

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy first approved by MAC: Jan 2025

Reviewed: Feb 2026

To be reviewed: Jan 2027

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent process for handling complaints relating to the behaviour of, actions of or decisions taken within the Penarth Ministry Area (PMA), ensuring that all concerns are addressed fairly, promptly, and effectively.

Scope

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, employees, visitors, contractors and other stakeholders associated with the PMA. It covers any complaint related to the conduct, operations, or activities of any aspect of the PMA.

However if the complaint relates to any other specific policy of the PMA it should be dealt with under that policy.

Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction regarding the conduct, operations, or activities of the PMA.
- **Complainant:** An individual or group who raises a complaint.
- **Respondent:** The person or entity against whom the complaint is made.
- **Church or Ministry Area:** Penarth Ministry Area (PMA), the organisation implementing this Complaints policy.
- **Members:** Individuals who are formally affiliated with the PMA
- **Volunteers:** Individuals who offer their time and services to the PMA without compensation.
- **Employees:** Individuals who are employed by the PMA
- **Visitors:** Individuals who visit PMA premises for various reasons.
- **Contractors:** External individuals or companies contracted to provide services to the PMA.
- **Church in Wales:** the ecclesiastical province comprising six dioceses in Wales.
- **MAC or Ministry Area Council:** the body responsible for governance of the PMA, as described in the Decree issued by the Bishop of Llandaff instituting it on 1st January 2022.

Policy Statement

The PMA is committed to fostering an environment of openness and accountability. We take all complaints seriously and aim to resolve them in a fair, efficient, and respectful manner. This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for handling complaints to ensure that they are dealt with appropriately.

Procedures

1. Submitting a Complaint:

- Complaints should be submitted in writing, either by post or email, to the Ministry Area Leader or the Lay Chair of the Ministry Area ('complaints officer' for the rest of this policy).
- If the complaint is about the MAL or Lay Chair, complaints can be directed to the Area Dean or Archdeacon.
- If any other person receives a complaint they should ask the complainant to raise it directly with the designated person and advise the designated complaints officer.
- The complaint should provide relevant details, to include the complainant's name and contact details, the date of the incident or decision that the complaint refers to, the nature of the complaint and who is involved, information or evidence that the PMA should be aware of, what steps have been taken to resolve the matter if any and what actions or outcomes the complainant seeks

2. Acknowledgment:

- The complaints officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 days confirming that it will be investigated. The complaint will be logged in the complaints register

3. Investigation:

- The complaints officer will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the complaint.
- The investigation may involve interviewing relevant parties, reviewing documents, and gathering additional information as needed.

4. Resolution:

- The complaints officer will aim to resolve the complaint within 14 days and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.
- If the complaint is complex more time may be needed in which case the complainant will be informed within 14 days of the likely timescale
- If the complaint is substantiated, the complainant will be notified of this and appropriate action will be taken to address the issue.
- The decision will be recorded.

5. Appeal:

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision to the Area Dean or Archdeacon.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 DAYS of receiving the initial decision.
- The governing body or independent reviewer will consider the appeal and notify the complainant of the outcome with two months of the appeal notice or will provide an update and timescale within that time if the case is complex.
- The outcome of the appeal will be recorded.

6. Confidentiality:

- All complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- If the complaint is against a named individual they will be asked for a response but the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed unless there is a need to do so in order to investigate the complaint. The need to disclose will be clearly explained to the complainant before any such action is taken.
- Otherwise the identity of the complainant will be protected unless disclosure is required by law.

Responsibility for Implementation

The MAC of the Penarth Ministry Area is responsible for implementation of this policy. It will learn from its complaints handling and any necessary adjustments to policies, procedures or training will be implemented.

Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this complaints policy may result in:

- **Disciplinary Action:** Including verbal or written warnings, suspension, or termination of volunteering, or employment.
- **Reputational Damage:** Non-compliance can harm the reputation and integrity of the PMA.
- **Legal and Financial Implications:** Severe breaches of the complaints policy may result in legal and financial consequences for the PMA