



## Complaints Policy

Renewal frequency and date	December 2024 2 yearly
Author	Harry Grigg

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### Updates

2024 – Updated to New Policy Format and Removed Mentions to Jon Beardon, replacing with Pete Collinson

2025- Frequency changed to 2 yearly

2025 – text added relating to web-tool

## **1. Principles**

- a. We value complaints, comments and suggestions, and will treat with respect and sympathy all people who make them.
- b. Complaints, comments and suggestions are valued because:
  - They provide us with an opportunity to put things right.
  - They help us to see what things people think are important in their dealing with us, and give us an opportunity for us to demonstrate our practical care and respect
  - They give valuable insights for setting service standards and monitoring quality
  - They provide users with a way to complain, which reduces the likelihood of people seeking other ways to express dissatisfaction
- c. A complaint is more serious than a comment or suggestion and is an expression of dissatisfaction with the way the Church or Centre or someone acting on our behalf has behaved or with some way we conduct our business.

## **2. Receiving a Complaint**

- a. Complaints may come from anyone – for example people taking part in any of our activities (including church members), neighbours, or members of the public. They may be addressed to anyone seen as representing the organisation, but are likely to be addressed to leaders of activities or the church, or people dealing with bookings of the Centre, or people 'opening up' for bookings. We should try to see things from the complainer's point of view and never be dismissive, and to resolve the matter to the complainer's satisfaction as quickly as possible.
- b. Anonymous complaints will not normally be accepted or acted upon unless there is significant evidence available to back up the complaint.

## **3. Minor Complaints**

A complaint to a person about their behaviour or something they are responsible for that they can easily deal with does not have to be recorded, but the person receiving the complaint can record it if they wish.

## **4. More Serious Complaints**

Other complaints must be made in writing if they are to be dealt with; this must be explained to the complainer if the complaint is at first verbal, and if appropriate the complainer should be given materials to write it on the spot.

A tool available to any person in the church, or from without, is available on the website. Through filling out a form, an email will be generated to the chair of trustees and one other trustee. If the complainant is unrelated to Pete, the email will be forwarded to him; if the complaint does relate to Pete, the trustees will take responsibility for the procedure. It will be necessary for the name and contact details of the complainer to be recorded, so the complaint can be responded to. The person receiving the complaint should put a copy in the file in the filing cabinet and then pass the complaint to Pete Collinson or a Trustee as appropriate, who will acknowledge it in writing within a week.

## **5. Complaints Procedure**

Pete or the Trustee will then attempt to resolve the matter, consulting leaders of various activities, the other Trustees, or the Elders if appropriate.

- a. The complainer should then be told in writing what has been done, or given an explanation if the problem cannot be corrected. This should be done within one month of the complaint. If the resolution is not accepted the complainer should at this stage be told about the appeal mechanism (Section 6 below).

- b. If Pete or the Trustee dealing with the complaint cannot resolve it to the complainer's satisfaction, the Trustees (Church or Centre as appropriate) must be consulted.
- c. If the complaint is of a spiritual or doctrinal nature, then the Elders might deem it appropriate to seek advice from the Relational Mission Team.
- d. If the complaint is of a legal nature, then the complainer has the right to seek legal redress from the appropriate authorities.
- e. Every attempt should be made to ensure that the complainer understands and, if possible, accepts the decision.
- f. If it is appropriate to explain the decision verbally this should be followed up in writing, even if this is simply to confirm and record what has been said by the complainer and by us.
- g. The complaints and outcomes should be reviewed by the appropriate set of Trustees at their next meeting.

Copies of documents and records of actions should be added to the copy of the complaint in the filing cabinet.

## **6. Appeals Process**

Any appeal must be made in writing to the Trustees by the complainer within 14 days of receiving the decision. The Trustees will acknowledge it within 5 days. Two Trustees not otherwise involved will consider all documentation and will interview the complainer if he or she is willing, and will interview any volunteer or staff whom they require. They will report to the whole Board of Trustees, who will then consider their recommendation. The Trustees' decision must be communicated in writing to the complainer within 21 days of the lodging of the appeal.

## **7. Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## **8. Guidance for Staff receiving a complaint**

Complaints received by telephone or in-person need to be recorded. The person who gets a phone or in-person complaint should:

- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number, Date and time.
- Write down the facts of the complaint: when it happened, where, who witnessed it, etc. (Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by e-mail so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant that the complaint will be logged and that the process will follow the complaints procedure as detailed in the complaints policy