

Complaints Policy

Purpose and Scope of the Policy

As a Christian church we aim to be a blessing to our community and to reflect the character of Jesus Christ in the way we work. Even so, we acknowledge there are sometimes things we can get wrong, or concerns others may have about what we do or the way in which we do it. This policy explains how such a concern can be raised.

For very serious concerns, such as individual's safety being placed at immediate risk, it be appropriate to take another route such as calling the emergency services.

Informal Complaints

Anyone who has a complaint should initially raise this with a member of the church ('the Charity') who is present at the time, as this allows a quick response if that is appropriate. The member will seek to resolve any reasonable complaints quickly and fairly.

If unable to resolve the complaint, the member will make a note of:

- The complainant's name and contact details (if they are willing to provide these).
- The nature of the concern and anything that the complainant wished to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when the complaint was raised, what, if any, action has been taken and the details of others who were present/involved.

The member should advise the complainant that this will be passed to the trustees. There is no commitment to give a formal response to an informal complaint.

Formal Complaints

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, he/she should email info@whittleseybaptist.org.uk or write to us at our registered address. Correspondence should be marked 'private and confidential'.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the complainant should be provided with a copy of this policy by either post or email.

To help resolve the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible, the individual making the complaint should notify us of the complaint as soon as possible and should include details of:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and e mail.

- If you do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is you felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What you believe should be done to address your concern.

Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 working days. The complaint will then be investigated. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, a trustee will contact the person complaining to request this.

A response will be sent within 14 working days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 14 days advising when we estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain our findings and any action we will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he or she may appeal the decision, by writing to the Chair of the Trustees. Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of our response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days and will be final.

Wider Action

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, we will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to the

Charity Commission

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

H&SW Executive

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm>

other regulator or the **Police**

<https://www.police.uk/information-and-advice/reporting-crime/>

Consideration will also be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar problem arising in future.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked in to. However, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we can all be held accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and his or her contact details. This will also allow us to advise him or her of the outcome.

Potential Compensation Claims

If a complaint may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal problem, our insurers are to be notified.

Confidentiality

The complaint will be treated as confidential and any communication on this matter, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Availability

This policy is to be made publicly available and given to anyone who advises that he/she wishes to submit a complaint.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Next Review
1.0	Trustees	05/03/2024	Draft approved	2026
1.1	Trustees	02/06/2026	Minor changes to standardise policy document.	2029