

The Phoenix Fellowship Complaints Policy

Version: 1.0

Purpose and commitment

The Phoenix Fellowship strives to handle concerns promptly, fairly and with respect. We welcome complaints as an opportunity to put things right and to learn. This policy explains how anyone can raise a concern about our work, how we will respond, and how you can escalate if you remain dissatisfied.

Scope

This policy covers complaints from applicants and beneficiaries, referrers and partner organisations, donors and supporters, members of the public, and any other person who interacts with our charity. It applies to complaints about our decisions, our service, our communications, the conduct of our people, and the way we manage personal data.

What is a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction where a response is requested or expected. If you tell us you are unhappy, we will treat it as a complaint even if you do not use that word.

How to make a complaint

You can complain by email or through a web form. If you need help to explain your concern we will offer reasonable assistance. If you need an interpreter, large print or another accessible format, please let us know so that we can make suitable arrangements.

Contact details:

Email: complaints@phoenixfellow.org

Our process and timescales

We aim to resolve issues as early as possible. Timescales are working days.

Stage one

Acknowledgement within two working days. Initial review by the most appropriate person who is independent of the events where possible. Response within fifteen working days that sets out the findings and any remedy.

Stage two

If you remain unhappy, you can ask for a review by a senior manager or a trustee who was not involved at stage one. We will acknowledge within two working days and respond within twenty working days with our final position.

Stage three

If the complaint concerns serious harm, including safeguarding or criminal matters, or if you believe we have not met our legal duties, external escalation routes are available as described below.

Complaints about grant decisions

We recognise that applicants may disagree with decisions. We will explain the reasons for a decision and the criteria used. Where the grant making policy provides an appeal route, you may ask for a review within the time stated in that policy. A different decision maker will consider whether the original process was followed, whether the decision was reasonable in light of the evidence, and whether new information changes the outcome.

Safeguarding and urgent risk

If a complaint indicates that a child or an adult at risk may be in danger, we will follow our safeguarding policy. This may require us to share information with the police or local safeguarding teams. In an emergency you should contact the police on 999.

Confidentiality and data protection

We handle complaints confidentially and only share information with people who need it to investigate and respond. Personal data in complaints will be processed in line with our privacy policy. We keep a record of complaints in a secure system and we retain records only for as long as needed to manage the complaint and to meet legal obligations.

Anonymous complaints

We will consider anonymous complaints, but our ability to investigate and to provide feedback is limited when we cannot contact the person who raised the concern. We log anonymous complaints and review them for learning.

Vexatious or repeated complaints

We take all complaints seriously. Where a complaint is repeated without new information, or where behaviour is abusive or unreasonable, we may limit contact to a single point of contact or decline to consider the matter further. We will explain any such decision in writing.

Escalation to external bodies

If you remain dissatisfied after our final response, or if you have a serious concern that you do not feel able to raise with us directly, you can contact external bodies. The Charity Commission provides guidance on serious incident reporting and on how to complain about a charity. If your complaint concerns the handling of your personal data you can contact the Information Commissioner. If your complaint concerns fundraising practice you can contact the Fundraising Regulator.

Learning and improvement

We record complaints and themes. We review them regularly to identify learning and improvement. Significant issues and trends are reported to the trustees. Where we agree actions, we track completion and check effectiveness.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has overall oversight of the complaints process. The Chair or a delegated trustee handles stage two reviews when appropriate. The Chief Executive or an equivalent senior lead oversees day to day handling and ensures resources are in place. All staff members and volunteers are responsible for passing on complaints promptly and for cooperating with investigations.

Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

We will make reasonable adjustments to support access to the complaints process. This may include alternative formats, interpreters, extended time where needed, and allowing a representative or advocate to act on your behalf with your permission.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read alongside our privacy policy, safeguarding policy, grant making policy, and fundraising and donor ethics policy.

Monitoring and reporting

We will maintain a log that records the number of complaints, the issues raised, the time taken to resolve them, the outcomes and any learning. Trustees receive at least an annual summary.

Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Policy Lead using the policy@phoenixfellow.org email address.

Review

This policy is reviewed at least once a year and sooner if legal requirements or our operations change. The version number and effective date will be updated on publication.

Effective date

Effective from. 1st October 2025

Document owner. Policy Lead.

Next planned review. September 2026