

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist Trust (the Trust) takes complaints very seriously and whilst we try to provide a good service, we know that sometimes things go wrong.

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide a means for members of the public/third parties to express legitimate concerns and have them addressed;
- ensure that issues are resolved quickly and satisfactorily in order to protect the users of our services.

We aim to sort out complaints quickly and fairly and we will try to sort out any mistake or misunderstanding straight away. Sometimes it may take longer, but we will let you know how long it will take.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the Trust, its staff, or Trustees which affects an individual, a company or organisation.

This policy also covers concerns which are in the public interest and could include:

- financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud;
- failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutes;
- dangers to health & safety or the environment;
- criminal activity;
- improper conduct or unethical behaviour;
- attempts to conceal any of these.

What we learn from Complaints

We keep records of all the complaints received and monitor them regularly. This helps us to:

- identify areas of service where we need to make changes and improvements;
- make sure we are dealing with complaints effectively and consistently.

Procedures

The people who can best deal with a complaint are those you have been dealing with. You should speak or write to the member of the team and explain the reasons you are unhappy. We will acknowledge your complaint in three working days and we can usually sort out mistakes and misunderstandings quickly and informally at this stage.

Please be aware that all complaints will be treated with the utmost discretion.

The Trust will respond to concerns raised by an individual who must not forget that testing out concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them. Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- be investigated by management or through the disciplinary process;
- be referred to the police;
- be referred to the external auditor; and/or,
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle that the Trust will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Usually within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to the complainant:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how the Trust proposes to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- telling them whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- supplying them with information about staff support mechanisms; and,
- telling them whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between the person considering the issues and the complainant will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the Trust will seek further information from the complainant.

When the matter is resolved, all those involved in the issue should be informed of the outcome. In any case, the matter will be dealt with promptly and confidentially. Immediate steps should be taken to remedy the situation and a final solution should be reached within 28 days.

If no further correspondence is received from the complainant within 7 calendar days of the response being issued, or if the complainant responds confirming acceptance of the initial outcome, the complaint will be closed as resolved.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint was dealt with, or the outcome that was delivered, please contact our Company Secretary [email] and/or our Chair [email].

It is best to let the Company Secretary, and/or Chair, know which parts of our response you are unhappy with. We will investigate your complaint and the Company Secretary or Chair will respond to you within 30 calendar days. An investigation may take longer than this, but if it does we will explain the reasons why and let you know when you can expect a full reply.

Anonymous Allegations

The Trust takes all complaints and concerns raised by members of the public and third parties seriously. We will investigate anonymous allegations. However, we remind complainants that when people put their names to an allegation the ability to investigate and therefore reach firm conclusions is strengthened. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the Trust. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and,
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.

Where details are gathered, the Trust will put in place appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.