

## **Complaints Procedure of Birmingham Cathedral**

### **Publicised contact details for complaints.**

Written complaints may be sent to: Birmingham Cathedral, Colmore Row, Birmingham B3 2QB or by email to: [anna.pitt@birminghamcathedral.com](mailto:anna.pitt@birminghamcathedral.com)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the Cathedral Office on 0121 2621840 or in person to any member of Birmingham Cathedral staff (or volunteers at office address or at any event or activity)

### **Receiving complaints.**

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

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

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

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take down the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the complainant's relationship to Birmingham Cathedral
- Tell the complainant 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 by post or email so that it can be recorded in their own words.

For further guidance about handling verbal complaints see **Appendix I**

### **Resolving complaints**

#### **Stage One**

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 may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Cathedral Chief Executive within 5 working days.

On receiving the complaint the Chief Executive passes the information to the Dean's PA who records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate and take appropriate action.

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

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling complaints within 2 working days. The acknowledgment 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.

Ideally complaints should receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. 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.

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

## **Stage Two.**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at stage one, they can request that the complaint be passed to a nominated panel of Chapter. This panel will consist of any three members of chapter who will form a committee to hear the complaint (subject to none of the members having a conflict of interest).

The request for a higher level review should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the case and when a response can be expected.

The chapter panel receiving this complaint may investigate themselves or review the paperwork and speak to the person who dealt with the initial investigation.

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

The person who dealt with the initial investigation should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complaints should receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. 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.

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

### **Stage Three**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at stage two, they can appeal the decision and the complaint will be passed to a further nominated panel of Chapter. This panel will consist of any three members of chapter who will form a committee to hear the complaint (subject to none of the members having a conflict of interest). None of the members will have been part of the stage two panel.

The request for an appeal should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the case and when a response can be expected.

The chapter panel receiving this complaint may investigate themselves or review the paperwork and speak to the person who dealt with the initial investigation.

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

The person who dealt with the initial investigation should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complaints should receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. 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.

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

The decision taken at this stage is final.

### **Variation of the complaints procedure**

The chapter may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

### **Monitoring and Learning from complaints**

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

## **Appendix I- Practical guidance for 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 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 they are being unreasonable)- you can do this without making comment on the complaint itself or by 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 the 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.