



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

**BENEVOLENT FUND OF THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS
AND THE ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS**



Association of
Optometrists

55 Colchester Road, White Colne, Colchester CO6 2PW
e-mail: admin@opticalbenfund.com
website: www.opticalbenfund.com
Tel: 01787 223800

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Policy

We accept that sometimes things go wrong and applicants may wish to complain about the service received from the Benevolent Fund.

Complaints may be related to the:

- Application process involving a member of our staff
- Decision-making process conducted by the trustees
- Service received by a third-party supplier

We will:

- Do our best to resolve things, as soon as possible
- Ensure that all complaints are given full and fair consideration
- Ensure that all complaints are handled with due regard to individual needs
- Learn from complaints to help us plan and improve our services
- Include a 'Compliments and Complaints' section in our Annual Report

Procedure - informal complaints

Many complaints can be resolved informally. In the first instance you should contact the Administrator (admin@opticalbenfund.com) who will try to sort the matter out.

If you are not satisfied, do not wish for an informal resolution, or wish to complain about a member of staff, you may raise a formal complaint.

Procedure - formal complaints

Formal complaints must be made as soon as possible (and no later than three months after the event about which there is a complaint) in writing by letter to the address above or email to the Chair (chair@opticalbenfund.com)

Please outline your complaint concisely in 500 words or less and explain why the Fund fell short of your expectations.

What happens next?

- The Chair will ask a small group of trustees to investigate your complaint
- You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint as soon as possible
- You may be contacted to make sure that we have understood your complaint properly
- You may be interviewed by one or more trustees investigating your complaint
- You are very welcome to have someone with you when your complaint is discussed
- You will receive a written response to your complaint within 28 working days of us receiving it, or we will be in touch if we need to extend this timeframe for any reason

If a criminal offence is alleged, then the police will be informed.

In serious cases you may be able to complain to the Charity Commission. You can find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Role of trustees

Trustees appointed to investigate a complaint will examine all relevant issues and decide on a suitable response.

In most cases, the outcome of the investigation and the decision will be reported to the full board of trustees at its next meeting but will not be available for further discussion or debate. However, it may sometimes be necessary for the trustees investigating a complaint to seek views and a decision from the full board.

Review

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.
This policy was last reviewed in April 2022
Next review due in September 2023