



It Takes a City (Cambridge)

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. **It Takes a City (Cambridge)** aims to provide its contractors, volunteers and users with the best possible service. However, we recognize that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect.
- 1.2. We take complaints seriously. Complaints give us the opportunity to put things right and the lessons learned can often influence our practices going forward.
- 1.3. The complaints process is for all complaints – or expressions of dissatisfaction, including from service users, who have used or tried to use the service, but failed to access the service.
- 1.4. Where complaints cannot be resolved at the informal stage users may write, email or telephone the Chair of the Board of Trustees using the contact details given.
- 1.5. At any stage, the complainant may be accompanied or supported by a friend, but not a legal representative.
- 1.6. The Charity's Grievance Procedure, for use by staff who have a complaint, is detailed in the Employee Handbook.
- 1.7. The Complaints procedure is outlined in the Flowchart in Appendix 1.

2. Informal Resolution

- 2.1. It is hoped that dissatisfaction, including from service users, can be remedied on an informal basis. In the first instance we would expect that any complaint is directly raised with the person concerned or where that is not possible with their Manager.

3. Formal Complaint Process - Stage One

- 3.1. Where resolution cannot be achieved on an informal basis a formal complaint should be made either in person or by telephone or email to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (Chair), unless the complaint is about the Chair. In this case, the complaint should be addressed to Simon Allcock (Board of Trustees) (marked confidential).
- 3.2. The complaint should include the following details which will help us to effectively and quickly investigate your complaint:
 - 3.2.1. Your name and contact details: this is essential as we will not investigate anonymous complaints.
 - 3.2.2. Outline the nature of your complaint as precisely as possible, this will help us to investigate further and hopefully to resolve the issue. Please include details such as the place and time the incident occurred.
- 3.3. Once a complaint has been received, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the complainant within 10 working days. This will include who is dealing with the complaint, what action is being taken, and when the complainant can expect to receive a full reply - the target time for responding in full to a complaint is 20 working days.
- 3.4. The Chair will investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint and will communicate the results of the investigation to the complainant. If the complaint is found to be justified, the Chair will agree any necessary further action with the complainant. This communication must also inform complainants of their right to ask for a review of the investigation if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One, and how to access the second stage.



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- 3.5. Formal communication of the outcome of the investigation will be made by email or letter, and an informal opportunity to discuss the outcome, e.g. over the phone or face to face, should be made available where practicable.
- 3.6. The Chair should undertake the investigation – or oversee it if carried out by another Trustee or It Takes a City (Cambridge) representative. Where the complaint is against the Chair, the designated member of the Board of Trustees will need to investigate. This may require an interview with the complainant or a member of staff, contractor or volunteer.
- 3.7. Once the investigation is complete, a communication detailing its findings should be sent to the complainant. If the matter is complex and will take longer than originally indicated, a letter explaining the reasons why, and including an indication of when a response can be expected, is to be sent to the complainant.
- 3.8. The full response must contain sufficient information to assure the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously. If the complaint is upheld, the complainant must be given a full apology for their experience and given details, as far as possible, of what is being done to prevent a recurrence of the situation.

4. Appeal - Stage Two

- 4.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the enquiry, they will have the right to put their case, in writing or in person, to an appeal panel of two members of the Board of Trustees.
- 4.2. The process to be followed in reviewing the complaint is similar to Stage One but the lead person conducting the review will be someone different e.g. the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a designated Trustee if the Chair conducted Stage 1. The same target timetable applies.
- 4.3. Once again, the communication responding to the complainant must contain an explanation, apology if required, information about remedial actions, and satisfactory assurances that the complaint has been investigated fully.
- 4.4. This communication must also inform the complainant that the reviewer's decision is final and that no further appeal is possible.

5. Reporting

- 5.1. The Chair will keep the Board of Trustees informed of the number and nature of complaints, and the outcomes, and will report to the Board on this at least annually.

6. Contact Details

- 6.1. If you have a complaint, please contact:
Chris Jenkin MA CEng FIET (Chair of the Trustees)
07831 547 643
chris@ittakesacity.org.uk
Chair of Trustees
It Takes a City (Cambridge)
c/o St Andrews Street Baptist Church
St Andrew's Street
Cambridge CB2 3AR
- 6.2. Please ensure all emails are marked '**confidential complaint**'