

TRBC is committed to providing high quality activities, services and support. We recognise that we may fall short of our aspirations. This policy provides a process for dealing with complaints about the behaviour of, or actions and decisions taken by, our staff, trustees or volunteers. There is a separate complaints procedure covering Accredited Baptist Ministers, Baptist Ministers in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Workers and Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastors (see Section A - 1.2).

Contents

Section A - Complaints Policy	2
1 Introduction.....	2
2 Definition of a complaint.....	2
3 The purpose of this policy.....	2
4 Types of Complaint covered by this Policy	2
5 Types of complaints covered by other policies or procedures	2
Section B - Trustees' responsibilities when a complaint is received	4
6 Stage 1 – Informal resolution	4
7 Stage 2 – Formal complaint process.....	4
8 Stage 3 – Appeals process.....	4
9 Vexatious complaints	4
Section C - TRBC Complaints Procedure.....	5
10 Introduction.....	5
11 What kind of complaint can be made using this procedure?	5
12 Guidance on making a complaint	5
13 Our response	6
14 What happens if I find the result unsatisfactory?	6
15 What we cannot do	6
16 Confidentiality	7
Section D - Version control.....	8

Section A - Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Our aim is to provide high quality activities, services and support but we recognise that at times we may fall short of reaching those standards. The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for dealing with complaints relating to the behaviour of, or activities and decisions taken by, the staff, trustees or volunteers.
- 1.2 Please note that there is a separate complaints procedure for complaints about an Accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor. That procedure is available at:
https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx
- 1.3 You can find out if someone is an Accredited Minister by looking them up on the directory of Accredited Ministers at:
<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/504943/Ministries.aspx>
- 1.4 We believe that it is best to follow scriptural principles of reconciling differences wherever possible. However, on occasions attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. A formal complaints process is available for such cases.

2 Definition of a complaint

- 2.1 A Complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about an action or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church.

3 The purpose of this policy

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to:
 - a) provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to follow for anyone wishing to make a complaint
 - b) make sure that the Minister and Trustees know what to do if a complaint is received
 - c) make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
 - d) make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
 - e) gather information which helps us to improve what we do

4 Types of Complaint covered by this Policy

- 4.1 Complaints about the following subjects are covered by this policy:
 - a) conduct of staff, trustees or volunteers
 - b) the standard of service we provide as a local church
 - c) poor administration, delays in responding to enquiries
 - d) financial mismanagement
 - e) provision of inaccurate information
 - f) decisions made by someone acting on behalf of the church that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible

5 Types of complaints covered by other policies or procedures

- 5.1 The following subjects are covered by other policies or procedures:
 - a) Safeguarding concerns. These should be dealt with in accordance with the church's Safeguarding Policy by sending a detailed report to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
 - b) Complaints about the conduct or service of an Accredited Minister (see paragraph 1.2).

- c) Employment grievances, which would be dealt with under the employee's contract of employment.

Section B – Trustees' responsibilities when a complaint is received

6 Stage 1 – Informal resolution

- 6.1 Wherever possible and if it is appropriate to do so, the Minister and Trustees will seek to resolve any complaint or grievance informally by encouraging discussion between the individuals or teams involved. In this way it may be possible to achieve reconciliation quickly and fairly by dealing reasonably and sensitively with the situation.
- 6.2 We recognise that when this is not possible the complainant may wish to raise a formal complaint.

7 Stage 2 – Formal complaint process

- 7.1 The person making the complaint will be asked to record their complaint in writing, ideally using the church's complaints form. This will include any action they have already taken.
- 7.2 If the person making the complaint will not, or is unable to, put their complaint in writing, the person receiving the complaint should record the information provided as accurately as possible, ideally using the church's complaints form.
- 7.3 When a complaint is received, the Church Secretary will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 7 days and provide the names of the trustees who will be reviewing it. If the complainant has not provided a written version of their complaint, the Church Secretary's acknowledgement letter should include a summary of the church's understanding of the person's complaint and ask the complainant to inform the church if the summary is inaccurate.
- 7.4 Whilst making every effort to handle complaints with a high degree of integrity, it should be explained to the complainant before proceeding that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed depending on the nature and circumstances of the of the complaint.
- 7.5 Within 14 days, the named trustees will begin the review, contacting those involved for more information, finding out what happened, when it happened and who was involved. The person who is subject of the complaint should be informed about the nature of the complaint unless this would seriously prejudice the review. If necessary, the review may include interviewing people. Notes will be kept of all investigatory interviews.
- 7.6 The trustees will then recommend what remedial action, if any, should be taken. A letter informing the complainant of the outcome of the review will be sent.
- 7.7 All formal complaints and responses will be stored securely and confidentially in line with the church's Data Protection policy.

8 Stage 3 – Appeals process

- 8.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, they will need to put their case in writing to the Church Secretary. The appeal should not include new evidence, unless that evidence could not, with reasonable diligence, have been provided when the complaint was first made.
- 8.2 The Church Secretary will consult with the trustees to see if another member of the leadership team not previously involved, or an independent Association Regional Minister, is able to review the appeal.
- 8.3 If this is not possible and the complainant remains unhappy, they can be advised of how to contact the Charity Commission using <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity/>.

