



The Dog Hut

Complaints policy and procedure

Updated March 2021

Introduction

The Dog Hut is committed to providing a high-quality, transparent, and accessible service to our clients. To do this, we need you to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

What this Policy Covers

This policy covers complaints about the standard of service you should expect from us and the behaviour of the professionals within The Dog Hut.

The Dog Hut's Responsibilities

The Dog Hut is jointly owned by Dean and Sara Hart and has a team of part time staff with different abilities and knowledge. The grooming salon is managed by Sara Hart with overseeing of behavioural elements by Dean Hart. If a complaint is made the most appropriate individual professional will work together with you and take full responsibility for this policy. As a group of individuals all professionals involved are responsible for making sure The Dog Hut implements and complies with it.

All staff are responsible for identifying complaints and forwarding them and any other information needed to the most appropriate person within The Dog hut.

The Dog Hut will record your complaint confidentially.

The Dog Hut reserve the right to change the policy at any time.

Reasonable Adjustments and Alternative Formats

The aim of The Dog Hut is to make our policy easy to use and accessible for everyone.

If you are unable to contact us in writing because of a disability and need a reasonable adjustment to the complaint format, then please call 01323 890041 and ask to speak to a member of The Dog Hut Administration Team

Advocacy support

Advocacy agencies may be able to support you through the complaint process and help you to express your views and wishes.

If you need support in making a complaint, we are happy to receive your complaint from:

- an advice or advocacy agency
- other relevant professionals
- family members or friends.

After your advocate has written to us, we will let them know if we need your consent for us to speak to them. Please also refer to our Complaints Form for completion by your advocacy and your signature.

A list of Advocacy providers can be requested from the Citizens Advice (England) <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

Where issues are simple and we accept we have done something wrong, we may not need a formal investigation. We can say sorry, try to put things right and / Or learn from our mistake. Where this is an option, we will do this promptly and within five working days.

Either Director can deal with a complaint informally (including the person being complained about) and offer an on-the-spot apology. If the complaint is simple but the person who received the complaint cannot handle it because they are unfamiliar with the issue, they will pass it on to someone who can as soon as possible.

The Dog Hut does not normally apologize on the phone, preferring face to face discussion where the complaint is from an existing client. In this situation The Dog Hut may not follow up with an email unless an individual professional feels they wish to. Where this is not possible an email will be sent to the person making the complaint with an apology if this is appropriate and considered necessary.

If you are still not happy or The Dog Hut feels that the complaint cannot be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint using Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

A complaint will be escalated to this stage when:

- stage 1 was attempted but you remain dissatisfied
- the issues are complex or require detailed investigation, or
- the complaint relates to issues that have been identified as serious.

Making a Stage 2 Formal Complaint

You can make a formal complaint by downloading our complaint form and sending this to

- **by email:** to dean@caninestudiescollege.com

Should your complaint relate to Dean Hart and you would rather email another professional then email sara@caninestudiescollege.com

- **by post:**

The Administration Team
The Dog Hut
1 Claremont Road
Seaford
BN25 2AY

Please note that this office is not always manned and therefore The Dog Hut cannot always guarantee there will be a person available to speak with you.

When making your complaint please make sure you complete our complaint form in full including:

- your name and address (an email address will also be acceptable)
- what your complaint is about, and
- any other requirement (for example, if you need a different format).

Please try to be as clear as possible. This will help The Dog Hut understand your complaint and respond to you promptly. If a complaint is unclear, we may ask you for more information to help us to understand. If you do not provide the information we need when asked, we may not be able to help you.

Timescales

If you want to make a formal complaint, then you should do so within one month of the matter you wish to complain about. Waiting longer could make it difficult to look at your complaint and mean that we aren't able to unless we think there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- you've only just found out about the problem
- you need an extension as a reasonable adjustment, and
- ill health, bereavement, or other serious personal

We aim to send acknowledgement of your complaint within five days, send a final or holding response within four weeks and send a final or other response within eight weeks of receiving your complaint. If we need to contact you for further clarification, or your advocacy agency for consent, the timescale will start from the date we receive the information we need. If we are not able to meet this timeline, we will tell you and let you know when we are likely to be able to respond to your complaint.

Initial Assessment

We will decide whether the issue is a service complaint or whether your complaint needs to be handled in some other way.

Covered by Another Policy or Process

If your complaint is covered by another policy or process, The Dog Hut will send it to the correct and most appropriate organisation to handle and write to explain that to you.

Examples include:

- where there is another appeal method set out in the Equality Act 2006
- a request for information or review under data protection or freedom of information laws
- an employment grievance about us, and
- where a court or tribunal has already heard the issue.

Feedback

If your complaint isn't a service complaint, you are not a client and doesn't fall within any of The Dog Hut policies, we will treat it as feedback.

When you provide feedback, this information helps The Dog Hut understand more about the issues clients may experience. This can help shape our future work, even if The Dog Hut is unable to take immediate action on the issue you raise.

Some examples of things we will be treat as feedback are:

- dissatisfaction with the type of grooming that The Dog Hut carries out or decisions we make in relation to the behaviour of your pet or your pet's coat condition
- comments about our policies or policy decisions

An example of a complaint we will treat as feedback

- Someone writes to The Dog Hut and says they don't agree with our behavioural methods applied during grooming. (Unless there is suggestive of an animal welfare nature which we will always investigate).

If The Dog Hut considers your complaint to be feedback, one of the professionals within The Dog Hut will:

- make a record of the feedback, where appropriate
- pass it onto the relevant person involved
- write to you to explain this and signpost you to the Ombudsman service or Citizen's Advice Service

Reasons we may refuse your complaint

If your complaint is about the actions or service of a different organisation and The Dog Hut has no involvement in the issue, The Dog Hut will refuse your request and signpost you to the specific organisation to complain.

There are also situations where The Dog Hut may decide that we won't look into your complaint further. These include:

- attempts to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where The Dog Hut has already given you our final decision
- where The Dog Hut has already investigated the matter for you under another process
- anonymous complaints
- where the time-limit for complaining has passed, and
- if we think the complaint is unreasonable, we will let you know our reasons for this

If we are refusing to investigate further, we will explain this to you and signpost you to Citizens Advice or Ombudsman.

Acknowledging The Complaint

If The Dog Hut thinks the service complaint should be investigated under stage 2 of this policy, we will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.

Investigation

The Dog Hut will decide which professional representative will investigate your complaint in more detail. They will handle your complaint fairly and you can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect, and fairness.

Complaints about the service being provided by one of The Dog Hut staff will normally be considered by, or passed to, the senior Director of that specialized field. They should attempt to resolve these concerns by email. Where we are at fault, this could involve apologizing for a delay, arranging appropriate forms of contact or explaining how improvements will be made.

Outcome

The Dog Hut will give a fair and balanced description of what happened and what conclusions have been reached on your complaint.

It is possible that there will be parts of the complaint that fall within this policy and others that don't. Where this is the case, The Dog Hut will be clear with you in our response about what we could and couldn't investigate.

If we can put things right, we will try to. If we can't put things right, we will be open and honest, say sorry, explain what went wrong (and why) and try to improve in the future.

Stage 3: Ombudsman

If you have reached the end of The Dog Hut's internal process and are still not happy with our response, or we haven't replied to your complaint in time, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed by a professional Ombudsman you can find details of local professional services by following this link <https://www.ombudsmanassociation.org/> www..

It's a good idea to get your complaint to the Ombudsman as soon as possible after you have had a final response from The Dog Hut. This is because there are time limits for making your complaint that may be set out in law.