

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 own 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 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 in a prominent place 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 purposes 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) complaints from staff, who should refer to the relevant processes in the Wells Cathedral staff handbook
- (b) complaints from volunteers, who should refer to the relevant process in the Wells Cathedral volunteer handbook; and
- (c) [complaints relating to safeguarding](#), which should be referred directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager, Ben Goodhind at ben.goodhind@bathwells.anglican.org (01749)588917

4.2 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 process in section 9 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.

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 or letter to the cathedral's Chief Operating Officer, Jackie Croft at jackie.croft@wellscathedral.org.uk and Cathedral Offices, Chain Gate, Cathedral Green, Wells BA5 2UE.
- 5.3 Should your complaint be about the Chief Operating Officer then the complaint should be directed in writing to the Dean at the above address or by email at: dean@wellscathedral.org.uk
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Verbal complaints may be made by phone on (01749) 674483 or in person to any of the cathedral's staff at the cathedral.
- 5.7 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.

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 twenty working days of a complaint being received. Sometimes a complaint is more complex and 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
- (b) is harassing a member of staff, volunteer, or office holder at the cathedral.

Where the Chapter makes such a decision:

- (c) where possible, the investigation into the complaint made should continue, in accordance with section 7 below; and
- (d) a letter must be sent to the complainant within 5 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 The Chief Operating Officer (or Dean, as the case may be) will assign a senior employee or a member of the Chapter, as appropriate, to investigate any complaint received (the Investigator). The Investigator must not be personally involved in the events complained about.

7.3 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.

7.4 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator must provide a written report to the Chief Operating Officer (or Dean, as the case may be). Any report about the Chief Operating Officer must be considered by at least two other members of Chapter.

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

8.1 Once the Chief Operating Officer (or Dean and at least two members of Chapter, as the case may be) receives the Investigator's report, he or she will respond to you in writing (the Outcome Letter).

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 because 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.

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.

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 Outcome Letter.
- 9.2 If you request a review within the timescales set out in your Outcome Letter, the Chief Operating Officer (or Dean, as the case may be) 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 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. Monitoring and learning from complaints

- 10.1 The Chapter should regularly review the complaints received by the cathedral and their outcomes, to identify any trends or wider learning.
- 10.2 The Chief Operating Officer should report to the Chapter at each meeting after any complaints have been received on the number and nature of any complaints received and the outcome of those complaints, including whether they have led to a change in services, policies, or procedures. If a complaint raises serious concerns, the Chief Operating Officer should bring it to the Chapter's attention (or to the Dean's attention, as appropriate) without delay.
- 10.3 The Chief Operating Officer (must keep a secure record of the complaints received, the report of the Investigator setting out the reasons for their decisions and copies of Outcome Letters.

11. 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 on our website.

12. Policy review

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

Date adopted by Chapter: 30 November 2023