



Complaints and comments policy

The Chartered Secretaries' Charitable Trust is by the side of Chartered Secretaries and their families through life's challenges, by supporting them when in need and by promoting excellence in governance. The Trust:

- Serves The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland members, graduates, students, employees and their families to relieve and help prevent financial difficulties,
- Facilitates research to increase good governance for the benefit of the public and
- Encourages the expertise of those in the field of governance with bursaries and prizes.

The Chartered Secretaries' Charitable Trust endeavours to maintain the highest quality of support through our administration, services and visitors. If you are happy with our overall service or have any comments, please let us know and whether we may share these comments anonymously in our Annual report and publicity material.

Governance and Accountability: The Charities Officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of complaints, including maintaining the complaints register and coordinating investigations. Oversight of complaints handling and themes arising is provided by the Board of Trustees, who receive regular reports on complaint volumes, themes and learning. Final responses to complaints are approved by the Charities Officer or an appropriately delegated senior individual. Escalated complaints are reviewed and determined by the Trustees.

We take every case seriously and we are committed to ensuring that all complaints are dealt with promptly, efficiently and deliver an outcome that is fair, evidence-based and clearly explained.

Complaints and comments may come from any person who has (or has had) a relationship with The Chartered Secretaries' Charitable Trust. This includes recipients of financial assistance and those who support the work of the Trust through making donations and/or volunteering. This document outlines the process for any complaints relating to services provided by the Trust.

Any appeals relating to a decision made about an application for support will be dealt with by the Support and Grants Committee and in line with our Appeals policy.

Any personal information provided to The Chartered Secretaries' Charitable Trust as part of the complaints process, will be used in order to help us fully investigate and resolve the matter raised. All information will be held securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Personal information of an individual making a complaint will only be accessed by those who are investigating or resolving the matter and will not be used for any other purpose.

Your entitlement to receive support will not be affected by making a complaint.

Complaints relating to personal data

Individuals may raise concerns about how the Trust collects, stores, or uses personal data. This includes concerns about:

- marketing communications;
- accuracy of personal information;
- responses to subject access requests; or
- sharing of personal data.

These complaints will be handled in line with this policy.

Where a complaint relates to data protection, it will be identified as such in the complaints register and handled with appropriate priority and confidentiality.

This process does not affect an individual's right to exercise their data protection rights or to lodge a complaint directly with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

How to make a complaint or comment

You can submit your complaint or comment to:

The Chartered Secretaries' Charitable Trust,
Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street,
London, EC1N 8TS

By telephone: 020 7612 7049 or by Email: CSCT@cgi.org.uk
Or, if you are a beneficiary, during a visit with your assigned visitor.

Complaints and comments can be submitted either by letter, email or conversation.

In order to enable us to fully investigate your complaint, please provide as much detail as you feel is appropriate. If your complaint relates to a matter that occurred some time ago, it may be more difficult for us to investigate fully.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, outline your relationship to the individual and provide a summary of why you are making contact and whether they have given their permission for you to contact the Trust on their behalf.

If you are making a complaint during the course of a visit, the visitor may record the information on your behalf and that the information was provided verbally. The visitor will also check that you are happy with the information they have recorded.

Any complaints submitted anonymously will be logged on the complaints register, reviewed and considered.

How we will process your complaint:

On receipt, complaints will be allocated a reference number and logged on to the complaints register. The complaints register is used to keep track of complaints received, along with resolution dates and outcomes. It will also record the date when all details should be destroyed.

We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days. At this stage, we may also ask you for further details in order to help us fully investigate the matter.

We will also aim to respond to your complaint in full within 20 working days. If we are unable to investigate the matter fully within this timeframe, we will contact you to explain why we need further time to respond.

If you are happy with the response given, we will close the file and destroy all records after a maximum period of two years from the date of the complaint, this retention period is set in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy, which sets out wider data retention requirements. If however, you feel that the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to appeal the outcome of the complaint. We request that all appeals are lodged within 28 days of receipt of the report sent to you.

If you appeal against the outcome of your complaint, this will be elevated to our Board of Trustees who will then investigate the matter further. Individuals who were involved in dealing with the original complaint will not be involved in this stage. Trustees will aim to resolve the elevated complaint within a further 20 working days of receipt of your appeal. Any Trustee with a conflict of interest or prior involvement in the original complaint will not participate in the review of an appeal. Appeals will be considered in line with Trustee governance arrangements, ensuring appropriate independence and objectivity. If Trustees are not able to fully investigate the complaint within this timeframe, you will be contacted to advise you of the reasons why and an amended timescale for completion of the report.

At this stage if you do not feel your complaint has been dealt with to a satisfactory level, you can ask for advice from the Charity Commission or the Fundraising Regulator.

The Charity Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG. Telephone 0845 3000 218
<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/how-to-complain/complain-about-a-charity/>

The Fundraising Regulator has an online form on their website. Telephone 0300 999 3407
<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints/make-complaint>

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint relating to personal data, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint.

This policy will be reviewed as determined by the Trustees, with the complaints register being reviewed annually. The complaints register will be used to identify themes, trends, and areas for improvement. Learning arising from complaints will be recorded and used to inform service development and reported to Trustees as part of routine governance reporting.