



Ararat Baptist Church

Complaints Policy

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INTRODUCTION:

Our aim is to provide high quality services which meet your needs and surpass your expectations. After all, without your support, we would not be able to continue to carry out the work we do, changing people's lives and impacting our community.

We set ourselves high standards but, being human, we know there will be times when we fall short of those high standards. When we do, we want you to be free to tell us (hopefully before you tell everyone else) and give us a chance to put things right and learn lessons for the future.

If you are not happy with us, please begin by contacting the relevant staff member/volunteer, manager or trustee. If you are not happy with an individual, it is usually best to tell him or her directly. If you are not able to do this, or you feel it is inappropriate, contact the staff member/volunteer's manager or a trustee. If your initial contact fails to resolve the issue, then we want you to be free to escalate the matter by contacting us at a higher level.

We will work hard to find out what went wrong and fix the problem and address your concerns. When you contact us, please feel free to offer your suggestions on how you feel it can be resolved. We will always treat you with courtesy and respect, listen to what you say, and keep you informed of progress. We will advise you of your options if you want to take it to the next stage.

WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Anyone may make a complaint; you don't have to be a church member. We promise to take all concerns about our Church seriously.

WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

You can make a complaint about most things, but there are separate processes for making some types of complaint. If you have a safeguarding concern, then you should make contact with our Designated Person for Safeguarding in the first instance, and they will then investigate your concern. We have a separate Policy on safeguarding concerns, and we will be happy to give you a copy on request.

If your complaint is about a nationally accredited Baptist Minister, a nationally accredited church worker or a nationally recognised Baptist pastor or a Baptist minister in training then a separate process applies. We will be happy to give you advice on how to complain in those circumstances.

If you are a staff member of Ararat Baptist Church and have a grievance, then advice on how to raise your grievance can be found in the staff handbook.

HOW SHOULD YOU CONTACT US?

If you wish to formalise your complaint, then you may either write to us or send us an email. Our contact details are:

Ararat Baptist Church
Complaints
Plas Treoda
CARDIFF
CF14 1PT

Or centremanager@ararat.org.uk

HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE YOU RECEIVE A RESPONSE FROM US?

We will acknowledge your complaint immediately, and we will give you the name of a person to contact in connection with your complaint. We aim to get a detailed response to you within ten days. If it takes longer than this, we will let you know and provide a revised timescale. Sometimes investigations take longer due to the complexity of the concern, or the need to obtain professional e.g. legal advice.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

We will take your complaint seriously and see it as an opportunity to learn. We will interview all those who are relevant to your complaint and arrange to meet with yourself, if you are willing to do so. Once we have heard all sides of the story, we will consider any ways in which we have failed you and then prepare a report which we will send to you.

We are always glad to hear from people who are willing to take the time to tell us where they feel we have let them down.

WHAT IF I AM STILL NOT SATISFIED?

We are part of a local Association of Baptist churches, and they will review any complaints passed on to them and provide an appropriate response. This is not a legal process, but it is a genuine and serious attempt to ensure that all complaints are given the attention they deserve. At your request, we will involve this Association. Alternatively you can complain to the Charity Commission, our Charity number is 1132808.

WHAT WE WILL NOT OR CANNOT DO:

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

RELATED COMPLAINTS:

Sometimes several people will make a complaint relating to the same concern. When this occurs, the Trustees may decide to consolidate the complaints and investigate them together, or to respond to the first complaint received.

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Certain complaints are sufficiently serious for us to have a statutory duty to report the matter to the police, the Charity Commission or other statutory bodies. If we need to do so, then we will let you know and give you reasons for this. Should the police make a decision to investigate the matter, they may request that we put our own investigation on hold until they have completed theirs.

VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS:

Rarely, we receive regular complaints from the same individual who is angry with the church for some reason and wishes to take out this anger on the organization. Whilst these feelings may be valid, we sometimes have to make a decision whether continuing to investigate a whole series of grievances and complaints is likely to be of benefit to the complainant and to ourselves. Exceptionally we may reach a decision to stop investigating concerns which are thought to be vexatious.

OUR PLEDGE

We treat all complaints seriously and see them as an opportunity to improve what we do, and the way we do it. We are happy to acknowledge the mistakes that we make, sincerely apologise for them, and try to prevent them from happening again.

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