

Bishop Hannington Memorial Church PCC Policy Statement

Complaints Handling

Bishop Hannington Memorial Church 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 organisation) that has made the complaint.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Bishop Hannington Memorial Church activities.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Bishop Hannington Memorial Church's work and ministry. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use either the church's or BH Christian Workers Trust's Discipline and Grievance procedures as appropriate.

Confidentiality

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

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the PCC of Bishop Hannington Memorial Church.

Review

This policy is reviewed at least every two years and more frequently if required.

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 all staff, trustees and volunteers at Bishop Hannington Memorial Church 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 future.

Procedure for handling complaints and grievances

Informal procedure for complaints and grievances

Problem-solving

The aim always, when responding to complaints and grievances, is to enable them to be resolved informally, speedily and fairly by discussion, problem solving, mediation and negotiation. Problems should therefore be brought direct to the person(s) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet, and will hopefully be resolved in this way.

If, however, a complaint or grievance relates to or includes an allegation that a child or adult who may be vulnerable has been harmed or is at risk of harm, or that an adult or another child may have caused harm to a child or adult who may be vulnerable, it must be responded to through the Parish Child Protection Officer and Incumbent.

If the complaint or grievance does not concern a child or adult who may be vulnerable, and the person bringing it is not satisfied with the outcome at the problem-solving stage, s/he may then invoke this formal procedure.

Formal procedure for complaints and grievances

Stage 1

A complaint should be submitted in writing to a churchwarden of the parish (who is not him or herself the subject of the complaint).

A grievance should be submitted in writing to the person to whom the person bringing the grievance is accountable; this will be the direct line manager of a paid employee, or the person responsible for co-ordinating the work of a volunteer. If, however, the person who is accountable is the subject of the grievance, the grievance should be taken to a churchwarden.

The person bringing the complaint has the opportunity to state his or her case; and to be represented, if they wish at any meeting, by a friend or other supporter.

The churchwarden (if a complaint) or line manager (if a grievance) will meet with the complainant to listen to and note the facts of the complaint or grievance. S/he will then give to the subject of the complaint or grievance the facts relating to it. The churchwarden/ line manager will then interview the subject of the complaint or grievance, who may also be represented by a friend or other supporter if they wish, to listen to their response to the complaint or grievance brought against them. The churchwarden/line manager may then interview any other relevant parties.

The churchwarden/line manager then draws conclusions and informs the complainant and the subject of the complaint or grievance of the outcome, ideally within a week of the complaint or grievance being made.

Stage 2

If the reply given at stage 1 does not satisfactorily resolve the complaint or grievance, the complaint or grievance should be put in writing to a churchwarden, who will take the complaint to the PCC. The PCC will form a panel of three of its members who have not been involved in the process before.

The panel will establish why the complainant continues to feel aggrieved, and receive all the documentation from the previous investigation at Stage 1. The panel will then meet with the complainant and his/her supporter, the subject of the complaint or grievance and his/her supporter,

and the churchwarden or line manager who investigated the complaint at the first stage. Witnesses may be called.

The panel members will then sit alone to form a judgement and make a decision about the complaint or grievance. They will inform the complainant and the subject of the complaint or grievance of the outcome, within a month of the complaint being made.

The decision of the panel representing the PCC will be final.

As a result of an investigation into a complaint or a grievance, it may be necessary to address the matter through the disciplinary procedure.

Amended and adopted 23 November 2021 (Adopted by the PCC on 21 July 2015 and re-adopted on 30th July 2019)