

COMPLAINTS POLICY

When something goes wrong or a concern is raised, it's important to accept what has happened and the impact it may have had. We should then seek to address any concerns as quickly as possible with the co-operation and involvement of those involved, drawing on wider help as necessary and appropriate.

By acting in this way, we recognise the serious nature of any dispute, disagreement or failure in providing services or support, as well as the impact it can have on those involved. This does not mean that we are dismissing concerns or failing to bring them to wider attention where necessary: following the guidelines outlined below means that we address such matters in a focussed, timely and responsible way.

Please note that this policy does not cover matters of Safeguarding and Health & Safety. Both areas have their own policies which detail how to raise concerns or complaints or to report something you are concerned about. Details of the policies are available on the GHBC website together with our up-to-date risk assessments (<https://www.ghbc.org.uk/about-us2/church-policy>).

Dealing with complaints

The bible provides us with guidance for dealing with many concerns – looking for consensus and understanding, within a framework of mutual support and accountability both to one another and to God. A key passage is found in Matthew 18 verses 15 to 17 where Jesus' emphasis is on our responsibilities towards one another:

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church" (The Message)

This approach will be appropriate for many areas of church life involving members of the church. Where differences arise, we can deal with these quickly, effectively and graciously by following this biblical pattern, unless the concerns are more serious in which case additional support is required.

Where there are wider concerns, a structured approach helps us to maintain transparency in the process and to focus on solutions rather than dwell on the problem(s). The flow chart in Appendix A outlines what happens when a complaint is raised which cannot immediately be addressed between those involved using the biblical principles outlined above.

How do I report a concern?

Appendix B contains a copy of a standard form for reporting your concerns. This will serve as a reference point for the steps that follow. If you need help completing the form then please contact the Minister and Charity Trustees (also known as Deacons) who will be able to find someone to help you. In the first instance please email at deacons@ghbc.org.uk.

The Charity Trustees (including the Minister) are responsible to the Charity Commission for the day-to-day Governance, Leadership and Management of the Church. They are nominated and elected by the church members. The Church's Constitution details how the Trustees are elected and outlines the scope of their responsibilities: a copy of this is available on request.

Confidentiality

Our investigation into your complaint will be taken seriously as we recognise the impact that the person and/or events will have had on you. We will act in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner, as your concerns will be considered by those not involved in the original incident.

The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with its data protection policy [<https://www.ghbc.org.uk/about-us2/church-policy>]. However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice. Consequently, the church cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential – we will always let you know if we intend to do this.

We ask you to maintain reasonable confidentiality, other than to seek professional advice if you feel you need it or the church suggests it. If the complaint is about the actions of another person, please don't contact them while we are looking into your complaint.

Timescales

We will seek to look into and resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. Some broad timescales are included in the Flow Chart in Appendix A but it may be necessary to undertake wider investigations where we rely on support and contact from outside the church. Where this happens, we will keep in touch with regular updates on progress (at least weekly).

