



RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch

Registered Charity No. 206630

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch are committed to providing an excellent service to its community, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We have developed a Complaints Policy and Procedure that explains our approach to receiving complaints.

Our Aim

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve the services that we provide is by listening and responding to the views of our members, partners and stakeholders and in particular responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- we deal with it promptly, politely, and when appropriate confidentially.
- we will respond in the correct way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology or information on any action taken.
- we will learn from complaints and use them to improve the services that we offer.
- we review our complaints policy and procedures annually.

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch recognises that many concerns raised will be informal, and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the person concerned. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with our services provided by the RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch, with a member of staff, or with a Trustee of the RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch and therefore requires a formal response.

Purpose

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch's complaint procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.

- respond within a stated period.
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- take appropriate action if required.

The complainant's responsibility is to:

- raise their concerns promptly and directly with the person concerned and if their concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily informally, then to follow the formal complaints procedure as detailed.
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- allow RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter as detailed in the formal complaint's procedure.
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch's control.

Monitoring and Reporting

Trustees of RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch will regularly receive an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Principles of the Complaints Policy

- The RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch Complaints policy is based on the principle of a two- stage process (as detailed in the complaints Procedure).
- The Complaints Policy will apply to all the services that our branch provides.
- If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise that warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings, or through a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly, the complaints procedure should be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- Where a complaint is against a member of staff they should be informed of the support services available to them.
- The Branch Manager should be informed of the receipt of a Stage 1 formal complaint. A complete record of the entire process should be kept. A copy of all reports, transcripts of interviews and other relevant information should be forwarded to the Branch Manager for immediate review.
- RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch may, at any stage of the formal complaint's procedure, review a complaint and give a decision, without a formal investigation, where a member of the board of Trustees deem the complaint to be deliberately repetitive or vexatious. Examples of such complaints being unsubstantiated or repetitive complaints against an individual or service, or where a complaint has previously been investigated and appropriate action taken.
- When appealing against a previous decision, the complainant will be asked to state why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.

RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch

Formal Complaints Procedure

1. Stage 1

1.1. If you are unable to resolve the issue informally and wish to make a formal complaint you should request a copy of RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch's formal Complaints Policy and Procedure from the Branch Manager or the Branch Secretary. This will be sent to you without delay. If we hear nothing further from you 28 calendar days from the date it is sent, we will regard the complaint to be closed.

1.2. Upon receipt of RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch Complaints Policy and Procedure, you should write a formal letter or email of complaint to the Branch Manager.

1.3. In your correspondence you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

1.4. You can expect the complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 10 working days.

1.5. The written response will also notify the complainant that they have 28 days in which to ask for the complaint and response to be reviewed (stage 2); if they are dissatisfied with the response they have received.

1.6. If you are unsure which member of RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch staff to write to, your complaint should be addressed to the Branch Secretary and marked private and confidential. It can also be emailed to secretary@rspcabrighton.org.uk

1.7. Our contact details are RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch, Patcham Animal Centre, Braypool Lane, Brighton, BN1 8ZH.

2. Stage 2

2.1. If you are dissatisfied with the stage 1 response to your complaint, then you can write to the Branch Chairman stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome and ask for your complaint and the response to be given further consideration. You can expect your request to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt, describing the process the complaint investigation will follow.

2.2. A stage 2 complaint will be coordinated by the Branch Chairman or other delegated Trustee, who will respond within 20 working days with a full written response giving details of any right of appeal.

2.3. RSPCA Sussex Brighton & East Grinstead Branch aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible, however, if a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

The person responsible for this policy/procedure is: The Branch Manager

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Policy approved date 15th June 2021

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees.

Next Review due: June 2022