

COMPLAINTS POLICY

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

DOCUMENT VERSION	2024
AUTHORS	Chapter Safeguarding Lead & Chief Operating Officer
SCOPE	Members of the Public and Organisations
DESCRIPTION	This document details the procedure to be followed in the event that any member of the public would like to complain or communicate a concern to the Cathedral.
ACTION REQUIRED	Read alongside Safeguarding Guide that can be found on our website

REVISION HISTORY

Review Date	Summary of Changes	Chapter Approval Date
Jan 2023	Minor changes	N/A
August 2024	Minor changes	N/A
Sept. 2025		

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Exeter Cathedral views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or the organisation that has made the complaint.
- 1.2. Our policy is to:
 - 1.2.1. Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
 - 1.2.2. Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
 - 1.2.3. Ensure everyone at Exeter Cathedral knows what to do if a complaint is received
 - 1.2.4. Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
 - 1.2.5. Ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
 - 1.2.6. Gather information which helps us to improve what we do

2. SCOPE

This policy details the procedure to be followed by members of the public or an organisation that has a complaint or would like to provide us with feedback.

3. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Cathedral, its operations and its mission and ministry.

4. WHERE COMPLAINTS COME FROM

- 4.1. Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Exeter Cathedral.
- 4.2. A complaint can be received
 - 4.2.1. verbally,
 - 4.2.2. by phone,
 - 4.2.3. via our website: <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk>
 - 4.2.4. by email: complaints@exeter-cathedral.org.uk
 - 4.2.5. in writing.
- 4.3. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the Staff Handbook

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, involving only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Chapter of the Cathedral.

7. REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 8.1. Written complaints may be sent to the:
Complaints Administrator
1 The Cloisters
Exeter

EX1 1HS

Or by e-mail at complaints@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

- 8.2. Verbal complaints may be made by phone, 01392 255573 or in person to any of the Cathedral's staff in the Cathedral or in the offices.

9. RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

- 9.1. Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.
- 9.2. Complaints received by telephone or in person shall be recorded on a complaints form.
- 9.3. The person who receives a telephone or in person complaint should:
- 9.3.1. Write down the facts of the complaint
 - 9.3.2. Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
 - 9.3.3. Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Cathedral
 - 9.3.4. Inform the complainant of our complaint's procedure
 - 9.3.5. Inform the complainant what will happen next and the timescale
 - 9.3.6. Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

10. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

10.1. STAGE ONE

- 10.1.1. 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 may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- 10.1.2. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Complaints Administrator within 4 working days.
- 10.1.3. On receiving the complaint, the Complaints Administrator will make a full record of it. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.
- 10.1.4. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- 10.1.5. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within ten days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.
- 10.1.6. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within three 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.
- 10.1.7. 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 because of the complaint.

10.2. STAGE TWO

- 10.2.1. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Chapter. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Dean.
- 10.2.2. The request for a Chapter 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.
- 10.2.3. The Dean may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable member of Chapter 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.
- 10.2.4. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- 10.2.5. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.
- 10.2.6. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within three 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.
- 10.2.7. 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.
- 10.2.8. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chapter decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution

11. VARIATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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

12. MONITORING AND LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

All complaints received are analysed to identify any emerging trends and root causes on a quarterly basis with a report provided to the Safeguarding Committees, the Health and Safety Committee and the Chapter, which may indicate a need to take further action such as amendment to policy and procedures.