

# Grievance Procedure

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## 1 Purpose and Scope

The PCC acknowledges that for anyone working in a Christian setting concerns, problems or complaints (grievances) may arise, which need addressing. This procedure sets out the actions which will be taken if; a member of the clergy, a licensed lay reader, a lay assistant or worker, a PCC employee or ministry contractor, a ministry trainee, volunteer or church member has a grievance.

## 2 Principles

When addressing grievances all parties should be adopted the principles set out below.

- Given what we believe about the weakness and fallen nature of humanity, no one should be surprised when mistakes are made.
- We should all assume that we are not without fault and seek to deal with the plank in our own eye, before dealing with the speck in someone else's.
- Everyone should also 'be quick to listen and slow to become angry', especially in difficult situations.
- We ask everyone to consider the timing and manner in which issues are raised to enable the best possible reaction and outcome.
- We should be cautious in ascribing motive or intention to a person's actions, but instead focus on the words or actions involved.
- To minimise the impact of any mistakes and to make repentance and reconciliation as easy as possible, all issues should be dealt with as quickly and privately as possible. It is only rarely appropriate to discuss the issue with others before raising it directly with the person concerned.

## 3 Dealing with Grievances Informally

Wherever possible, a concern or complaint should, in the first instance be dealt with informally. usually through the relevant line manager or responsible person.

## 4 Formal Grievance Procedure

When a concern or complaint has not been or cannot be resolved informally this procedure is to allow grievances, to be dealt with fairly, consistently, confidentially and speedily. To this end, every endeavour will be made to hold a meeting within 5 working days of the submission of a formal grievance.

### 4.1 Formal Grievance

The person(s) with the formal grievance should write in the first instance to their line manager or responsible person. This letter should be a clear presentation of the perceived facts of the case and should avoid unnecessarily emotional, insulting or abusive language. The line manager or responsible person must notify the PCC Secretary that a formal grievance has been made.

If it is not appropriate to approach the line manager or responsible person, for example, if the grievance is against them, then the person(s) should write to the PCC Secretary.

#### **4.2 Notification of the Grievance Hearing**

The Lead Minister or Churchwardens will, on behalf of the PCC, appoint a panel to hear the grievance. The panel will normally comprise members of the Leadership Team, the Safe Guarding Co-ordinator and may include an independent person. When the grievance is against a person who has been licenced by the diocese then the panel should include a representative of the diocese.

The date of hearing should be within 5 working days of the submission of the formal grievance.

The person(s) will be notified in writing of the date of the hearing and the names of the panel members and advised of their right to be accompanied by a representative who may be an accredited Trade Union Representative, fellow worker or supporter.

The person(s) with the grievance must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing.

#### **4.3 Grievance Hearing**

The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the grievance(s) set out in writing.

After the meeting the PCC Secretary will give a decision in writing, normally within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

### **5 Appeal**

If the person(s) is not satisfied with the decision or feels that the process has not been fair, they may appeal by writing to the PCC Secretary within five working days.

The person(s) will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within ten working days of the Church receiving the appeal. The appeal will be heard by an Appeal Panel, comprising members not involved with the Grievance Hearing, who may include, the Lead Minister, Churchwardens a member of the Diocese or members of the PCC, as appropriate. An independent person may be appointed to hear the grievance appeal.

The Appeal Panel will hear the appeal independently and decide the case as impartially as possible. The person(s) has the right to be accompanied by an accredited Trade Union Representative, fellow worker or supporter.

After the meeting the PCC Secretary will give the decision of the Appeal Panel in writing, normally within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

The Appeal Panel decision is final.

## **6 Retention of Records**

When a formal grievance has been made a confidential record of the grievance, the panel members and the panel decision will be held for a period of two years.

## **7 Overlapping grievance and disciplinary cases**

Where a grievance is raised during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.