



Complaints Policy

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Natalie Freeman	Compliance Officer	27/08/2021	NF

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Complaints

Peterborough Cathedral is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints received. We try to use the information we gain to learn and improve the way that we work.

Safeguarding Complaints

If your complaint relates to a Safeguarding issue, this will be dealt with separately. Please contact the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Canon Tim Alban Jones, Vice Dean at the Cathedral. He can be contacted by email Tim.AlbanJones@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk or 01733 355315.

Alternatively you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team [Safeguarding contacts - The Diocese of Peterborough \(peterborough-diocese.org.uk\)](https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

How to make a complaint

It is always best to lodge a complaint as soon as possible after the event so that it can be investigated whilst still fresh in everyone's minds. All complaints should be raised within three months of the date of the incident, unless this is not reasonably practicable. Many matters can be resolved quickly and informally and it is our aim to do this wherever possible.

Stage 1 - Informal Complaint and Resolution

In the first instance, you should report the matter either in person, in writing, by phone 01733 355315 or by email to dean.pa@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk, giving your contact details so that we can respond to you.

We aim to respond to any concerns of this nature within 10 working days of receipt. If we can't do this, we will explain why and tell you when we do expect to be able to respond.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if it is deemed more serious, then the matter should progress to stage 2, Formal Complaint.

Stage 2 — Formal Complaint and Resolution

To raise a formal complaint, we ask you to set out the complaint in writing and send it to the Senior Manager of the relevant department.

Our web pages outline the roles of each of the senior staff and can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/staff-directory.aspx>

Mail can be addressed to Peterborough Cathedral Office, Deanery Mews, 11 Minster Precinct, Peterborough, PE1 1XS, or it can be emailed to dean.pa@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk, marked as Confidential and with the name of the appropriate manager in the subject line.

A Senior Manager will acknowledge, investigate your complaint, and respond within 10 working days of receipt.

If it is found that the issue is more complex than first thought, you will be given an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter and when you can expect a reply.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against the outcome of a complaint, you should do so in writing.

Appeals should be addressed to The Chapter of Peterborough Cathedral, Care of the Dean's PA, at the postal or email address above. You should outline the reason for your appeal, including why you feel the complaint has not been dealt with to your satisfaction.

Any appeal must be made in writing within one month of receipt of the reply.

A member of Chapter will be assigned to acknowledge, review and respond to the appeal. This will be done within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. If the issue is more complex, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done with it and when you can expect a reply.

The decision taken at this stage is final, and there is no further right to appeal.

Unreasonable Complaints

The Cathedral defines unreasonable complaints as 'those whose frequency, or nature of the complainants' contact with The Cathedral, hinders our consideration of this, or other complaints'.

We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with The Cathedral. However, we do not expect our staff or volunteers to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and we will take action to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

A complaint may be regarded as 'unreasonable' when the complainant:

- refuses to identify themselves or give sufficient detail about the issue;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint's procedure;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be considered and commented on;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;

- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Cathedral's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;
- makes excessive demands on Cathedral time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the complainant does so:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false; using falsified information; and/or
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the number of communications with The Cathedral while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, Cathedral Administrator, or Chapter, will discuss any concerns with the complainant before designating the complaint as 'unreasonable'.

If the behaviour continues, the Cathedral Administrator will inform the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Cathedral causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan.

In certain circumstances, The Cathedral may decide to stop responding to a serial and persistent complainant. Such a decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly but is likely to occur when the Cathedral has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs and has given a clear statement of its position.