

COMPLAINTS POLICY OF LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

General complaints

Introduction

Liverpool Cathedral expects the highest standards of conduct and behaviour from all members of Liverpool Cathedral community (Chapter members, staff, volunteers and members of cathedral committees and advisory councils). We know there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards.

If we fail to meet our high standards we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it happening again. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure that all members of the Liverpool Cathedral community know what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

In the first instance, we will attempt to address any concerns informally. However, if you feel that the matter has not been dealt with appropriately, or is sufficiently serious in nature, a complaint can be made via our formal procedure.

This leaflet covers general complaints made about the conduct and behaviour of members of Liverpool Cathedral community. If your complaint relates to the way in which a safeguarding matter has been dealt with, please refer to the separate Safeguarding Complaints Policy.

Background information

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Cathedral, its operations, mission and ministry or about an action, or lack of

action, on the part of members of Liverpool Cathedral community that requires a formal response.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the conduct or behaviour of Chapter members, staff, volunteers and members of cathedral committees and advisory councils in the Liverpool Cathedral.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

Confidentiality

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

Complaints not included in this policy

This policy does not relate to:

- a. Complaints from employed staff, who should refer to the relevant processes in the employee handbook;
- b. Complaints from volunteers, who should refer to the relevant process in the volunteer handbook; and
- c. Complaints relating to safeguarding which should be referred directly to the Interim Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Stuart Barton Ainsworth at stuart.bartonainsworth@liverpool.anglican.org or 07919 112979

As a general 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;
- b. When the complaint has already been responded to and has been reviewed through the Resolving complaints procedure described below
- c. When a complaint has clearly 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 reply or not.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Chapter.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on:.....[date]

Last reviewed:.....[date]

Making a Complaint

Written complaints

Written complaints may be sent to the Executive Assistant to the Chief Officer, St James House, 20 St James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY or by e-mail at pamela.ambrose@liverpool.anglican.org.

Should your complaint be about the Chief Officer then the complaint should be directed in writing to the Dean of Liverpool at jayne.bainbridge@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

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.

Where a complaint is unclear or uncertain a staff member will contact the complainant, where possible, to request that the complaint be clarified. Where no clear or certain version of the complaint is provided, the complaint will not be able to be progressed.

Verbal complaints

Verbal complaints may be made by phone on 0151 705 2112 or in person to any of the cathedral's staff at the cathedral.

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

- a. write down the facts of the complaint;
- b. take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- c. note down the relationship of the complainant to the cathedral;
- d. tell the complainant that the cathedral has a complaints policy and direct them to it;
- e. explain to the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take; and
- f. where appropriate, ask the complainant to send in a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Resolving Complaints

What we do when we receive a complaint

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.

We will do our best to investigate and respond fully and conclusively to all complaints within 20 working days of a complaint being received. Sometimes a complaint is more complex and so it may take us longer to investigate it. Where this happens, we will send you a progress report within 20 working days and let you know when you can expect to receive a final response.

We will handle any complaints received with sensitivity and in compliance with the Chapter's privacy policy and the law.

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 is:

- a. Being deliberately abusive, prejudiced or offensive; and/or
- b. Harassing a member of staff, volunteer or office holder at the cathedral.

How will complaints be progressed and resolved?

Wherever possible, we will look to resolve your complaint amicably and with pastoral care and sensitivity.

The Chief Officer will assign a senior member of the Cathedral staff, or clergy or Chapter to investigate any complaint received (the Investigator). The Investigator will not be someone who is personally involved in the events complained about.

The Investigator 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 Investigator 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.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator must provide a written report to the Chief Officer.

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

Once the Chief Officer receives the Investigator's report, he or she will respond to you in writing (the Outcome Letter).

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 any volunteer.

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.

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

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 Outcome Letter.

If you request a review within the timescales set out in your Outcome Letter, the Chief Officer will appoint an independent Chapter member or fellow member of the senior staff team (as appropriate) who has not been involved in the first stage (the Reviewer) to conduct a review.

The Reviewer will consider any paperwork relating to the complaint and its investigation, as well as the Investigator's 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 to the Dean and a Review Outcome Letter will be sent to you. Reviews will normally take up to 28 days to complete.

The decision of the Dean is final and at this point our complaints process will end.

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

We hope 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>

Before you write to the Charity Commission, you should check your complaint is one which the Charity Commission will look into. 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.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed regularly by the Senior Executive Team to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action. An annual report is provided to Chapter. If a complaint raises serious concerns, the Chief Officer should bring it to the Dean or Chapter's attention without delay

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 policy, which is available on our website.

Policy review

This policy should be reviewed every three years and updated as required.

Adopted by Chapter on: 27 February 2023 and amended 3 December 2025

Date of last revision: