

Complaints



Diocese of
Liverpool

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance (trading as the Diocese of Liverpool) aims to provide excellent services which meet the needs of all our customers. We are committed to reaching the highest standards of customer care and in order to achieve this, we are constantly seeking feedback from all our customers – clergy, parishes, church members. We are always grateful for suggestions as to how we may improve our services and we view complaints positively as a means of being able to identify and correct any failings in the services we provide.

This policy and procedures sets out the process for handling a complaint about a service provided by the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Finance. If your complaint is about a parish then you will need to contact a member of our clergy at the parish.

2. BASIC PRINCIPLE

- i. Complaints will be dealt with promptly, courteously and efficiently.
- ii. A spirit of openness and honesty will characterise our dealings with complainants.
- iii. It is our intention that our Complaints Policy and Procedure should be as accessible, responsive and user friendly as possible. It is also our intention to use the analysis of complaints outcomes to support quality improvements across the organisation.
- iv. Staff will be expected to proactively engage with all complainants and to ensure that the Complaints Procedure is followed each time a complaint is made. In instances where there are a number of complaints raised persistently local protocol should be adhered to.
- v. Complainants will be advised of their rights to access independent advice and representation.
- vi. Every effort will be made to achieve a satisfactory resolution of the complaint. Where a failing or error has occurred we will always apologise directly to the complainant in writing. Where preferred we would be happy to communicate with complainant via email or verbally. If possible, the matter will be put right immediately, or if this is not practicable, within an agreed time-scale.
- vii. All staff will be given appropriate guidance and training in dealing effectively with complaints.
- viii. Staff will be guided on how to obtain feedback from our customers.
- ix. Suggestions will be acknowledged in writing or verbally (dependent on complainant's preference) carefully considered and wherever possible, put into practice. Feedback will be given to the person making the suggestion as to whether or not the suggestion is to be implemented.
- x. All compliments will be warmly received and conveyed to the appropriate individual(s).

3. WHO IS THIS POLICY FOR?

This Policy is for:

- Clergy
- Parishes
- Customers
- Families
- Staff – paid or unpaid
- Referrers
- Workers from other agencies
- Students on placement (who should use their University/College procedures in addition to this Policy)
- Members of the public
- Volunteers

This policy is for any of the above who may wish to; share a concern, make a complaint, air a grievance, make a suggestion, give feedback about our service, pass on a compliment or make a suggestion in respect of any of our services, staff, sub-contractors or others acting on our behalf. Staff who wish to make complaints or suggestions in respect of the Diocese of Liverpool (e.g. personnel, wages, etc.), or in respect of other projects/services we provide, may use this procedure. Staff who have a complaint about any employment related matter should use the Diocesan Grievance Procedure described in the Employee Handbook

3.1 What this Policy Does Not Cover

We are not able to deal with complaints made about any external organisations. In instances where the event is subject to legal action our internal procedures will be delayed until the external process has been concluded.

4. HOW YOU CAN MAKE COMPLAINTS?

Complaints can be made verbally, by letter, or by e-mail depending on the preference of the Complainant. If the complainant so prefers, they may appoint a Representative or Advocate to outline the complaint on their behalf. A family member or close friend can also complain on behalf of a complainant.

4.1 Time limits Complaints & Compliments

Generally we cannot investigate complaints which are more than 12 months after the event which is the subject of the complaint, unless there are good reasons for the person not having complained earlier.

5. THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All complaints will be formally acknowledged in writing by email where we have it. Where the preference is not to receive letters we would be happy to communicate verbally or by email, as preferred by the complainant. We may write to the complainant as well as liaising verbally to ensure that there is a written record of the complaint and response.

5.1 Receiving a complaint

Complaints can be made verbally, by email or letter. Complaints can be received by any staff member. When receiving a complaint you should:

- Ensure that the complainant's communication needs have been taken into account. • Listen to the complaint.
- Make notes of your conversation and inform the complainant that you have done this.
- If you are speaking to the complainant ensure that you apologise for the way we have made them feel.
- Confirm that you have formally received the complaint.
- Ask how they would like the complaint to be dealt with.
- Ensure that you take into consideration our Whistle-blowing Policy.
- If possible try and resolve the complaint – every effort should be made to take immediate action to address the complaint. You may need to escalate the complaint to Senior Management.
- Explain the next steps.
- If the complainant is unhappy with your response or with the next steps give them an alternative contact (i.e. senior manager).

5.2 Recording and taking action on the complaint

- Log and record the complaint on a complaints form.
- Forward the complaint to the right person within the Diocese.

5.3 Acknowledging the initial complaint

- The complaint should be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint.

5.4 The Complaints Procedure;

STAGE ONE

- The complaint should be allocated to an appropriate person who should the complaint at stage one thoroughly.
- The outcome of the complaint should then be sent in writing to the complainant within 14 days of receipt of the complaint. If it is not possible to conclude the complaint within this time period the complainant will be contacted with the reason for the delay and a new timescale will be given.
- If a written outcome is not appropriate please ensure that the outcome is conveyed verbally or by other means.
- Included in the outcome letter will be information on how the complainant can appeal the stage one outcome. All requests for an appeal should be sent to a senior manager.

5.5 The Complaints Procedure;

STAGE TWO

- Once the appeal has been received the complaint will be allocated to an appropriate senior manager to be reviewed and investigated at stage two.
- The outcome of the complaint should then be sent in writing to the complainant within 21 days of receipt of the complaint. If it is not possible to conclude the complaint within this time period the complainant will be contacted with the reason for the delay and a new timescale will be given.
- If a written outcome is not appropriate please ensure that the outcome is conveyed verbally or by other means.
- Included in the outcome letter will be information on how the complainant can appeal the stage two outcome. All requests for an appeal from stage two to stage three should be sent to the PA for the Diocesan Secretary.

5.6 The Complaints Procedure;

STAGE THREE

- Once the appeal has been received the complaint will be allocated to the Diocesan Secretary or Assistant for review and investigation at stage three.
- The outcome of the complaint should then be sent in writing to the complainant within 28 days of receipt of the complaint. If it is not possible to conclude the complaint within this time period the complainant will be contacted with the reason for the delay and a new timescale will be given.
- If a written outcome is not appropriate please ensure that the outcome is conveyed verbally or by other means.
- Stage three is the final stage of the complaints procedure. There is no right of appeal.