

Comments, compliments and complaints policy and procedure

Policy statement

Skelmersdale and District Foodbank (“the Foodbank”), which works in association with The Trussell Trust is committed to working in an open and accountable way that secures the trust and respect of stakeholders, and as such recognises the role of an effective complaints policy in fostering transparency, fairness, and a culture of continuous improvement.

Philosophy

The Foodbank undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward as possible.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, courteously, and discreetly – confidentially when appropriate and complaints about discrimination are dealt with as sensitively and confidentially as the procedure allows.
- 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.
- 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.

Making a complaint about the Skelmersdale and District Foodbank

We hope that the majority of complaints can be dealt with informally, but in cases in which the formal procedure is more appropriate, we request that they are submitted in the following format:

- By email to projectmanager@skelmersdale.foodbank.org.uk with ‘complaint’ in the subject line. In writing, Project Manager, Skelmersdale and District Foodbank, Ecumenical Centre, Northway, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6LU
- It should include a full explanation of the problem, how it occurred, and the effect on you.
- Describe what you think we should do to put things right.

We will deal with your complaint as follows:

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 28 days from receipt of the complaint*.
3. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation you may appeal. Letters or emails must be received within 28 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.

Other information

Complaints about staff behaviour or attitude will be handled by the line manager of the staff member in question, and in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedure if appropriate. You will not be given details of the action we have taken as such information is confidential.

If you wish to make a complaint anonymously or do not provide contact details, then we will treat it as a comment and will be unable to advise you of the outcome of the investigation.

If your complaint contains abusive or offensive language, then we reserve the right to not respond. We reserve the right to report any such communication to the police.

Please be aware that during the investigation of any complaint, consideration will be given as to whether the Foodbank has a duty to report the matter to a relevant regulator, such as the Fundraising Regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office, the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland or the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. Where appropriate, complaints will be escalated to one of these bodies.

Making a complaint about a food bank in the Trussell Trust network

Food banks in the Trussell Trust network are independent charities, not governed by the Trussell Trust itself. Complaints against food banks should therefore be dealt with at a local level wherever possible. However, if the food bank does not respond or if the complaint is of a particularly serious nature, it is the Trussell Trust may also become involved with supporting the food bank to carry out their complaints procedure.

If you work or volunteer at a food bank and have a concern, we suggest in the first instance you raise this with the food bank's trustees in accordance with their own internal complaints/grievance procedures. However, if you wish to submit the details to us as , we can ensure it is directed appropriately. Please note that the Trussell Trust will share your details, and the details of the complaint with the food bank, unless you state in writing that you wish to remain anonymous. If you are a food bank staff member or volunteer whose complaint would constitute whistleblowing, we would recommend following the food bank's own whistleblowing procedures if they have them or seeking advice from ACAS.

The Trust undertakes to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as straightforward as possible.
- Complaints about food banks received by the Trussell Trust are dealt with promptly, courteously, fairly and discreetly. Complaints about discrimination are dealt with as sensitively and confidentially as the procedure allows.
- The complainant is aware of the relationship between the Trussell Trust and food banks in the network and that the complaint will be investigated and responded to by the food bank directly.
- Food banks are informed as fully as possible about the nature and detail of the complaint, subject to the degree of confidentiality requested by the complainant.
- We will help food banks, the network and ourselves to learn from complaints and use them to make improvements to the ways we work.
- If the allegation is of a safeguarding nature, we will pass it on to our internal Safeguarding and Quality team, who will follow internal procedures which may involve alerting relevant external safeguarding bodies.

We will deal with the complaint as follows:

1. We will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt.
2. As soon as we have received your complaint, we will pass it to an appropriate person at the food bank via the most appropriate Trussell Trust regional representative. They might reach out directly if any clarity is needed to enable the complaint to be passed on.
3. The food bank will be responsible for investigating and responding to your complaint directly, in line with their own complaints policy and procedures. In exceptional circumstances we may support the food bank's investigation.
4. Where possible we ask that food banks respond to the complainant with their findings and proposed actions or resolution within 28 days of the complaint being received*.
5. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they should

appeal to the food bank in the first instance.

6. If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they should appeal to the Trussell Trust within 21 days of receiving the last response from the food bank. Trussell Trust will investigate and where the food bank has acted fully in accordance with expected standards and procedures, the complainant will be advised of this and advised that the Trussell Trust has no reason to be further involved.

*unless the complaint is particularly complex or time-consuming, in which case the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and notified of the expected date of completion.

The Trust will review this policy annually.

Data Privacy Statement

We collect and analyse data about complaints so that we can improve the services we provide. We will collect personal information including your name and contact details, including postal address, telephone number, email address and social media contact information, to be able to communicate with you about your complaint. We will also collect sufficient information about the situation that you are contacting us about to be able to understand what has happened. We may need to request further information depending on the nature of your complaint. We have a legitimate interest in holding this information to be able to monitor and improve our services.

Information gathered is accessed by Trussell Trust employees 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 a complaint involves a food bank in our network, we may also need to share the information with that food bank in order to understand what has happened and determine a resolution. We may also provide information to authorities such as the police or social services where necessary.

We keep this information for 2 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.

[Read our full privacy policy.](#)

Changes to this policy

This comments, compliments and complaints policy and procedure may change from time to time.

This policy was last reviewed in October 2025.

Signed..... *Kathryn H* KATHRYN HARWOOD

Trustee and secretary to the board of Trustees

Dated..... *11th November 2025*