

Complaints Policy

1. Purpose of this policy

- 1.1 The highest standards of conduct and behaviour are expected from all Chapter members, staff, volunteers and members of any Cathedral committees and advisory bodies. We know there may be times when we do not meet our high standards. Should this happen we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it from happening again.
- 1.2 The Chapter views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or the organisation making the complaint.

2. Making this policy publicly available

This policy must be advertised on the Cathedral's website, so members of the public can find it easily should they wish to make a complaint. A hard copy should also be provided to any person on request at the Cathedral's office.

3. What is a Complaint – for the purpose of this policy?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of the Cathedral, its operations and its mission and ministry or about an action, or lack of action, by the staff, clergy, Chapter members, members of committees of Chapter and advisory bodies, contractors or volunteers that requires a formal response

4. What complaints are not included in this policy?

4.1 This policy does not relate to:

- a. This policy relates to complaints from people who do not work or volunteer for the Cathedral. A separate process exists for internal complaints.
- b. Complaints relating to safeguarding¹ should be referred directly to the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer at safeguarding@stpaulscathedral.org.uk or to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at safeguarding@london.anglican.org

4.2 As a rule, the cathedral will not respond:

- a. to complaints that do not relate directly to something that the cathedral has done or been involved in;

¹ <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/safeguarding>

- b. when the complaint has already been responded to and has been reviewed through the process in section 9 below²;
- c. complaints made on the Cathedral's social media platforms, only complaints made by email, in writing, by phone or in person will be dealt with via this policy;
- d. when a complaint has been sent to us and numerous other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email. In this instance, we can choose whether it is necessary for us to respond or not.

5. **How to make a complaint**

- 5.1 You can contact us in whichever way is most convenient to you and we will respond to you via the same method unless instructed otherwise.
- 5.2 Written complaints should be sent by e-mail to complaints@stpaulscathedral.org.uk or by letter to St Paul's Cathedral, St Paul's Churchyard, London EC4M 8AD.
- 5.3 Please include your name, address and contact telephone number in your email or letter so that we can get back in touch with you easily. The Cathedral cannot respond to complaints made anonymously, but we will investigate anonymous complaints and use the information provided to improve in any way we can.
- 5.4 Where a complaint is incoherent or illegible a staff member will contact the complainant, where possible, to request that the complaint be provided in a legible format or to clarify the complaint. Where a legible or coherent version of the complaint is not provided, the complaint will not be able to be progressed.
- 5.5 Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 020 7246 8350 or in person to any of the Cathedral's staff at the Cathedral.

6. **What we will do when we receive a complaint**

- 6.1 We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement will explain who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a response.
- 6.2 We will do our best to investigate and respond fully and conclusively to all complaints within 28 working days of a complaint being received. Sometimes a complaint is more complex so it will take us longer to investigate it. Where this happens, we will send you a progress report and let you know when you can expect to receive a final response.
- 6.3 We will handle any complaints received with sensitivity and in compliance with the Chapter's data protection policy, privacy notice and the law.
- 6.4 The Chapter may decide not to respond to a complainant, or to cease to respond to a complainant, where it is considered appropriate and proportionate to do so on the basis that a complainant:
 - a. is being deliberately abusive, prejudiced or offensive; and/or

² See section 10 of this policy.

- b. is harassing a member of staff, volunteer or office holder at the cathedral.

Where the Chapter makes such a decision:

- a. where possible, the investigation into the complaint made should continue, in accordance with section 7 below; and
- b. a letter must be sent to the complainant within 7 working days to inform them of the Chapter's decision and it should inform the complainant whether the complaint raised is being investigated by the Chapter.

7. How will complaints be progressed and resolved?

- 7.1 Wherever possible, we will look to resolve your complaint amicably and with pastoral care and sensitivity.
- 7.2 Complaints will be assigned to a senior employee, or a member of the Chapter, as appropriate, to investigate any complaint received. This person must not be someone who is personally involved in the events complained about.
- 7.3 The person investigating will make all necessary and appropriate enquiries to establish the substance of the complaint and note any attempts already made to resolve the matter informally. Where possible, members of staff will be informed of a complaint made about them or any actions for which they were responsible. The Chapter has a duty of care to staff complained about as well as to complainants and so the person investigating should ensure, where possible, that the person about whom a complaint has been made has an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by the complainant.

8. How will we inform you about the outcome of your complaint?

- 8.1 Once the investigation is concluded, a written response will be made to you, to advise you of the outcome.
- 8.2 If your complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the outcome letter will normally include an apology, acknowledge where things have gone wrong and explain whether any actions will be taken as a result of the investigation into your complaint. However, the outcome letter will not include personal employment information about any member of staff or any personal information about a Chapter member, committee member or volunteer.
- 8.3 The outcome letter will also include information on how you can seek a review if you are unhappy with how your complaint has been investigated or handled by the Cathedral.
- 8.4 A copy of the outcome letter will also be recorded for the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

9. What if you are unhappy with how your complaint has been investigated or handled by the Cathedral?

- 9.1 If, after receiving the outcome letter, you are unhappy with how your complaint has been investigated or handled by the Cathedral, you can refer your complaint for review in accordance with the process and timescales set out in the letter.

9.2 If you request a review within the timescales set out in your outcome letter, one of the Chief Officers will appoint a member of the Executive Leadership Team or an independent Chapter member to review. The reviewer will consider any paperwork relating to the complaint and its investigation, as well as the report and the outcome letter and consider whether your complaint has been properly investigated and handled by the Cathedral. The reviewer will provide a written report; Chief Operating Officer or Dean, as the case may be and a review outcome letter will be sent to you. Reviews will normally take up to 28 days to complete.

10. **What if you are still not happy with how your complaint has been investigated or handled by the Cathedral following a Review?**

10.1 We hope that we are able to resolve your complaint in an honest, open and satisfactory way. However, if you are still unhappy then you can write, either by letter or email, to either of our regulators:

a. The Church Commissioners at: cathedralregulation@churchofengland.org
Please name the Cathedral, outline the details of the complaint and explain why you have not been satisfied with our response.

b. The Charity Commission at:
The Charity Commission
PO Box 211
Bootle
L20 7YX

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

10.2 Before you write to the Charity Commission, you should check your complaint is one which the Charity Commission will look into³. As stated in the Charity Commission's guidance on complaints about charities, its involvement in relation to complaints about a charity is limited to issues that pose a serious risk of significant harm to that charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation.

11. **Monitoring and learning from complaints**

11.1 The Executive Leadership Team will regularly review the complaints received by the Cathedral and their outcomes, to identify any trends or wider learning.

11.2 The COO must keep a secure record of the complaints received, the report of the setting out the reasons for their decisions and copies of outcome letters. The COO will report complaints to Chapter as appropriate.

12. **Records of your complaint**

We will retain a record of your complaint for 6 years after the last contact with you about the complaint. We will then destroy all records of the complaint securely. You can read more about how we look after your records and your rights as a data subject in our Privacy Notice, which is available <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/privacy-policy>

Received by Chapter May 2023, subject to further revision

³ [Complaints about charities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)