



Connect Church

COMPLAINTS POLICY and PROCEDURE

1. General Policy

- 1.1. The Trustees of Connect Church take complaints seriously and commit to deal with all complaints in a confidential, timely and appropriate manner.
- 1.2. Our policy is:
 - To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use;
 - To make sure that Trustees, the Leadership Team, staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and know how to handle complaints;
 - To ensure in all cases that complaints are handled using Biblical principles and that wherever possible, disputes and disagreements are amicably resolved and that relationships are restored;
 - To gather information which helps us improve what we do in the future.
- 1.3. All complaints and any associated information provided will be handled sensitively and in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The Trustees do, however, reserve the right to involve external parties (including the police and other authorities) and to take legal advice where this is considered necessary.
- 1.4. The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Trustees of Connect Church.
- 1.5. This policy is in place to uphold the Charity Governance Code and to promote a culture consistent with its recommendations.

2. Receiving Complaints Procedure

- 2.1. Complaints may be addressed to any current Trustee either orally or in writing using the contact details in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Where complaints are received by other contacts within Connect Church, complainants will be directed towards a member of the Leadership Team in the first instance, before any escalation to the Trustees where deemed appropriate.
- 2.3. At the time of receiving the complaint, or within any initial response, complainants will be informed of the existence of this policy and provided with a copy if requested.
- 2.4. Connect Church operates a Safeguarding Policy and where complaints refer to people or activities covered by the Safeguarding Policy, such complaints will be handled in accordance with it. In instances where policies conflict, the Safeguarding Policy will carry precedence.
- 2.5. In the case of complaints made by a parent, guardian or other carer to any member of the children's or youth ministry teams, these will automatically be passed to the



Safeguarding Lead using the details in Appendix 1. Such complaints will then be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

- 2.6. In certain cases and for avoidance of doubt, the Trustees or Leadership Team may request oral complaints to be repeated in writing and reserve the right to share these complaints with other Trustees or members of the Leadership Team as they see appropriate.
- 2.7. Oral complainants must be informed that certain aspects of oral complaints will be recorded (either at the time or later) including but not limited to:
 - The name and contact details of the complainant;
 - The date and time that the complaint was received;
 - The substance of the complaint;
 - Any formal relationship that the complainant has with Connect Church.

Those receiving oral complaints can use Appendix 2 for the recording of this information.

- 2.8. Oral complainants must be informed that although complaints will be handled confidentially, the Trustees may share these with other Trustees or members of the Leadership Team in accordance with this policy.
- 2.9. All complaints, together with any actions undertaken, will be recorded in a complaints log and reviewed by the Trustees as a standing agenda item at Trustees meetings. Any conclusions and further action required as a result of these reviews will be formally recorded in the minutes of the meeting and the complaints log will be updated accordingly.
- 2.10. Where a specific person(s) is the subject of the complaint, the Trustees may choose to inform that person of the nature of the complaint and receive a formal response from them. The name and any other sensitive information provided by the complainant will not be shared with the subject of the complaint.

3. Resolving Complaints Procedure

- 3.1. Complaints will be acknowledged by the Trustees within two weeks of being received. The acknowledgement will include:
 - Details of who is dealing with the complaint;
 - When the complainant can expect to have a response.

Any first response should include a copy of this policy if not already provided.

- 3.2. The Trustees will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within one month of receiving the complaint. If, because of ongoing investigations or for other reasons, this is not possible, a progress update will be provided to the complainant within one month instead.
- 3.3. A definitive response will include:



- Actions taken to investigate the complaint;
- Conclusions drawn from the investigation;
- Actions taken, or scheduled to be taken, as a result of the investigation.

4. Appeals and Escalation

- 4.1. Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should inform the Trustees of this dissatisfaction in writing and make an appeal within three months of receiving the response. At this stage they can also request a meeting.
- 4.2. Given the governance structure of Connect Church it will be the same group of Trustees who dealt with the original complaint who will be responsible for reviewing the appeal. Wherever possible a different Trustee will take the lead in investigating the appeal.
- 4.3. As long as this notice of dissatisfaction is received within the timeframe set out in 4.1, the Trustees will acknowledge this correspondence within two weeks and will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within a further month. Notices of dissatisfaction that are received outside of that timeframe will be considered at the discretion of the Trustees.
- 4.4. This appeal decision will be considered final. At any time, the complainant can complain directly to the Charity Commission using the details in Appendix 1, or any other appropriate regulating authority. The information about the types of complaints that the Charity Commission can become involved with are set out on their website.



Appendix 1

Connect Church Contact Details

Connect Church,
Molesworth Street,
Wadebridge,
Cornwall,
PL27 7DS

01208 813110

hello@connectchurch.uk

Connect Church Safeguarding Contact Details

safeguarding@connectchurch.uk

Charity Commission Contact Information

Charity Commission
PO Box 211
Bootle
L20 7YX

<https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk>

Appendix 2

Complainant's full name:	
Preferred method of contact:	
Relevant contact details:	
Date and time of complaint:	
Details of complaint: <i>including note of any formal relationship the complainant has with Connect Church</i>	