



SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Southwark Cathedral is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints raised about the way in which we work, what we do and/or the services we provide. If and where possible, we will seek to put right any mistakes we may have made. If we get something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve the way we work in future.

When to use this policy

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will use all reasonable endeavours to respond in the way we explain below.

Have you asked us yet?

If you approach us about an aspect of Cathedral life or what we do for the first time then this policy does not apply unless the issue of concern is in connection with the Safeguarding of Young People and Vulnerable Adults (see below). You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known in the manner set out below.

Concerns and complaints in connection with the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults

If you have a concern or complaint which is connected with safeguarding you should normally contact one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers as soon as possible. Their details are listed on the Cathedral website under Parish & Community/Safeguarding and displayed on a noticeboard in the Cathedral and in the Mandela Porch.

Informal resolution

Usually it is better to deal with any concerns and complaints straight away. If you have a concern, raise it with the person involved at the time. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff cannot help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to express concern or complain formally

If you wish to express your concern or complain formally, you will need to do this in writing. You can express your concern in writing in any of the ways below.

- You can ask for a copy of our complaints and concerns form (available from Cathedral Office during office hours or via email to cathedral@southwark.anglican.org)
- You can use the form on our website at <http://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/contactus/>
- You can e-mail us at cathedral@southwark.anglican.org
- You can write a letter to us at the following address

Southwark Cathedral
London Bridge
London
SE1 9DA

Dealing with your concern

We will formally acknowledge your concern within five working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it. We will aim to respond to issues regarding Safeguarding within 2 working days.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you have a disability.

We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within six months (there is no time limit with regard to safeguarding issues). This is because it's better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us compelling reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. (In any event, with the exception of safeguarding issues, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.)

If you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement in writing to you acting on their behalf.

Investigation

We will inform you as to whom we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually designate a member of staff to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, the Chapter will be the investigating body.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see any files or documentation we hold relevant to your complaint. If you do not want this to happen, it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and normally expect to deal with them within 20 working days.

If your complaint is more complex, we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- inform you how long we expect it to take
- let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and give you regular updates, including letting you know whether or not any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.

We will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we will talk to others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your concern or complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Our senior management team considers a summary of all complaints quarterly as well as details of any serious complaints.

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

What happens if a complaint is made against me?

If you find you are the subject of a complaint made by another person, we will ensure that no judgement is made about the validity or otherwise of the complaint until the investigation is complete. The result of the investigation will determine the outcome in line with Cathedral policy. We will ensure that those investigating the complaint are impartial and not open to comment during the process.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of an investigation you will have the opportunity either to raise a concern yourself under the terms of this policy or to raise a grievance under the Chapter's Grievance Procedures.

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