



Complaints Procedure – Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network

This Procedure has been developed by Good Company (Surrey) to provide a specific complaints service for people supported by our Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network. For Good Company's general Complaints Procedure, you can get in touch with us at foodbank@goodcompany.org.uk.

Good Company and the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) are committed to providing the highest possible standard of support, and we welcome any feedback you can give us. We see complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right, and we will always treat any complaint with the utmost seriousness and respect.

Aims of this procedure

- To make it easy for anyone that EERN supports to make a complaint.
- To provide a procedure for fair and timely responses.
- To make sure everyone at EERN knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved satisfactorily.
- To ensure that complaints are monitored to improve our work.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the care provided through Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network.

This can include dissatisfaction about:

- The people who are responsible for providing direct support through EERN.
- The quality of the support received.
- The service providers we work with – including those relating to accommodation, interpreting, health, or education and tuition.

It does not include dissatisfaction about other recipients of EERN's support, including other members of a complainant's family, which should be dealt with through our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Who can make a complaint?

Complaints may come from anyone being supported by EERN, anyone working with or for one of our partners or suppliers, or members of the public.

This policy does not cover complaints from volunteers or staff, who should consult Good Company (Surrey)'s Grievance and/or Whistleblowing Procedures.

How can you make a complaint?

You can decide how to make your complaint, depending on what is easiest and what you are most comfortable with. You can contact us in several ways:

- Verbal complaint
 - You can speak to Jo Sherring, the nominated Complaints Officer.
 - If this is not possible, or if it is inappropriate to do so due to the nature of the complaint, you can speak to the Managing Director of Good Company (Surrey), Jonathan Lees.
- Telephone complaint
 - You can call Jo Sherring, nominated Complaints Officer, on 07775 798 047.
- Written complaint
 - You can make a complaint via email, at eern@goodcompany.org.uk.

Regardless of how you get in touch with us, we will always treat your complaint with the utmost seriousness and respect. We know that it can be awkward and stressful to raise a complaint, and we will do what we can to support you through the process.

As part of making your complaint, you can let us know how you would like us to resolve it. We want to provide the best possible outcome for you, and your advice helps us to achieve this wherever we can.

Accessibility and language

Recognising that many of the people we support speak English as an additional language, we aim to make sure that this Procedure is made available in your first language if needed.

We also aim to provide translations for your complaint, any communications during the complaints process, and our final response. If translations are needed, we will endeavour to use a professional translation service rather than a volunteer translator.

What happens when you make a complaint?

If you make a complaint verbally or by telephone, we will immediately write down the details of your complaint and keep a secure record of it. The information we write down includes:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your contact telephone number
- The facts of the complaint

We will inform you about this procedure, and let you know what will happen next. If possible, and where appropriate, we may ask you to follow up by providing a written account of the complaint in your own words.

All complaints information will be handled sensitively, and with care and confidentiality. Any information you share as part of this Procedure will only be shared with those who need to know, and we will always follow any data protection requirements to ensure that we keep your personal data safe.

If you have any questions about data protection, contact us to see our Data Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy, Record of Data Processing Activity, and Confidentiality Agreement.

When can you expect to hear back from us?

We aim to provide an initial response by telephone within 24 hours, or by the next working day.

This will be followed by a written acknowledgement of your complaint within 48 hours of your complaint being made. The written acknowledgement will include:

- The name of the person dealing with the complaint
- Information on when the person complaining can expect a reply
- A copy of this Complaints Procedure

We aim to provide you with a definitive written reply within 10 working days. This should include:

- The action taken to investigate the complaint
- The conclusions from the investigation
- Any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If a definitive response is not possible after 10 working days - for example, because an investigation is ongoing - we will still endeavour to provide you with an update and an indication of when we might be able to give a full reply.

There may be rare occasions when we will not respond to a complaint. These include:

- When a complaint is about something that has no direct connection to us.
- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to - such as pursuing a complaint after it has been escalated and decided on.
- When a complaint is made in a way that is abusive, prejudiced, or offensive.
- When a complaint constitutes bullying or harassment.
- When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to many organisations in bulk.

How do we resolve complaints?

Regardless of how your complaint is resolved, we will always treat you and your concerns with respect, courtesy, openness, and gratitude for your help in improving our work.

1. Complaints can often be resolved as soon as they are made. If the person receiving the complaint feels they may be able to resolve the complaint swiftly, they should do so if possible and appropriate. A resolution could be reached through something as simple as an apology.
2. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, all complaints will be reported to the Complaints Officer within 48 hours.
 - If the Complaints Officer is absent, or is the subject of the complaint, the Complaints Officer role will be filled by the Director of Good Company (Surrey).
3. On receiving the complaint, the Complaints Officer will record it in our complaints log.
4. If the complaint was not resolved immediately, the Complaints Officer will delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint. The investigator will not have been involved with the concern in question, and will therefore be able to investigate as impartially as possible.
5. A written acknowledgement of your complaint, and who will be investigating, will then be provided in line with the timeframe outlined above.
6. If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person will be informed, and given a fair and timely opportunity to respond, as part of an investigation.
7. If an investigation finds that we should take action to respond to your complaint, the person investigating will decide the appropriate course of action. We will always consider your suggestions or requests as part of the decision-making process.

Possible outcomes include:

- Directly rectifying any problem or mistake.
 - Making a commitment to ensure that what went wrong does not happen again.
 - Showing you evidence that we are working to improve our work in line with your complaints, such as an updated training curriculum or new operating procedure.
 - A letter of apology and appreciation from the person you made the complaint about and/or a senior person in the charity.
8. We aim to provide you with a definitive response on the success of your complaint, and on the actions proposed and/or taken, within 10 days, as outlined above.
 9. If appropriate, we will also try to let you know about the positive changes that we have been able to make as a result of your complaint and feedback.

How can you escalate a complaint?

If you feel that your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved following our investigation, you can request that it be escalated.

Your request can be made in person, by telephone, or by email, and should include:

- The details of the complaint
- Why you have not been satisfied with our response
- The further action you would like us to take.

Your escalated complaint will be managed by the Managing Director of Good Company (Surrey), who will aim to acknowledge the request in writing within 48 hours and to advise you on how your appeal will be handled.

Good Company Surrey's Managing Director, as well as Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network's Complaints Officer and/or Good Company (Surrey)'s Support Lead, may investigate the facts of the case or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the initial complaint.

Any individual who dealt with the original complaint will be kept informed and given ample opportunity to explain the reasons for the original decision. If further assistance is required, then Good Company (Surrey)'s Trustees will be consulted and asked to review the situation. The decision taken at this stage is final, except in cases where the complaint is reviewed externally.

If you are unhappy with our response

If you remain dissatisfied with our response after escalating your complaint, you can contact the Charity Commission at:

The Charity Commission
PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG
0845 3000 218

If your complaint is about data protection, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>.

If your complaint is about our fundraising, you can contact the Fundraising Regulator at <http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/> or via telephone on 0300 999 3407.

Who is responsible for this policy?

Responsibility for Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network's implementation of this Procedure lies with the EERN Director Joanna Sherring. Overall responsibility for Good Company (Surrey)'s complaints management lies with its Managing Director, Jonathan Lees.

Responsibility for monitoring our complaints responses is held by the Board of Trustees, who conduct a yearly review to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Changes to this procedure

Good Company (Surrey) and Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network may make changes to this Procedure from time to time. We will try to keep everyone informed about any updates, but we encourage you to check with us if you would like to stay informed.

We may need to vary this procedure to account for any issues arising during a complaints process, such as if there is a potential conflict of interest with any of the designated individuals who should be responsible for dealing with the complaint.