9 Vexatious complaints

- 9.1 If it is felt that a complaint made by a church member is vexatious, exercising church discipline may be considered. If a vexatious complaint comes from someone who is not a church member, the trustees may decide not to answer it, or any future complaints.

Section C - TRBC Complaints Procedure

This section of the policy may be reproduced separately and published as the TRBC Complaints Procedure.

10 Introduction

- 10.1 Our aim is to provide high quality activities, services and support which meet your needs and expectations, but being human, we recognise that from time to time we may fall short of meeting those standards. When we do, we want you to be able to tell us and give us a chance to put things right. In that way, we can learn lessons for the future. We will take your complaint seriously and see it as a way to help us develop.
- 10.2 We are glad to hear from people who are willing to take the time to tell us where they think things can be improved.

11 What kind of complaint can be made using this procedure?

- 11.1 You can make a complaint about:
- Services the church provides.
 - The behaviour of a church employee, trustee or volunteer.
 - The application of church policies and procedures.
 - Decisions made by the church which affect you or someone for whom you are responsible.
- 11.2 Some complaints are not suitable for this procedure:
- Safeguarding Concerns relating to children, young people or adults at risk should be reported to our Designated Person for Safeguarding. See TRBC Safeguarding Policy.
 - A complaint about the conduct or service of an Accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor. These should be made following the procedure for accredited Baptist church workers. See TRBC Complaints Policy, Section A - 1.2.
 - An employment grievance. This should be dealt with according to the employee's contract of employment.

12 Guidance on making a complaint

- 12.1 If you are unhappy about something, please begin by contacting the relevant staff member or team leader. If you are not happy with an individual, it is usually best to tell him or her directly in a supportive and polite manner.
- 12.2 If you are not able to do this or you feel that it is inappropriate, contact a member of the church's Leadership Team. If your initial contact fails to resolve the issue, then we want you to be free to bring the matter to our attention at a higher level.
- 12.3 It is helpful to have the complaint you wish to make in writing, which should be sent to the Church Secretary. You may wish to use the Complaints Form provided. If you are unwilling or unable to put your concerns in writing, the person receiving your complaint will try to record your concerns as accurately as they can. You will be asked to let us know if our understanding of your concerns is inaccurate.
- 12.4 Please include the following:
- a) The actions you are complaining about
 - b) When they took place
 - c) Why you think the actions are wrong
 - d) Details of anything you have done to try and resolve your concerns
 - e) What you consider would resolve your concerns
 - f) Details of anyone else to whom you have reported the matter
 - g) Any additional information

- h) Confirmation that you are happy for details of your complaint and the supporting documentation to be provided to those who have made the decisions in question.

13 Our response

- 13.1 We will acknowledge your contact within 7 days of receipt and will let you know who is dealing with your complaint. If you have not put your complaint in writing, this letter will include a summary of our understanding of your concerns. If this is not accurate, please let us know as soon as possible.
- 13.2 We will aim to get a more detailed response to you within 14 days. We will let you know if it is likely to take longer than this, for example, if we need time to contact others in order to progress our investigation.
- 13.3 We will aim to find out what has happened and, if something has gone wrong, we will do our best to fix the problem and address your concerns.
- 13.4 Those investigating will meet with you or contact you if there is need for clarification regarding the complaint.
- 13.5 If, following the initial information and any discussions with you, the investigation is to proceed, those investigating will inform those who have been complained about of the nature of the allegations made (unless in their opinion this would prejudice the review).
- 13.6 Those investigating will interview anyone involved and those complained about where necessary to understand their account of events. Notes will be kept of all investigatory interviews.
- 13.7 When their review is complete, those investigating will write informing you of the outcome of the review and any remedial action they intend to take.
- 13.8 Throughout we will respect and listen to what you have to say and keep you informed of our progress.

14 What happens if I find the result unsatisfactory?

- 14.1 If you are still not satisfied with the result, or if it is deemed complex and needing further investigation you can again write to the Church secretary requesting for other Trustees not previously involved and, if possible, an independent Association Regional Minister to review the complaint. This is not a legal process but a genuine attempt to give your complaint the attention it deserves.
- 14.2 In this case, your appeal should set out:
 - a) Your grounds for appeal
 - b) What you consider would resolve your concerns.
- 14.3 Your appeal should not include new evidence unless you could not with reasonable diligence have provided that evidence when you first complained.
- 14.4 If the church is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, the Church Secretary will let you know and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission at <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity/>.

15 What we cannot do

- 15.1 We cannot engage in lengthy debates on issues that are not directly related to our work or mission. We will not reply to complaints that are abusive, prejudiced, or offensive. Where a complaint is made anonymously, clearly, we cannot reply to it, but we will investigate it to see if any lessons can be learnt.

16 Confidentiality

- 16.1 The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with the church's data protection policy. However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of a complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice and consequently the church cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential. You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required. Once you have submitted your complaint and while the matter is being reviewed, you should avoid communicating with the person complained about.

Section D - Version control

Version	Comment	Date	Approved by
v0.1	First draft of TRBC Complaints Policy	14/10/2025	
v0.2	Draft formatted into TRBC Policy Template	15/10/2025	
v1.0	Approved	21/10/2025	Trustees