



Policy and Procedure: Complaints

1. Opening Statement

Vineyard25 (the “Charity”) recognises that from time to time the quality of services provided by the charity may not meet up with the standards that individuals have come to expect. The Charity views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint. Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly
- keep matters low-key
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred

This policy ensures that we provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

2. Definitions

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction; however, it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

3. Purpose

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

4. Responsibilities

The Charity's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the Charity's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in the Charity;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow the Charity a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Charity's control.

5. Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the Charity maintain confidentiality. However, the

circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

6. Complaints Procedure

Written records must be made by the Charity at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Stage 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the member of the public should be advised that a formal complaint may be made, and the following procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a member of the Management Team, to make this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing please post to:

Vineyard25 Trustees
The Vineyard Centre,
25 Wellington Business Park,
Crowthorne, Berkshire.
RG45 6LS

- b) If verbally, a statement should be taken by a member of the Leadership Team, staff member or a Pastors Team.
- c) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to Senior Pastors Debbie or Nino Moscardini. In the event of a complaint about the Chair of Trustees the complaint should be passed to the Senior Pastors Debbie or Nino Moscardini, and if the complaint is about the Senior Pastors Debbie or Nino Moscardini this must be passed on to Chair of Trustees.
- d) The Senior Pastors Debbie or Nino Moscardini or Chair of Trustees, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.

- e) One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager.
- f) The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter must be sent explaining why.

Stage 3

- a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision then a sub-group of the Trustee Board will be convened.
- b) The sub-group will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, examine files / notes. They will respond within four weeks in writing. Their decision will be final.