

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

- Carlisle Cathedral believes it should be easy to give feedback or make a complaint to us.
- This policy is written by the Cathedral to help you to give us feedback or make a complaint. It tells you what will happen and what you can expect as part of this process.
- This information helps us to make sure we are offering the best possible service.
- This policy does not apply to any current Cathedral employee who has a grievance or complaint in relation to their employment, who should refer to the Cathedral's grievance policy and procedure.

What do we mean by 'feedback'?

- The Cathedral welcomes feedback about the work that we do.
- Feedback can be both positive and negative. It is where the person who is passing on the information does not wish the Cathedral to act specifically on the information provided; however, they do want us to know about it and consider it accordingly.
- The Cathedral may choose to investigate any 'negative' feedback for their own use in order to inform good practice.

What do we mean by 'complaint'?

- A complaint can be spoken or a written statement, where the complainant wishes the matter to be investigated.
- It can be from anyone who volunteers for, or visits, the Cathedral, or who has received support from, or who has had contact with, the Cathedral in any way. (employees who wish to raise a complaint should do so by using the Cathedral's Grievance Policy).
- It can be about the work that the Cathedral does, about a member of staff, a volunteer, a trustee, our organisation or something that the Cathedral has been involved in.
- Safeguarding concerns: For safeguarding concerns please contact the Chapter Safeguarding Lead at email: canonwarden@carlislecathedral.org.uk or phone: 01228 521857.

Whistleblowing

This procedure does not apply to any qualifying disclosure made under the Cathedral's whistleblowing policy. Where a complaint is received it should first be considered whether the whistleblowing policy applies, before proceeding to deal with the matter under this policy.

Complaints

- We will deal with complaints as quickly as possible. Equally, we are aware that some complaints cannot be dealt with quickly and require a more formal process.
- Where possible, we will try to address the complaint informally and agree how to

- resolve it quickly without having to put a formal investigation in place.
- Sometimes, however, the issue is more complex, and a formal investigation is started. If this does not lead to full resolution, then the complaint can move to the appeal stage.
 - This policy is not a legal process. It is not written to consider whether the Cathedral has been negligent. It is not part of the Cathedral's disciplinary policy.
 - All complaints will be dealt with as follows:
 - All complaints, no matter what the subject matter, will be taken seriously.
 - All complaints will be dealt with empathetically.
 - Staff will be at all times polite, courteous and sympathetic, and will remain calm and respectful.
 - All complaints are treated confidentially. Only the officers dealing with complaints will be aware of the complaint.
 - The Cathedral aims to handle complaints fairly and honestly regardless of who makes a complaint, and all complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Cathedrals' equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
 - The Cathedral treats all members of the community equally. Where appropriate, every effort will be made to make information available in a different format, or language.
 - If it is found that one or more of the operational 'procedures' of the Cathedral have failed, the Investigating Officer is responsible for making sure these failures are raised with the Senior Management Team and, if appropriate, Chapter in order to inform change.

Complaints Log

- The Cathedral uses a log to record complaints. The log is used to identify potential trends or concerns. The log is maintained by Human Resources (HR) and the Chief Operating Officer (COO).
- All complaints logged in the complaints log contain the following information:
 - Date of complaint
 - Complainant's initials only (unless a complaint is made anonymously)
 - Brief overview of the complaint
 - The service/department which, or the person whom, the complaint is about
 - Initials of Investigating Officer
 - Outcome of the complaint
 - The date the complaint process was completed

Correspondence Log

- All correspondence relating to each complaint is securely stored in a correspondence complaints log. The log is maintained by HR and the COO.

Action Plan

- Any actions/learning undertaken as a result of the complaint are recorded in individual action plans.

Complaints information is kept for a period of 7 years following the resolution date.

Supporting people to make comments

- If someone would like to make a complaint to the Cathedral, but needs some help to do so, we will provide information about services which may be able

to provide independent support, e.g., Citizen Advice Bureau.

Minor/Verbal Complaints – Stage 1

- When it is appropriate to do so, the Cathedral feels it is the best approach to ask front line staff to talk to the person making the complaint and try to find a solution straight away. Staff should talk through the issue with the complainant. Staff should listen and be empathic to their concerns. Staff should not accept blame, blame others, or make excuses.
- The staff member should then agree a course of action for moving forward with the complainant and clarify this with the complainant. It might be appropriate to put it in writing at this stage.
- It is important to identify in this discussion what it is that the complainant feels would resolve the issue they have raised, and to address this as far as is appropriate and possible.
- The member of staff should keep their line manager informed of their work with the complainant. The line manager should also inform the COO, so that the complaints log can be updated.
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant, or the complainant is not satisfied that they have been listened to, or that the appropriate action has taken place, the complainant may move to a Stage 2 complaint. Alternatively, if the frontline member of staff considers that the matter is so serious it cannot be dealt with under Stage 1, they may invite the complainant to move straight to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Written/Formal Complaints – Stage 2

All written complaints should be emailed to the chiefoperatingofficer@carlislecathedral.org marked strictly confidential for the attention of the COO or by post to the COO, Carlisle Cathedral Office, West Walls, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8UF.

Should the COO be the subject of the complaint please send the written complaint via email to dean@carlislecathedral.org.uk or by post to the Dean, Carlisle Cathedral Office, West Walls, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8UF. The Dean would follow the process detailed below and assume the role of the COO as detailed.

When the COO receives a complaint, it is their job to appoint a named Investigating Officer to manage the complaint. The Investigating Officer would normally be from a different department to that to which the complaint relates and, where the complaint relates to a particular member of staff, where possible the Investigating Officer should be at least as senior as that staff member.

