

Gateshead Foodbank Complaints Policy and Procedure

Gateshead Foodbank is committed to delivering a high standard of service to anyone who engages with our work.

We believe that the best way to improve our service is by learning from the people who use it. We welcome comments, compliments and complaints from clients, referral agencies, volunteers and anyone else we come into contact with in our work. These help us to see what we are doing well and where we can make improvements.

We aim to promote an environment where people are encouraged to raise and discuss issues informally and, where necessary, seek solutions to prevent them developing into problems or complaints.

However, we recognise that there may be situations where people are not happy with the outcome of an informal discussion or feel that the issue needs to be taken further. In these cases, Gateshead Foodbank has a complaints procedure so that we can work towards a resolution in a fair and transparent manner.

Philosophy

Gateshead Foodbank undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward as possible.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously, and discreetly, with information shared on a 'need to know' basis only.
- We will respond decisively, outlining a clear outcome of our investigation.
- We will learn from complaints and use them to make improvements in the way we work.
- The policy and procedure is accessible to all regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation. If you require a copy of this policy in an alternative format, please contact us on any of the contact details in the section below.

How to register a complaint or give feedback

If you have a complaint, or would like to share a concern, compliment or comment on any aspect of our service, you can contact us in one of the following ways:

- In person to staff/volunteers at the Foodbank – (in writing)

- By email: info@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk
- Write to the following address:

Jackie Beeley The Chair, Gateshead Foodbank, Davidson Building, Swan Street, Gateshead. NE8 1BG

Please tell us what your comment or complaint is about and what you would like to see happen as a result. Please also tell us how we may contact you. If you choose to remain anonymous, we will not be able to request further information or respond.

Complaints process:

1. We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receipt and provide you with the name of the person responsible for investigating the matter on your behalf.
2. The person responsible for the investigation will write to you with their findings and proposed resolution within twenty one working days from receipt of the complaint*.
3. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation you may appeal or escalate your concerns to details above. Letters must be received within twenty one working days of the date on the correspondence notifying you of the outcome of the first investigation.
4. The complaint will be re-investigated and you will be informed of the outcome within 10 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.*

Wherever possible, Gateshead Foodbank will respect your confidentiality. Any information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know in order to help resolve it. There may, however, be occasions when we cannot provide absolute confidentiality, for example in circumstances where a child or adult with additional support needs may be at risk of harm.

Data Privacy Statement

Gateshead Foodbank is registered as a data controller with the UK Information Commissioner's Office under registration number 1161395. We use the personal information that you provide 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. We may

also provide information to authorities such as the police or social services where necessary. Information gathered is accessed by food bank staff and/or volunteers and may be shared with advice agencies or professional services firms (e.g., if your complaint relates to safeguarding and we seek guidance as to next steps).

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 7 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.