits

- a) We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case, we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and the new deadline.
- b) Following each stage of the procedure, the complainant has a maximum of 20 working days from the date of the final response to request that their complaint be progressed to the next stage.

4. If you remain dissatisfied

If having followed the 2 stages of our complaints procedure you remain dissatisfied, depending on the type of complaint you can:

- ask the **Legal Ombudsman** to consider the complaint. The Legal Ombudsman can be contacted at PO Box 6806, Wolverhampton WV1 9WJ (telephone: 0300 555 0333 or email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk). Normally, you will need to bring a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman within 6 months of receiving a final written response from us about your complaint. For information about their criteria for whether or not to investigate complaints, you should contact them.
- complain to the **Charity Commission** Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself can be found on their website at: <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>
- complain to your **Member of Parliament** <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>
- complain to your **Local Authority Councillor** (please visit your council website for details)

5. Remedies

- a) When we get things wrong, we will act to:
 - accept responsibility by saying sorry
 - explain what went wrong and why
 - put things right by making any changes required
- b) The action we take to put matters right (i.e. redress) in response to a complaint, can include any combination of the remedies set out in the list below. The general principle we follow is that a complainant should, as far as possible, be put in the position he or she would have been in, had things not gone wrong.
- c) The remedy chosen needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service and consider what people are looking for when they complain. An apology is normally appropriate, but other action may also be necessary:
 - remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant
 - service desired by complainant (immediately, if appropriate)

- putting things right (for example change of procedures to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others)
- training staff

5.1 Comments

- a) Quality of service is an important measure of the effectiveness of Cambridge House, therefore learning from complaints is a good way of helping to improve and develop the way we work. As well as learning from your complaints, we are also interested in other ideas that you may have on how we might do things better.
- b) You can make your comments by email to feedback@ch1889.org or in writing to: Director of Administration and Corporate Services, Cambridge House, Unit F, Ground Floor, The Print Works, 22 Amelia Street London SE17 3PY. We will use your comments to help improve our service and the way we do things. However, the 2-stage procedure outlined above does not apply to comments.

6. Unreasonable behaviour

- a) All complaints will be processed in accordance with this policy. However, during this process, staff may have contact with unreasonable complainant behaviour and unreasonably persistent complainants.
- b) We define this as “those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contact with Cambridge House, hinder the reasonable ability of staff to deliver services”
- c) In these cases, we reserve the right to limit your access to staff; or to limit the means by which you can contact staff; or to terminate the complaint process prematurely.

7. Recording complaints

- a) We will log all the complaints that we receive so that we can monitor the types of problems we are encountering, the best way to resolve them, and how long we are taking to resolve them. This also helps us to take a closer look at how we can improve our own service delivery.
- b) We will handle your information in line with all current data protection legislation.
- c) This policy and procedure replaces all previous complaints policies and procedures including for fundraising.

ENDS