Should the complaint be about a non-executive member of Chapter, the Investigating Officer appointed would be the Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter (SNEM), unless the complaint is about the SNEM in which case the Investigating Officer appointed would be another non-executive member of Chapter.

Should the complaint be about any ordained member of Chapter or ordained member of staff, and the matter falls within the scope of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM 2003), the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with that Measure. If the matter does not fall within the scope of the CDM 2003, this policy will then apply.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

Prior to an investigation

- The COO will decide who the appropriate Investigating Officer will be and pass the complaint to this person.
- The COO (or allocated deputy, should be COO be on leave) will write to the complainant within 5 working days of initial receipt of the complaint. This letter can be sent by email and must include:
 - Confirmation that an Investigating Officer has been appointed, their name and contact details
 - Gain permission, where possible, from the complainant to proceed if the complaint has been made on behalf of someone else – this permission must be in writing.
 - A copy of this policy
- If a member of staff is the subject of the complaint, the COO will inform the member of staff's direct line manager within two working days of initial receipt of the complaint
- The COO will also inform the member of staff who is the subject of the complaint, (if appropriate to do so), within two working days of receiving the complaint. If the member of staff wishes to have a colleague appointed as their 'support' during the investigation, the COO will appoint a suitable colleague. The 'support' should not be the member of staff's direct line manager. The COO will also inform the member of staff the name of the appointed Investigating Officer and explain that they will be contacted directly by them in order to discuss the complaint in more detail. This process will be independent of any action that may be undertaken in relation to that member of staff under the Cathedral's disciplinary policy, as a result of the complaint.

Investigating Officer

The Investigation

- The Investigating Officer will contact the complainant within five working days of being appointed and offer an opportunity to meet. This can be done by telephone or email. An explanation of the rationale for the meeting and a planned agenda should be provided in advance.
- If not set out clearly in the written complaint, it is important to identify with the complainant what it is that they feel would resolve the issue they have raised, and to address this as far as is appropriate and possible.
- Complainants will be informed that they can bring a friend/relation along to any meetings.
- If the complaint is about a member(s) of staff, the Investigating Officer will also offer the opportunity for the member(s) of staff to put forward their account. This can be done by telephone or email, or in person. An explanation of the rationale for the meeting and a planned agenda should be provided in advance.
- The member of staff will also be informed that they can bring their 'support' or a union representative with them should they wish to do so.
- The Investigating Officer will keep a written record of all meetings, telephone calls and copies of any email communications.
- Within 18 days of receipt of the complaint, the Investigating Officer will inform

the COO of their findings of the investigation. This must be communicated in writing; however, it can also be communicated verbally.

- If the issues are too complex to be finalised within 18 days, then the complainant and the member of staff must be informed of the delay as soon as is reasonably possible.
- If the complaint raises a potentially serious matter, advice could be sought from a legal advisor, however this must be done in consultation with the COO. If legal action is taken, then the complaints procedure should be reviewed in line with the advice given.

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Following the investigation by the Investigation Officer

- Once the findings of the investigation have been reported back to the COO by the Investigating Officer, the COO, in consultation with the Investigating officer, will reach a decision as to the outcome of the complaint.
- Within 21 days of receipt of the complaint, the COO will inform the complainant of the outcome. This must be communicated in writing; however, it can also be communicated verbally.
- If relevant, the COO will also inform the member of staff of the outcome, as well as their line manager.
- The COO will populate the relevant sections of the action log and pass to the relevant manager to complete and review.

Making an Appeal – Stage 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the decision reached by the COO, they can raise what is called 'an appeal' to the Dean. In order for a complaint to be eligible for an appeal, it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- New information or evidence has come to light
- The complainant can show there has been a defect in the procedure carried out at the previous stage.

If the complainant feels that one of the above criteria has been met, they must then set out in writing, their reasons for, and grounds on, which they are appealing.

On receipt of the appeal, the Dean will first consider if the criteria required has been met. If agreed, the Dean will then proceed with the appeal process as set out below. If not, the Dean will write to the complainant within 7 working days of receiving the appeal, explaining that the criteria for an appeal has not been met.

(If the complaint was regarding the COO and therefore the Dean had carried out Stage 2 of this process, the Dean's role in stage 3 would be carried out by the Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter (SNEM)).

When the Dean receives the appeal, he/she will convene a panel within 21 days of receiving the appeal, consisting of:

- The Dean
- One member of Chapter not previously involved in the investigation
- An independent person within the Diocese of Carlisle.

Prior to the appeal hearing, the panel members will receive the following paperwork:

- A copy of any information or evidence concerning Stage I of the complaint (if applicable)
- Original letter/email received from complainant
- A copy of all meeting notes recorded during the original investigation
- A copy of this policy
- A copy of the outcome letter sent to the complainant
- Policies or procedures relevant to the complaint

Conduct of the Appeal Panel

- The complainant will be invited by the Dean to attend the panel hearing at a given date, time and location.
- The complainant will be informed by the Dean that they can bring a friend/relation.
- If the complaint is regarding a member of staff, they may also be invited by the Dean to attend the panel hearing should the panel feel they wish clarification on a particular point. The member of staff will also be informed that they can bring their 'support' or a union representative with them should they wish to do so.

The Dean will inform the complainant in writing of the outcome of the appeal panel within 7 days of the appeal hearing. The appeal panel's decision is final.

Adopted by Trustees – July 2023

Date of next review by HR Dept – July 2024