



Complaints Procedure

What is the complaints procedure for and what does it cover?

The procedure is for complaints from members of the public about RSPCA East Norfolk Branch services and members of the staff, our volunteers or Trustees.

The complaints procedure is not set up to handle animal welfare concerns about a particular animal or other general animal welfare matters such as farm animal transport or slaughter. These must be reported in the usual manner by calling 0300 1234 999.

How do I make a complaint?

Complaints can be made in the following ways:

Via email:

The simplest way to lodge your complaint is via email directly to manager@rspcaeastnorfolk.org.uk

In writing:

You can send a letter to the Branch Manager, RSPCA East Norfolk Branch, Tar Works Road, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1QR.

In person:

If your complaint is about one of our shops or our clinic then you should talk with the Shop or Clinic Manager. Our Shop or Clinic Managers will do all they can to discuss your concerns and resolve the matter. If this is not possible, they may ask you to write to us using the above methods so that your complaint can be investigated fully under the complaints procedure.

Please note that we are unable to take complaints over the phone due to lack of resources. If you have difficulty writing to us you may want to ask for assistance from friends, family, care workers, etc. or an organisation such as Citizens Advice. If you are unable to use any of these options we will offer assistance where we can.

What information do I need to provide?

To ensure that your complaint can be dealt with quickly and efficiently you should provide the following information:

- Full name
- Postal address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Any contact details that are different from the above
- Full details of the complaint including relevant dates
- Whether you have a relationship with us, e.g. as a volunteer, supporter, former member of staff etc.
- If you have any evidence available to support your complaint, e.g. photos, letters, emails, names of witnesses, veterinary bills or other paperwork.

What are the stages in the complaints procedure?

There are three stages in the complaints procedure; all complaints will be handled in this way:

Level 1:

New complaints will be recorded and acknowledged (within five working days). They will be passed to the relevant ~~line manager of the individual concerned~~, who will investigate your complaint and reply to you, within 21 working days of the date we acknowledged your complaint. If this is not going to be possible, they will let you know why and how much longer it will take.

Level 2:

If you remain dissatisfied with the reply you receive at Level 1 and you let us know in writing within 10 working days of the date of our reply, your complaint will be passed to the Branch Manager to review how it was handled. To ensure we save our resources for vital work on animal welfare, we will not acknowledge receipt of your letter/email but will aim to reply to you in full within 10 working days.

Level 3:

If you remain dissatisfied with the reply at Level 2 and you let us know in writing within 10 working days of the date of our reply, your complaint will be referred to the Hon. Chair to review it and reply. To ensure we save our resources for vital work on animal welfare, they will not acknowledge receipt of your letter/email but will aim to reply to you in full within 10 working days. If the Hon. Chair is not able to do this, they will let you know the date by which they hope to reply.

Are there some complaints you don't respond to?

We expect our staff to handle complaints politely at all times. If the person making the complaint uses abusive language or an aggressive tone, we will not engage with this. If the complaint is made in person, the member of staff may walk away or seek assistance from another staff member. In these circumstances it is unlikely that your complaint will be taken seriously.

If the complaint is made in writing by email or letter and uses abusive language or threats, it is unlikely that your complaint will be taken seriously.

We may terminate correspondence about a specific complaint if it is clear that despite our best efforts we are unlikely to satisfy you. If you write to us again about a different issue, it will be treated as a new complaint and replied to.

The decision to terminate correspondence will only be made after the matter has been investigated thoroughly and in line with our procedures. We will always tell you when we are terminating a complaint and the reason we are doing this.

Complaints will also only be considered if they are received within one month of the time when you were first aware of the situation. We do not handle complaints that date back further than this.