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DBF Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Document Overview

Purpose	The purpose of this process is to ensure all feedback and complaints are handled effectively and appropriately in the Diocese of Coventry.
Confidentiality	This document is not confidential.
Document owner	Stephen Davenport, Director of Operations.
Status note	Final.
Distribution	All DBF staff.
Required action	
Proposed next step	

Version History

Version	Date	Status Note
1.0	14/08/2018	Final Version for publication.
1.1	20/04/2021	Updated contact details.
1.2	18/09/2021	Paragraph 3.25 and 3.26 re Safeguarding Complaints included
1.3	02/01/2025	Update contact and address details

DBF Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Our Policy

We value your views and your feedback is important to us

1.1. We aim to give all our stakeholders the highest standards of support. We welcome feedback on all aspects of our work.

Compliments

1.2. Compliments let us know what we're doing well and help to identify areas of good practice. If you want to compliment us on any area of our work, we will make sure your comments are passed on to the staff concerned.

Comments

1.3. Suggestions help us to develop our services, so if you've got any thoughts about how we can improve things, we'd love to hear from you.

Complaints

1.4. If you're not happy about any of our services, or the way you have been dealt with by our team, please let us know so that we can apologise, try to put things right and, if necessary, make changes to the way we work.

1.5. The DBF will consider complaints about:

- the quality of any Diocesan services
- the way in which services are provided
- Diocesan staff

2. How we deal with complaints relating to the Diocesan Office

2.1. The DBF takes complaints seriously. We aim to deal with them openly and quickly and learn from them to improve our services.

2.2. We will respond to any written complaint sent to us within two weeks of receiving it. If it is not possible to give you a full reply within this time, we will send you a letter explaining the delay and letting you know when you can expect a full response.

2.3. If, after receiving our response, you are not happy with how we have dealt with your complaint, you can ask for the matter to be looked at by the Director of Operations or, if the complaint concerns the Director of Operations, the Diocesan Secretary.

3. Our Procedure

Informal Stage

3.1. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they maybe able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

3.2. If you have a concern about any aspect of the DBF's work, please try to have a chat about it with the relevant member of our team or someone in the relevant Diocesan office department in the first instance.

3.3. Generally issues are resolved satisfactorily in this way, but if you are still not happy, you may want to make a formal complaint.

3.4. Compliments, suggestions and any other comments can be made over the phone or by email. Simply call the Diocesan HR Manager on 07538 891784 between 8:30am and 12:30pm Monday to Friday, email simone.king@coventry.anglican.org, or use the Feedback Form (Appendix 1).

Formal Complaint Stage 1

3.5. Complaints will be handled using the following process.

3.6. Complaints may be made to the Director of Operations on 02476 521346 or stephen.davenport@coventry.anglican.org or in person to any of the Diocesan staff at 7 Priory Row, Coventry, CV1 5EX. Telephone number 02476 521200

3.7. Formal complaints must be made in writing by using the Feedback Form (Appendix 1). You can also use this form to give us comments and compliments. If you have difficulty filling in forms, someone else can complete the Feedback Form your behalf. However, you, as the complainant, must sign it.

3.8. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Director of Operations.

3.9. On receiving the complaint, the Director of Operations records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

3.10. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

3.11. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within two weeks. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

3.12. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

3.13. Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Formal Complaint Stage Two

3.14. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Diocesan Secretary (or the Chairman if the complaint is about the Diocesan Secretary.)

3.15. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

3.16. The Diocesan Secretary may investigate the facts of the case (or delegate a suitably senior person to do so). This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

3.17. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

3.18. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

3.19. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

3.20. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

3.21. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

3.22. The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

3.23. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

3.24. The procedure may be varied for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

3.25. For complaints relating to a Safeguarding investigation, then we would engage an independent 3rd party, safeguarding professional, who will be asked to review the case and report back to the Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Scrutiny Group (DSSG), who will then consider the report and take forward actions or recommendations.

3.26. For complaints received about our Safeguarding process, a member of the Safeguarding Team will review how the Safeguarding Team or Core Group have managed a case; a suitably senior person will investigate and respond at Stage 1 of the DBF process; and the Chair of the DSSG will review and issue a response at Stage 2. Their decision will be final. (For complaints about a member of staff the usual complaints process will be followed.)

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

4. Appendix 1 - Feedback form

Type of feedback (please tick or type “yes”)	
Compliment	☐
Comment/suggestion	☐
Complaint	☐

Title	
First name	
Last name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone number	
Alternative telephone number	
Email	

Please give details of your compliment, comment or complaint here

Have you already spoken to anyone at the Diocesan about this? (please tick)	☐
If so:	
Who?	
When?	

Please tick here if you do not require a response from us.	☐

Signature		Date	

Completing your form

You can either:

- Print this form out and complete it by hand. Send your completed form to: Director of Operations, 7 Priory Row, Coventry, CV1 5EX; or
- Type your responses in the boxes and email it to stephen.davenport@coventry.anglican.org.

Appendix 2 - Practical Guidance for Staff Handling Verbal Complaints

Receiving Complaints

1.1 Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

1.2 Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

1.3 The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account using the Feedback Form (Appendix 1) by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Further guidelines about handling verbal complaints.

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation.
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam".
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry.
- Show an interest in what is being said.
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details.
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary.
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you".
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise.
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue.
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver.
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met.
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told.
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.