

1. Introduction

This policy sets out a procedure whereby anyone may raise a complaint against Upton Baptist Church, its activities or any member(s) of staff. It outlines the process that will be followed to achieve a resolution of the problem.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about a person acting on behalf of the Church or about an aspect of Church life.

Your Complaint

Most complaints can be resolved simply by discussion with the relevant person subject to the complaint. Where this is impossible for any reason, a formal complaint should be raised. A complaint may be received by email or in writing.

In the first instance, any issue of concern should be raised directly with one of the Elders. If you think that the Elder has not resolved the issue or problem satisfactorily, or if your complaint relates to an Elder himself you can direct your complaint in writing to either another Elder, the Church Secretary, or another Deacon. The best way to do this is by sending an email to the person concerned

Once received, your complaint will be recorded in our register of complaints which is audited annually by the Trustees.

Acknowledgement

We aim to resolve complaints as soon as possible, and will aim to acknowledge your complaint within 14 working days of receipt. Our acknowledgement will explain the next steps and the likely timescale for sending you our written response to your complaint. We will always aim to respond to your complaint within 8 weeks of receipt of your complaint.

Understanding

We want to ensure that we fully understand your complaint. Therefore, it may be necessary or appropriate to take any of the following steps:

- 1) ask you to provide further details of your complaint in writing;
 - 2) for us to write to you to clarify our understanding of your complaint and understand the outcome you may be seeking; or
 - 3) for us to have a discussion with you to hear the details of your complaint.
- or
- 4) for us to seek information as appropriate from anyone involved in the complaint

Investigation

Your complaint will be overseen by one of our Trustees, an elder or deacon, who will usually carry out the investigation himself or in the case of any possible compromise of independence, arrange for an independent investigation to be carried out on his behalf. The investigator will usually be another long-standing member of the church. Your complaint will be reviewed carefully and the findings will be shared with the Trustees.

Response

We will respond to you with the outcome of the investigation in writing, usually by email but you may let us know if you would prefer a letter. We will set out our response following the investigation and how we reached it.

Remedies

We will discuss with you any remedies that may be appropriate in the light of the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your complaint using this procedure, you may raise it a second time with another church officer. This will be dealt with independently by a different Trustee, using this procedure, and will result in a further written response.

Our aim will always be to seek a resolution with which all parties are satisfied and we will work to the best of our abilities towards this end. We do recognise however that there may rarely be occasions where this is not possible.

In cases where you believe there may be a serious risk of harm to the charity, or to those it seeks to help, you may be eligible to escalate it to the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission

The church is a registered charity and is regulated by the Charity Commission.

Complaints may be referred to them in the event of:

- a charity not following the law, with damaging consequences to its reputation and public trust in charities generally;
- serious harm to the people the charity helps or other people who come into contact with the charity through its work;
- a person or organisation receiving significant financial benefit from a charity;
- criminal, illegal or terrorist activity;
- a charity set up for illegal or improper purposes;
- a charity losing significant amounts of money;
- a charity losing significant assets, for example land or buildings.

More information is available on the Charity Commission website.

Version History

Version 1 February 2023

Version 2 March 2024 (reviewed with no changes)