

SLOUGH BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY	Complaints Policy and Procedure
POLICY NUMBER: SBCP-36	



Primary Responsibility:	Secretary	
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DISTRIBUTION

Original	Slough Baptist Church Office
Copy	Website (PDF)

1. Purpose

The primary purpose of this complaints procedure is to provide a process for dealing with complaints relating to the behaviour of, or activities and decisions taken by the staff, Trustees or volunteers of Slough Baptist Church.

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2. General Principles

Wherever possible the church would prefer to follow Scriptural principles of reconciling differences. However, on occasion, attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. This formal complaints process is available for such cases.

3. Can I make a complaint?

Yes. You do not have to be a member of the church to make a complaint. If you believe you have reasonable grounds to make a complaint and you cannot resolve the issue informally or believe it would not be appropriate to do so, you can make a complaint.

4. What kind of complaint can I make using this procedure?

You can make a complaint about:

The services that the church provides.

- For example, toddler groups, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Poor service might include dirty facilities or the Trustees failing to carry out fire extinguisher tests or other health & safety requirements.

The behaviour of a church employee, Trustee or volunteer that has affected you or someone for whom you are responsible.

- For example, inappropriate language or behaviour; persistent late payment of bills; sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.

The application of church policies and procedures, or decisions made by the church, that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible.

- For example, the church withdrawing financial support for a community group without appropriate notice.

5. What kind of complaint is not suitable for this procedure?

A safeguarding concern relating to children or adults at risk.

- Use the church's safeguarding procedure to report any safeguarding concern to our Designated Person for Safeguarding by emailing safeguarding@sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk.
- Refer to our website <https://www.sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk/> for our safeguarding procedures and DPS contact details.

A complaint about the conduct or service of an accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor.

- Use the procedure for accredited Baptist church workers: https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx.
- You can find out if someone is a nationally accredited Baptist church worker by looking them up on the directory: <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/504943/Ministries.aspx>

An employment grievance.

- Use the church's staff grievance procedure, SBCP-18, which is set out in the employee's contract of employment.

A complaint against an independent group or organisation that uses the church's facilities.

- Use the procedure appropriate for that group or organisation.

6. How do I make a complaint and how will the church deal with it?

You should submit your formal complaint in writing, preferably using the church's complaint form (see Appendix 1). Formal complaints not using the appended form will also be given appropriate attention: please ensure that you address the questions given in Appendix 1 in your written account.

On receipt of your complaint, the church, acting through its Trustees, will:

- Acknowledge your complaint and tell you who will review it within 7 days of receipt;
- Within 14 days, begin the review, contacting you for further information if needed; finding out what happened, when it happened, who was involved, and if necessary, interviewing people involved;
- Inform the person who is the subject of the complaint about the nature of the complaint, unless this would seriously prejudice the review;
- Recommend what remedial action, if any, should be taken, giving reasons;
- Write to you informing you of the outcome of the review.

The church may, on occasion, receive related complaints, or several people may make the same complaint. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and when each complaint is received, the Trustees may decide to consolidate the review or to deal with the earliest complaint first.

The more complex the complaint is, the longer it may take the church to respond. This is especially likely if the complaint relates to historic matters or several people need to be interviewed. Please understand that if the police investigate the person who is the subject of the

complaint in relation to the same or related matters, the church may not be able to begin or complete the review until the police have completed their investigations.

Please be aware that the church may decide that it has a duty to report the matter to statutory authorities or the Charity Commission. If this is the case, the church will write to you to tell you this.

The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with the church's data protection policy, SBCP-35 (copy available on our website). However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of a complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice, and consequently the church cannot guarantee to keep this complaint confidential. You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required. Once you have submitted your complaint, you should avoid communicating with the person(s) complained about while the matter is being reviewed.

If you are concerned about submitting a formal complaint, you can speak to the Pastor or Church Secretary. We take all complaints seriously and will endeavour to resolve the matter appropriately. However, verbal complaints are more challenging to investigate and can more easily result in miscommunications. Therefore, if informal resolution is not possible, we encourage complainants to make a formal complaint using this procedure.

7. What if I am not happy with how the church deals with my complaint?

You should write to the church secretary (tony_tarrant@btinternet.com or by post to Secretary, Slough Baptist Church, Slough SL1 2EJ) stating that you want to appeal and the grounds for your appeal. The church secretary will consult with the church leadership to determine if another member of the leadership team or an independent Association Regional Minister can review your appeal, and if so, how long it will take for that person to review your appeal. If the church is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, the church secretary will let you know, and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission.

An appeal should not include new evidence, unless you could not with reasonable diligence have provided that evidence when you first complained.

If you are unhappy with how the church deals with your complaint, you may choose to contact the Charity Commission, the regulator of charities, using the following form:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-aboutcharity/> .

8. Vexatious Complaints

If the church concludes that your complaint is vexatious and you are a church member, the church may consider exercising church discipline in line with the church constitution. If you are not a church member, the church may not answer any further complaints you make.

Slough Baptist Church Complaint Form



The church will treat your data carefully and in accordance with our data protection policy, SBCP-35. The church cannot guarantee to keep the fact and details of your complaint confidential if it is necessary and proportionate to share your data in order to review and resolve your complaint.

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

Phone: Email address:

Details of your complaint

Date(s):

Person(s):

Complaint about: *Briefly describe the nature of your complaint.*

.....

Supporting information:

State the matter or name of the person who is the subject of the complaint, what happened, when and where. Provide the contact details or statements of any witnesses. Include any additional information that you think would be helpful.

If complaining about a decision, explain what the decision was about, when it was taken, and who made it. Explain what impact this decision has had, or you may fear will have, and who has been impacted. Provide any additional information that you believe would be helpful.

If you did not try to resolve this matter informally, please explain your reasons briefly.

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If you tried to resolve this matter informally, what happened?

State who you dealt with, when and where, what information you provided to them, and what you felt was unsatisfactory about the outcome.

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Action sought:

Describe what actions you want the church to take. While the charity trustees cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are seeking.

.....

Date you are submitting this complaint to the church:

Appendix 2: Template for church to acknowledge complaint

[Date]

Dear [insert name]

I am writing to confirm that Slough Baptist Church (“the Church”) received a formal complaint from you on [insert date].

We are sorry that you feel that [provide brief summary of complaint].

The Church, acting through our Trustees, will review this complaint in accordance with our complaints policy, SBCP-36.

The Church Trustees will be in touch with you within 7 days to begin their review of this complaint.

The Church will treat the facts and content of this complaint carefully and in line with our data protection policy, SBCP-35. However, on occasion, the Church may need to make a public statements about the subject matter of complaints or to report matters to the statutory authorities and consequently, the church cannot guarantee to keep the fact of or details of this complaint confidential.

You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of this complaint, other than to seek professional advice, if required. Now that you have submitted this complaint, you should avoid communicating with the person(s) complained about while the matter is being reviewed.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me in writing.

Yours sincerely,

[Name and signature]

Church Secretary

On behalf of the Trustees of Slough Baptist Church