



Complaints Policy & Procedures

Living Hope Church

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Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Living hope Church (Teesside) endeavours to provide the best service possible for all of its members in an open and transparent environment. We

welcome any feedback that we receive from members and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive.

Where concerns are raised Living hope Church (Teesside) intends for these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice

It is our policy to:

- Welcome complaints as an opportunity to improve what we do
- Record and review all complaints to ensure that we are learning from them
- Ensure confidentiality for all involved in a complaint
- Respond in a timely manner to all complaints
- Challenge any malicious complaints

Complaints Procedure

Informal Stage

Wherever possible, a complaint or concern should be raised as an issue in the first instance with the relevant member or volunteer, who will be happy to discuss the issue and who will seek to establish a solution. The member or volunteer will then record this. However, if the issue is not satisfactorily resolved a written note of the issue will be passed to a member of the leadership team including contact details of the person raising the issue and a brief summary of the concern/complaint.

The member of the leadership team will make contact with the person making the complaint within one working week and seek to resolve it within 5 working days. The member of the leadership team will make a record of the complaint on the complaint recording form following the conversation with the person making the complaint. If the complaint still cannot be resolved the management of the complaint will follow the formal procedure.

Formal Stage

The Senior Pastor will arrange to meet with the person making the complaint within 5 working days. The person making the complaint may be accompanied by a friend or colleague to the meeting. The person who has made the complaint is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.

If it has not been completed beforehand the complaint recording form should be completed during this meeting. At the end of meeting the Senior Pastor will explain the next steps they will take following the complaint and the length of time this will take. Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., a complaint being received about a limited time only service in the last week of the service) investigations should be completed within 10 working days.

Following the meeting the Senior Pastor will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the complaint ensuring that they take written statements from individuals who may have been involved in, or witnessed, the situation or action leading to the complaint.

Where the complaint has identified a serious safeguarding concern then the Safeguarding Policy procedures will take precedence.

When they have completed the investigation, the Senior Pastor will make a further appointment to meet with the person making the complaint and feedback to them the outcome of their investigation, including whether the complaint has been upheld and if so, what actions are being taken as a result. The person who has made the complaint is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.

The Senior Pastor will provide a written outline of their findings to the person making the complaint at this meeting and explain how to appeal against their decision if they are not satisfied with the outcome. If relevant, a copy of this letter will be provided to the member of staff about whom the complaint has been made.

Appeals

To appeal against the outcome of a formal complaint investigation, the person making the complaint should write to the person named in the letter

they received at the end of the investigation. This must be within 10 working days of the date of the letter.

The person named in the letter will either be a Trustee with responsibility for appeals or another Trustee, depending on whether the Trustee with responsibility for appeals has been involved with the complaint before this time. On receipt of a letter making an appeal, the person named in the letter will organise for an appeal's panel consisting of themselves and two other people, neither of whom has had anything to do with complaint before. The appeal's panel will meet at a date and time convenient to the person making the appeal, this should be no later than 10 working days after receipt of the letter.

The person making the appeal is able to bring a member of their family, a friend or a colleague to support them at the meeting.

At the meeting of the appeals panel, following introductions, the person making the appeal will explain the reason why they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint stage and explain what they would like the outcome to be. The Senior Pastor who dealt with the formal complaint will be present and will explain the reasons for their decision. The members of the appeal's panel may ask any questions or view any of the investigatory statements and other evidence.

Once everyone has had their say the appeal's panel will adjourn to consider its decision. Whenever possible the decision will be made the same day as the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances the appeals panel may adjourn for longer in order to gather or view evidence that is not available at the meeting. As soon as possible after adjourning – and never more than 3 working days later – the chair of the panel will meet with the person making the complaint and let them know of the decision.

The appeal's panel may agree or disagree with all or part of the outcome of the formal stage.

The decision of the appeal's panel will be provided in writing to the person making the appeal and, when relevant, a copy provided to the member of staff about whom the complaint has been made. The decision of the appeals panel is final.

Monitoring of complaints

It is the responsibility of the Trustee with responsibility for handling complaints to keep the complaints log up to date and to provide a regular report to the Board of Trustees. This report will form part of their termly report to the Board of Trustees.

- Electronic copies of all complaint documentation will be kept for at least 5 years.

Date of this Review	Date of next Review	Policy reviewed and updated by:	Policy approved by:
20/07/2022	20/07/2023	<i>Haleema Harrison</i>	<i>Stephen Harrison</i>