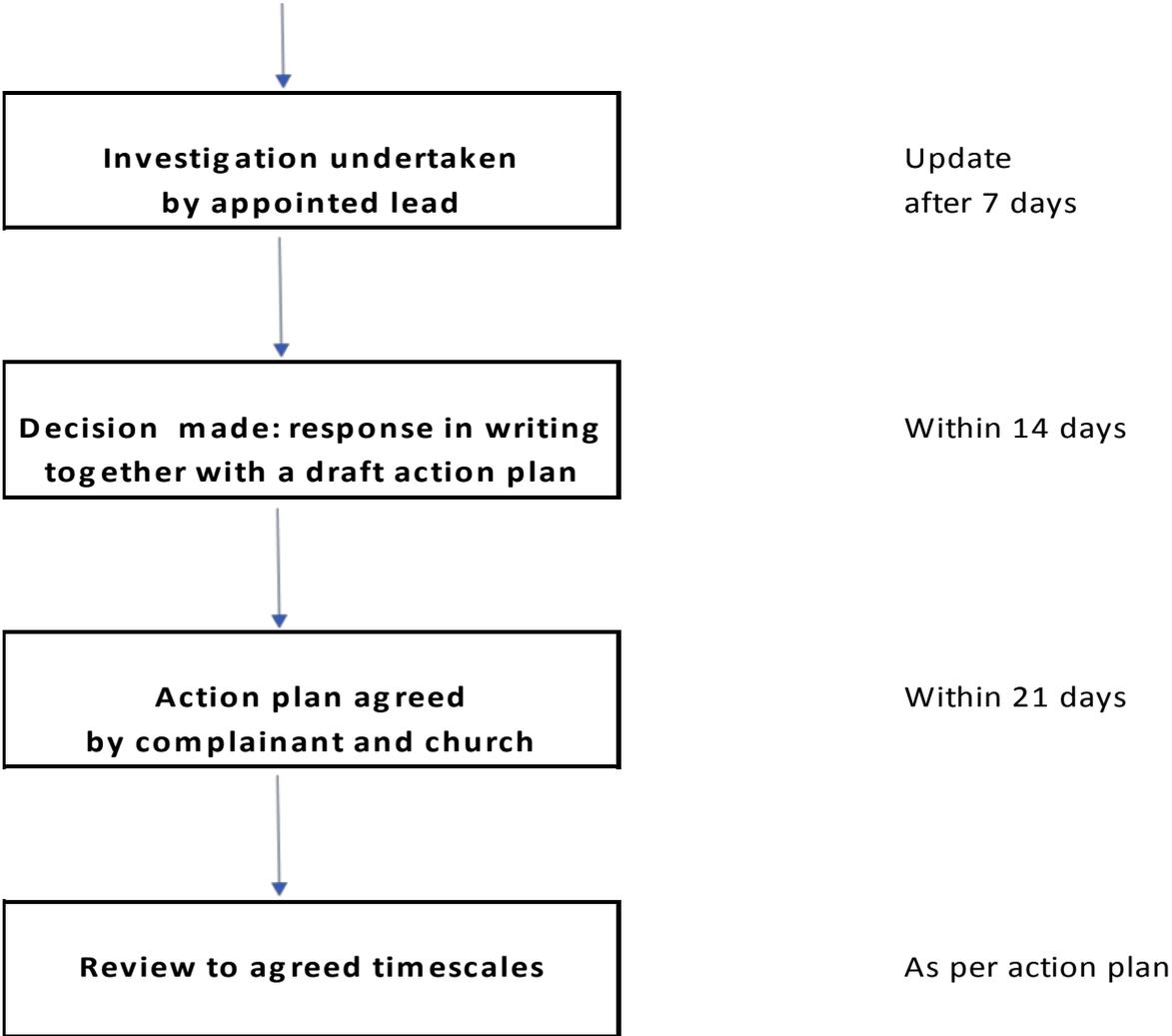
Right of Appeal

We hope that we will be able to address your concerns through this process. If, however, you're not satisfied with the outcome, you can appeal by contacting the Church Secretary who will arrange for a review of the process, referring to support from Baptists Together (our denomination) as necessary. You can contact the Church Secretary by email (secretary@ghbc.org.uk).

Where your concerns cannot be addressed, we will advise you on how you can contact both Baptists Together and the Charities' Commission.

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Appendix A Complaints Procedure Flowchart



Appendix B Complaints Form

Gorse Hill Baptist Church Complaints Form	
Your details: (PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)	
Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	email address:
What do you want to bring to our attention? ⁽¹⁾	
Date(s):	
Person(s):	
Complaint about:	
Supporting information ⁽²⁾	
(Please provide copies of letters and documents where possible)	
What can the church do to resolve the problem? ⁽³⁾	
<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>The church will treat your data carefully and in accordance with the church’s data protection policy [insert link to church data protection policy]. The church cannot guarantee to keep the fact and details of your complaint confidential if it is necessary to share your data in order to review and resolve your complaint</p>	
Date you submitted your complaint to the church:	
Date received by church:	
Date for resolution (per procedures):	
Date resolved (actual):	

Notes to Complaint form

1. What's your complaint about. Please tell us what you are concerned about
2. Supporting Information Who/what are you complaining about? 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 it may have, and upon whom. Provide any additional information that you believe would be helpful.

3. Resolving the problem Please tell us what you'd like us to do. While the Charity Trustees (Deacons) cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are looking for.