



Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges

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Complaints Policy

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges ("the Colleges"), its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a Collegian, a group of Collegians or the charitable functions, property and activities the Colleges. The Trustees take all complaints seriously and as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint, we will take them as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future.

Complaints may be made by Collegians, their carers and families, a representative of a Collegian or a third party.

Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if:

- a complaint relates to a legal matter that is already being dealt with by a solicitor; or
- the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.

Collegians should be encouraged to raise minor complaints or dissatisfaction informally in the first instance, preferably in person and orally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue. Complaints should be made to the Office Manager in the first instance.

If the complaint cannot be solved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing either by the complainant or the complainant's representative, who may accompany the complainant to any relevant meeting. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the charity to investigate.

Service requests are noted separately. A complaint will be raised if there is dissatisfaction with the response to a service request. Such complaint will not stop the response to the service request.

Written complaints should be made to the Office Manager, who will

acknowledge receipt of a written complaint and the understanding of the complaint within five working days of being received. This acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale.

The charity will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency with a full response after a further 10 working days.

If the complaint is about the Office Manager, a Trustee will be appointed to investigate the complaint and the same process will be followed.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant has 10 working days to submit a written appeal, and the appeal will be dealt with by the Chairman of Trustees, who will acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receipt.

The Chairman of Trustees will respond in writing to the complainant within 20 working days advising of the action being taken to resolve the complaint.

If the complainant is a Collegian, or a representative appointed by the Collegian, and is still not satisfied with the final response then the matter could be dealt with through the Housing Ombudsman Service. This is an independent service. (Please see Appendix to this Policy)

For any other complainant the decision of the Chairman will be final.

It should be noted that:

- If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a complainant's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable, the Trustees of the Colleges reserve the right to close the complaint. A complainant who displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether oral or written), that causes staff or Trustees to feel threatened, abused and/or continues to contact the charity with unreasonable demands during/following a complaint investigation, may have their appointment set aside.
- In cases where Trustees consider a complainant is being unreasonable and overly persistent and decide to bring the complaint to an end, they will inform the complainant of their reasons.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of Bromley & Sheppard's Colleges.

Dated 30.12.2024

Appendix to Complaints Policy

The charity is a Registered Provider and if the Collegian remains dissatisfied following consideration by, and the decision of the Trustees, the Collegian has the right to take the complaint to The Housing Ombudsman Service.

Complaints referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service

Charities that are or have been registered with the RSH (i.e. Registered Providers) are required to join the Housing Ombudsman Service. As Bromley & Shppard's Colleges is registered with the Ombudsman, Collegians can ask for their complaint to be considered by a 'designated person' when the charity's internal complaints procedure is finished. This is known as the Democratic Filter.

Designated persons were introduced by the Government to improve the chances of complaints about housing being resolved locally. The introduction of designated persons is intended to involve local politicians and local people in resolving local housing issues.

A 'designated person' could be an MP or a local Councillor who can help resolve the complaint in one of two ways. They can try and resolve the complaint themselves or they can refer the complaint straight to the Ombudsman. If they refuse to do either the Collegian can contact the Ombudsman directly.

If complaints to the Ombudsman are not referred by a designated person, there must be at least eight weeks from the end of the complaint process before the Ombudsman can consider the case. The law says that when the designated person refers a complaint to the Ombudsman, it must be in writing.

In summary, if a complaint is not resolved at the end of the complaint process, the Collegian can either refer the matter to a designated person or wait eight weeks and then refer the matter directly to the Ombudsman.

When the Ombudsman receives a complaint they will ask if it has been referred to a designated person and if not, will ask the reasons for this. They will either then refer the matter to a designated person or if the Collegian is clear that they do not want to make use of that opportunity for local resolution, (if it is more than eight weeks from the end of the charity's complaint process) the Ombudsman will consider the case.

Further information on the Housing Ombudsman can be found here <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>