



Gateway Church Complaints Procedure

Updated April 2024. To be Reviewed April 2026

Introduction

If you have a complaint about Gateway, we want to hear about it and we will do our best to put it right.

In doing this, our aims will be:

- To deal with complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively;
- To (wherever possible) resolve the conflict or difficulty to the satisfaction of all parties involved;
- To ensure that all complaints are handled in a consistent manner;
- To use complaints constructively, seeing them as an opportunity to improve relationships, and how things are done in the future.

Who can complain?

Anyone who attends Gateway's meetings, gatherings or services, either during the week or on Sundays, or has any other contact with the church, for example, in the course of their business / employment or using Gateway's community services.

How to complain

Many complaints can be resolved informally. In the first instance, and if appropriate, please speak about the issue with the member of staff or volunteer with whom you are in immediate contact.

If you are unable to do this, or if you attempt to do this and are not satisfied with the outcome, please speak to a team leader or one of our senior staff leadership team (David Cole, Sam Evans and Chris Frost), who may be able to assist with an informal resolution.

If you are not satisfied with the above process, or do not wish to pursue an informal solution, you may pursue a formal complaint.

Please note that initiating a formal complaint is a serious matter and will involve a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of the staff elder investigating it. If your complaint is about an individual volunteer or member of staff at Gateway, please be aware that a complaint against them may cause considerable disruption and stress. This is stated not to dissuade anyone from raising a formal complaint, but to encourage you to think carefully before doing so.

Pursuing a Formal Complaint

Complaints may be addressed to any member of the senior staff leadership team (Chris Frost, David Cole, Sam Evans), either orally or in writing to Chris Frost, Gateway at St Mark's Church, St Mark's Road, Leeds, LS2 9AF or by emailing chris.frost@gatewayleeds.net. If your complaint is against all the senior staff leadership team, you can address your complaint to a Gateway Church Trustee. Written complaints should use the Complaints Procedure Proforma below. When sending a written complaint, please provide us with details of the best means of contacting you, so that we can respond as quickly as possible.

Gateway Church operates a safeguarding policy. Where complaints refer to people or activities covered by that policy, such complaints will be handled in accordance with both policies. In instances where the policies conflict, those contained in the safeguarding policy will carry precedence.

In the case of complaints made by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult to any member of the children's or youth ministry teams, these will automatically be passed to the designated Child

Protection Officer (CPO). Such complaints will then be handled in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

In certain cases and for the avoidance of doubt, the senior staff leadership team may request oral complaints to be repeated in writing and reserve the right to share complaints with trustees, elders and deacons as they see appropriate.

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 Gateway Church.

All complaints, together with any actions undertaken, will be recorded in a complaints log which will be reviewed by the senior staff leadership team on a regular basis. Any conclusions and further action required as a result of this review will be formally recorded.

Where the complaint relates to a specific person, the handler of the complaint may choose to inform that person of the nature of the complaint and to receive a formal response from them. All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information concerning the complaint will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

What Happens Next?

Subject to working patterns and holidays, you will receive acknowledgement of your written complaint within five working days, and details of who is dealing with the complaint. You may be contacted to make sure that we have understood your complaint properly. You may be invited to be interviewed by the person investigating the complaint. You are welcome to have someone with you should an interview need to take place.

We will use our best endeavours to provide a definitive response within two months 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 two months of receiving the complaint.

A definitive response will include:

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

Once the complaint process is complete, the person responding to it will complete an entry in Gateway's Complaints Record.

Appeals and escalation

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should inform whoever has dealt with the complaint of this dissatisfaction in writing within 1 month of receiving the response.



Due to the size of Gateway Church it is possible that the same group of leaders that dealt with the original complaint will be responsible for reviewing the appeal. Wherever possible a different staff team leader or trustee will take the lead in investigating the appeal.

As long as this notice of dissatisfaction is received within the timeframe of one month, the recipient will acknowledge this correspondence within five working days and will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within two months. Notices of dissatisfaction that are received outside of that timeframe will be considered at the discretion of the senior staff leadership team.

This appeal decision will be considered final. At any time, the complainant can complain directly to the Charity Commission or any other appropriate regulating authority. The information about the types of complaints that the Commission can become involved with are set out on [their website](#).

Further Information

In all cases, a complaint will be given full and fair consideration. However, if as a result of your complaint, disciplinary proceedings are taken against a member of staff, an internal procedure will apply. You will be informed that disciplinary proceedings have taken place, but as these proceedings are confidential, you will only be informed of any details or the outcome of the procedure once it has been completed in full.

If a criminal offence is alleged, then the police will be informed.



Complaints Procedure Proforma

Date and time of incident:

Details of complaint made:

Person making complaint – name and contact details:

Date details were passed to handler (where appropriate):

Action taken / changes made as a result of this complaint (Filled in by handler of complaint):