

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

The Renewal Trust and its subsidiary are committed to providing high quality, transparent and accessible services to everyone we deal with. Unfortunately, despite all our best intentions, things can still go wrong. When this happens we need to be informed so that every effort can be made to put things right and to prevent mistakes being repeated.

If you want to make a complaint we will listen to your concerns, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our services. We want to help to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible (please see flow chart on page four).

We will keep the record of your complaints confidential. For information about what we do with personal data please see our privacy notice.

Safeguarding concerns and complaints will be dealt with in line with our safeguarding policy.

Feedback

If your complaint isn't a service complaint and doesn't fall within any of our other policies, we will treat it as feedback.

When you provide feedback it helps us to understand people's views on our work or policies. This can help shape our future work, even if we are unable to take immediate action on the issue you raise.

How to make a complaint

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

Where issues are simple and we accept we have done something wrong, we may not need a formal investigation. We can say sorry, try to put things right and/or learn from our mistake. Where this is an option, we will do this promptly and within 10 working days, where possible.

Any member of staff can deal with a complaint informally, including the person being complained about, and we can offer an on the spot apology. If the complaint is simple but the person who received the complaint cannot handle it because they are unfamiliar with the issue, they will pass it on to someone who can, as soon as possible.

If we apologise on the phone or face to face, we won't usually follow up with a written response by letter or email.

If you are still not happy, you can make a formal complaint using stage 2. If we do not feel that the complaint is easily dealt with informally, we will escalate it straight to stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

A complaint will be escalated to this stage when:

- Stage 1 was attempted but you remain dissatisfied.
- The issues are complex or require detailed investigation.

Making a Stage 2 formal complaint

You can make a formal complaint about either The Renewal Trust or Hungerhill Trading Ltd:

By email: enquiries@renewaltrust.org.uk

By post:- The Renewal Trust
27-31 Carlton Road
Nottingham
NG3 2DG

Hungerhill Trading Ltd
c/o 27-31 Carlton Road
Nottingham
NG3 2DG

When making a complaint please include:-

- Your name and address (an email address will do).
- What your complaint is about.

Please try to be as clear as possible. This will help us understand your complaint and respond to you promptly. If a complaint is unclear, we may ask you for more information to help us to understand. If you do not provide the information we need when asked, we may not be able to help you.

Timescales

If you want to make a formal complaint, then you should do so within 3 months of the matter you wish to complain about. Waiting longer could make it difficult and may mean that we aren't able to look at your complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as you've only just found out about the problem.

We will aim to send a full response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint. If we need to contact you for further clarification, the 20 working days will start from the date we get the information we need. If we are not able to meet this deadline, we will tell you and let you know when we are likely to be able to respond to your complaint.

Initial assessment

We will decide whether the issue is a service complaint or whether your complaint needs to be handled in another way. If your complaint is covered by another policy or process we will explain that to you. Examples of this could include a request for information or review under data protection laws or an employment grievance about us.

Reasons we may refuse your complaint

If your concern is about the actions or service of a different organisation and we have no involvement in the issue, we will refuse your request and signpost you to the other organisation.

There are also situations where we may decide that we won't look into your complaint further, even though it is a service complaint.

These include:

1. Attempts to reopen a previously concluded complaint, or have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given you our final decision.
2. Where we have already looked into the matter for you under another process.
3. Anonymous complaints.

4. Where the time limit for complaining has passed.
5. If we think a complaint is unreasonable and includes unacceptable behaviour. Our staff have the right to undertake their work free from aggression or abuse and we expect them to be treated with courtesy and respect.

If we are refusing to investigate further we will explain why to you.

Acknowledging the complaint

If we think the service complaint should be investigated further under stage 2 of this policy, we will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.

Investigation

We will decide which member of staff will look into your complaint in more detail. If your complaint relates to Hungerhill Trading Ltd we will ensure that your complaint is investigated by a Manager of Hungerhill Trading. They will handle your complaint fairly and you can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness. Where possible, they will be someone who has not been involved before.

Complaints about the service being provided by a member of staff or team will usually be considered by, or passed to, the relevant manager. The manager should attempt to resolve these concerns. Where we are at fault, this could involve apologising for a delay or explain how improvements will be made.

Our CEO and Chair will not respond to your service complaint personally, even if you write to them directly. They have delegated the responsibility for handling service complaints, in line with this policy.

Outcome

We will give a fair and balanced description of what happened and what conclusions we have reached on your complaint.

It is possible that there will be parts of the complaint that fall within this policy and others that don't. Where this is the case, we will be clear with you in our response about what we could and couldn't investigate.

If we are able to put things right, we will try to. If we can't put things right, we will be open and, say sorry, explain what went wrong and why and try to improve in the future.

Appeal Process

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to request an appeal. Our aim is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and without bias.

You may request an appeal if you believe that:

- The complaints process was not followed correctly.
- The decision was unreasonable based on the information available.
- Relevant evidence was not considered.
- There was a conflict of interest or bias in the handling of your complaint.

Appeals cannot be made simply because you disagree with the outcome.

If you wish to appeal, please submit your request in writing within 14 days of receiving the complaint outcome.

Your appeal should include:

- Your name and contact details.
- The original complaint reference (if known).
- The reason(s) you believe the decision should be reviewed.
- Any new or additional information you wish to be considered.

Appeals should be sent to the Chair of The Renewal Trust Board

By email: enquiries@renewaltrust.org.uk

By post: The Renewal Trust
27-31 Carlton Road
Nottingham
NG3 2DG

Hungerhill Trading Ltd
c/o 27-31 Carlton Road
Nottingham
NG3 2DG

Appeals will be reviewed by a Trustee who was not involved in the original complaint, or the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board, if no other independent Trustee is available

If necessary, the charity may seek support from an external adviser to ensure impartiality. The appeal reviewer will not have been involved in the original investigation or decision.

The appeal reviewer will acknowledge your appeal within 5 working days and review the original complaint, investigation, and decision. They will consider whether the process was followed correctly, assess any new evidence you have provided and decide whether the original decision should be upheld, amended, or reconsidered.

The reviewer may contact you for clarification but will not normally conduct a full reinvestigation unless there is clear reason to do so.

We aim to complete the appeal review within 20 working days. If more time is needed—for example, due to trustee availability—we will keep you informed.

You will receive the appeal outcome in writing. This decision is final within the charity.

If You Remain Dissatisfied

If you still have concerns after the appeal has concluded, you may raise them with the appropriate external body. This may include:

- The Charity Commission, if your concern relates to serious governance issues
- The Fundraising Regulator, if your complaint relates to fundraising practice
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), if your complaint relates to data protection

These bodies will expect you to have completed our full complaints and appeal process first.

Appendix – Complaints Procedure flowchart

