



Complaints and Grievance Policy

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The church takes all views, including any complaints or grievances very seriously. It is important that if you are dissatisfied, you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and where appropriate, resolved.

Our aim is:

1. To provide a fair procedure which is clear and easy to use.
2. To be open about how we will deal with complaints and grievances,
3. To ensure that all complaints and grievances are investigated in an equitable and timely way,
4. To resolve any complaints or grievances as soon as possible.

Stage 1 – Informal discussion

Informal discussion can usually resolve situations without the need for a written complaint. If you feel aggrieved about any matter, you should raise it with the person involved directly in the first instance. If you feel uncomfortable to raise your concern directly then it might be appropriate to ask a friend or member of the church leadership (PCC / Church Wardens / Rector) to raise your concern on your behalf.

We hope that the vast majority of issues will be resolved through informal discussion about the concern or grievance and would encourage everyone to air their concerns as early as possible.

Stage 2 – Formal complaint

If informal resolution fails and a formal complaint or grievance is to be raised it should then be put in writing. You should address your complaint to the Rector (or to a Church Warden, if the complaint is about the Rector) explaining fully the nature and extent of your complaint or grievance. Include documentary evidence if possible and seek to outline the results of your attempt to resolve your complaint through informal discussion. If possible, you should explain clearly the way in which the complaint would be resolved to your satisfaction.

On receipt your complaint will then be investigated fully. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within 2 weeks.

Within this timescale:

- A decision will be taken as to who is the best person to respond to the complaint
- All necessary and appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the substance of the complaint and any attempts that have been made to resolve the complaint informally.
- A meeting or discussion will be initiated with you to fully understand your issue and seek clarity about what would be the best resolution for you
- Arrange any necessary mediation and any subsequent actions.
- If it becomes clear that the investigation will take more than two weeks the person investigation will let you know and give you a suggested timescale

The reply will inform you of any actions that have been taken to investigate the complaint and the proposed resolution.

Your complaint will be kept confidential. Only those involved in the investigation of your complaint will be aware and, even then, information will be shared on a “need to know” basis.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If you are unsatisfied with the response to your formal complaint then you may appeal. An appeal may take one of two forms.

Appeal to the PCC

If you believe that the response to your formal complaint is incorrect regarding matters of fact then you may wish to direct an appeal back to the PCC outlining the deficiencies in the original investigation (in writing). Your appeal should be directed to the PCC Secretary (or another member of the PCC if you think it appropriate). Any appeal should be lodged within 28 days of the date of the reply to your formal complaint.

In this case the PCC will appoint someone who was not involved in the original investigation to consider the merit of your appeal and will make recommendations to the PCC about how to respond. The outcome of your appeal will be communicated to you within a reasonable timeframe.

Please note: This form of appeal is not appropriate if you are unsatisfied with the response to your complaint *unless the response is incorrect in significant matters of fact*.

Appeal to the Diocese

If you are unsatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled then you may wish to raise your concerns with the Bishop or Archdeacon (contact details may be found on the Diocesan website).

Complaints about the conduct of a member of the clergy may be dealt with under the Clergy Discipline Measure.