



## Safeguarding: Complaints Procedure

**February 2023**

This document will be reviewed, revised (as required) and approved as part of the Cathedral's annual review process				
Version	Date	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of next review
V 1	Feb 2022	N/A	SRH, Chapter	Feb 2023
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*Thanks are paid to Durham Cathedral's Safeguarding Team for their assistance with this document.*

This procedure is for any person having cause to complain to Christ Church Cathedral about the manner in which any safeguarding issue has been dealt with by the Cathedral.

For the purpose of these procedures, a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of safeguarding work undertaken by representatives of Christ Church Cathedral.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with Christ Church Cathedral's Whistleblowing Policy which is accessible on our website.

### **Use this procedure to...**

1. Understand Christ Church Cathedral's policy for handling complaints by people who consider that a safeguarding issue relating to them has not been handled correctly;
2. Make a complaint informally or formally regarding safeguarding;
3. Understand who and what is involved if you make a complaint;
4. Find out what you need to do if you have a complaint about the procedure leading to a decision by any representative of Christ Church Cathedral regarding a safeguarding issue relating to you.

## **Introduction**

We take complaints about our work and quality of service in all aspects of safeguarding seriously. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve the support that we offer to all who visit, volunteer and work here. If you are not satisfied with the way in which a safeguarding issue relating to you has been handled, please follow the process below.

This procedure is designed to be fair and open, easy to use and to ensure that all complaints raised are dealt with in a timely manner whilst also ensuring we have an opportunity to improve our safeguarding work where necessary.

All information will be handled sensitively, sharing information on a 'need to know' basis and in accordance with appropriate data sharing and confidentiality procedures.

Overall responsibility for this procedure and its implementation lies with Christ Church Cathedral. This policy will be reviewed periodically as required.

### **1. Complaints procedure**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue that is being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, we expect that all reasonable efforts will have been made to resolve it swiftly and appropriately if at all possible (often referred to as informal or local resolution).

However, we appreciate that this is not always possible or appropriate and therefore have the following process in order to deal with all complaints not resolved as described above.

### **1.1 Stage One – Informal investigation and mediation**

Initially, the complaint should be made to the Cathedral Registrar. This can be in writing or by telephone. The complaint will be acknowledged and responded to in writing and a copy of this procedure will be supplied. Should the complaint involve the Cathedral Registrar, it will be directed in the first instance to Sub Dean.

Within this timescale, the Cathedral Registrar will do the following:

1. To make all necessary and appropriate enquiries to establish the substance of the complaint and any attempts already made to resolve the matter informally;
2. To initiate discussions or meetings with the complainant to fully understand the issues raised, seek clarity and be clear on what would constitute a resolution for them;
3. To arrange any necessary mediation between the parties and any necessary, subsequent action(s) with the aim of resolving the complaint at the earliest opportunity.

If for any reason the Cathedral Registrar is either unable to resolve the complaint at this stage, or considers the matter unsuitable for resolution at this level, the next stage in the procedure is to be followed.

### **1.2 Stage Two – Formal investigation**

The details of the complaint and actions taken at stage one will be passed by the Cathedral Registrar to the Safeguarding Sub Committee Chair.

The Chair of the Safeguarding Sub Committee will:

1. acknowledge receipt of the Stage Two complaint in writing as soon as practicable.
2. make it clear when a response can realistically be expected. The aim will be for complainant to receive a definitive reply within 20 working days of acknowledgement of receipt. If, for any reason, this is not possible, all interested parties will be kept apprised of realistic timescales.
3. review all documentation and the actions taken so far and engage with either the complainant or the Cathedral Registrar to clarify and establish the circumstances from their perspective and why resolution could not be reached.
4. discuss the same with the Cathedral Registrar and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (where appropriate) and consider what, within the framework of Christ Church Cathedral policies and procedures, or if necessary, the law, could

be a way forward to resolve the complaint.

5. where necessary, take advice from the College HR Office as well as the Cathedral Registrar (or in their absence, the Sub Dean) in order to formulate a response for the complainant and any necessary action.

The Safeguarding Sub Committee Chair's final response to the complainant will inform them of the action(s) taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Again, where possible, all efforts will be made to resolve the complaint at this level, but if it is not satisfactorily resolved, there is an opportunity for the complainant to seek a further review at the next stage

### **1.3 Stage Three – Appeal**

If the complainant remains unsatisfied after the Stage Two process has been completed, they have the right to appeal directly to the Sub Dean. The Sub Dean, having ultimate responsibility for all administration and practices within the Cathedral is ideally placed to review all actions by Cathedral Officers and Committees and where necessary to direct that further action be taken.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 and wishes to appeal, the Chair of the Safeguarding Sub Committee will advise the Dean of the matter, and pass all relevant information regarding the issue to the Dean and the complainant will receive communication from the Cathedral confirming that the issue has been passed to the Dean for resolution.

All efforts will be made to respond to the complainant within 30 working days of the matter being raised to the Dean of Christ Church, any significant delays in this timescale will be communicated to all interested parties and realistic timescales further agreed.

Christ Church Cathedral is committed to "getting it right" when it comes to safeguarding, and when a cause for complaint is identified we are determined to identify any failings or lessons to be learned: we are confident our complaints procedure is robust and transparent, with necessary checks and balances to ensure complaints are heard, investigated and responded to proportionately.

## **2. Monitoring and learning from complaints**

The number and outcome of any safeguarding complaints will be included in the Annual Safeguarding Report to the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral.