



Hinchley Charitable Trust – Complaints Handling Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees on an ongoing basis, at least every two years.

Date of last review: April 2025

Date of next review: April 2027

1. General policy

- 1.1 Hinchley Charitable Trust take complaints seriously and commit to deal with all complaints in a confidential, timely and appropriate manner.
- 1.2 Our policy is:
 - To provide a fair complaints policy which is clear and easy to use;
 - To make sure that trustees, volunteers and staff are aware of this policy and know how to handle complaints;
 - To ensure in all cases that complaints are thoroughly handled with integrity and care and that wherever possible, disputes and disagreements are amicably resolved and that relationships are restored;
 - To gather information which helps us improve what we do in the future.
- 1.3 All complaints and any associated information provided will be handled sensitively, and in accordance with relevant data protection requirements. However, the Trustees reserve the right to involve external parties (including the police and other authorities) and to take legal advice where this is considered necessary.
- 1.4 The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Trustees of Hinchley Charitable Trust.
- 1.5 In constructing this policy, the Trustees have paid due consideration to the Good Governance Code with the aim that the charity demonstrates internal and external complaints are handled constructively, impartially and effectively and it learns from mistakes.

2. Receiving complaints

- 2.1 Complaints should normally be addressed to the Chair of the Trustees in writing, by email to hinchleycharitabletrust@gmail.com or by post to East Cottage, Chantry Road, Harrow, HA3 6NT.
- 2.2 Where complaints are received by other Trustees or staff members of the charity, complainants will be directed towards the Chair of the Trustees in the first instance, unless the complaint



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relates specifically to the Chair, in which case the Administrator will direct the complaint to another Trustee.

- 2.3** At the time of receiving the complaint or within any initial response, complainants will be informed of the existence of this policy and provided with a copy if requested.
- 2.4** Hinchley Charitable Trust operates a Safeguarding Children and Other Vulnerable Beneficiaries Policy. Where complaints refer to people or activities covered by that policy, such complaints will be handled in accordance with both policies. In instances where the policies conflict, those contained in the Safeguarding Policy will carry precedence.
- 2.5** In the case of complaints made by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult acting on behalf of a child, these will automatically be passed to the designated Safeguarding Trustee who will investigate the complaint in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.
- 2.6** For the avoidance of doubt, the Chair or any individual Trustee will request that oral complaints should be submitted in writing, and reserve the right to share complaints with other Trustees or staff as they see appropriate.
- 2.7** Oral complainants must be informed that certain aspects of oral complaints will be recorded (either at the time or later), including but not limited to:
 - The name and contact details of the complainant;
 - The date and time that the complaint was received;
 - The substance of the complaint;
 - Any formal relationship that the complainant has with Hinchley Charitable Trust.
- 2.8** Complainants must be informed that, although complaints will be handled confidentially, the Trustees may share these with other Trustees in accordance with this policy.
- 2.9** All complaints, together with any actions undertaken, will be recorded in a complaints log which will be kept by the Administrator and reviewed by the Trustees on a regular basis. Any conclusions and further action required as a result of this review will be formally recorded in the minutes of a Trustees meeting.
- 2.10** Where the complaint relates to a specific person, the Trustees may choose to inform that person of the nature of the complaint and to receive a formal response from them. The identity of the complainant, and any other sensitive information provided by them, will not be shared with the subject of the complaint.



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3. Investigating and resolving complaints

- 3.1** Complaints will be acknowledged by the Chair or Administrator within two weeks of being received and will include details of who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect to have a response. Any first response should include a copy of this policy if not already provided.
- 3.2** The Chair will depute two or more Trustees to investigate the complaint and report back to the full Board of Trustees within six weeks. Where the Chair is the object of the complaint, the Chair may not be one of the investigators and may not participate in the meeting of the Board that considers the complaint.
- 3.3** The Trustees will use their best endeavours to provide a definitive response within six weeks of receiving the complaint. If, because of ongoing investigations or for other reasons this is not possible, a progress update will be provided to the complainant within six weeks of receiving the complaint.
- 3.4** A definitive response will include:
- Actions taken to investigate the complaint;
 - Conclusions drawn from the investigation;
 - Actions taken as a result of the investigation.

4. Appeals and escalation

- 4.1** Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should within eight weeks of receiving the response inform the Chair or any other Trustee in writing of their dissatisfaction and consequent appeal.
- 4.2** As long as this notice of dissatisfaction is received within the timeframe set out in 4.1, the Chair or other Trustee appointed by the Chair will acknowledge this correspondence within two weeks. The Trustees will then use their best endeavours to provide a definitive response within six weeks. Notices of dissatisfaction that are received outside of that timeframe will be considered at the discretion of the trustees.
- 4.3** The decision of the Board of Trustees on any appeal will be considered final. At any time, the complainant can complain directly to the Charity Commission or any other appropriate regulating authority.