

# Hopeweavers Complaints Policy and Procedure



## Introduction

Should a complaint be made about the Hopeweavers Community, a Hopeweavers event or an individual Member or Members of the Community, this procedure provides a framework for addressing the complaint fairly and promptly.

## Principles

1. The aims of the complaints procedure is to address the issue raised, seek to avoid similar such complaints in the future, and, if applicable, to effect reconciliation.
2. Complaints may be raised by a Member, Enquirer or Friend of the Community, or a member of the public (e.g. a participant at a Hopeweavers event).
3. The complaint may be raised verbally or in writing.
4. Anyone raising a complaint will receive an initial response within a week. This initial response will include a timescale for receiving a final response. The expectation is that a simple matter will be dealt with within a fortnight and a more complex matter within 2 months.
5. The complainant and person complained of will be kept informed of progress. Complaints should be dealt with within the timescale set out in the initial response, or an explanation with a new timescale provided before the first time period has elapsed.
6. The matter should be kept confidential, unless there is a good reason to do otherwise.
7. A written record should be made, and a form is appended for this purpose.
8. Care will be taken to minimise or exclude the risk of actual or apparent bias.
9. The focus should be on the issue, rather than the personalities involved.
10. Everyone involved in handling complaints should be aware of the need for sensitivity and care for the complainant and the subject of the complaint.
11. Complaints with a safeguarding element must be referred to the Community's Designated Safeguarding Person and advice or involvement from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor may be sought at any stage.
12. Records will be kept in accordance with GDPR requirements (data processing).

## Complaints procedure

### Raising the complaint

1. Complaints should in the first instance be referred to a Guardian by emailing [contactus@hopeweavers.org.uk](mailto:contactus@hopeweavers.org.uk). If the complaint relates to one of the Guardians the complaint should be sent to [warden@hopeweavers.org.uk](mailto:warden@hopeweavers.org.uk). One of the Guardians will lead the response. If the complaint involves one of the Guardians the Warden will determine who is best placed to investigate the complaint. This could be another of the Guardians or a Trustee. This person will be referred to as the investigator.
2. The investigator will ensure the complainant has a copy of this procedure and encourage any serious or complex verbal complaint to be put in writing and assist with this if necessary.
3. The investigator will determine whether the complaint concerns a safeguarding issue, in which case the investigator will refer it to the Community's Designated Safeguarding Person in the first instance. If the complaint would be better dealt with under the bullying and harassment procedure the investigator will initiate that. The investigator will inform the complainant in both instances.

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4. If the complaint is to be dealt with under this procedure, the investigator will call upon another Guardian, Trustee or Member to work together with them (referred to as “co-worker”) to address the complaint.
5. The investigator and co-worker will be chosen to minimise the risk of actual or apparent bias and suitability to address the complaint in question.

## Investigating the complaint

6. The investigator and co-worker will hold an initial meeting (in person or Zoom) with the complainant to establish the facts, the nature of the complaint and the resolution sought. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend/person of their choosing. If the complaint was raised verbally, the investigator and co-worker will make a written record of this and supply a copy to the complainant.
7. The investigator and co-worker will investigate the complaint, meeting or talking with anyone involved who can assist in providing the full picture. In complex cases it may be necessary for the investigator to seek additional expertise in completing the investigation.

## Responding to the complaint

8. The investigator and co-worker will consider the matter and advise the complainant and other relevant persons of their findings, as to whether it is upheld or not. If upheld, the action taken will depend on the nature of the complaint but could include; to recommend change to a policy or practice, issue an apology or set something right that was found to be wrong, inappropriate or that could have been done better. In the case where the complaint involves a breakdown in relationship between Members it may be helpful for voluntary mediation to take place between the parties. In this case a suitably qualified mediator acceptable to all parties will be sought to conduct this.
9. If the complaint is serious in nature and/or against a Member holding a leadership role (e.g. Guardian, Trustee, Sanctuary Spaces Leader) and is upheld, advice will be sought from the Episcopal Visitor and appropriate action will be taken. This may include requiring the person to step down from their role or retraining.
10. Ultimately, if efforts to resolve the misconduct, or other failure leading to the complaint, have been unsuccessful, the Member may be removed from Membership as set out in the constitution.
11. Serious complaints with the capacity for reputational damage to the Community must be reported to the Secretary as this may need to be reported to the Charity Commission.

## Appeal against the decision

12. It is hoped that the response given, and action taken will address the matter to the complainant's satisfaction, however, if this is not the case the complainant will be advised that they may appeal to the Warden, except when the complaint relates to a safeguarding matter, in which case the appeal will be to the Episcopal Visitor.
13. For non-safeguarding matters, the Warden, in her role of guide and friend to the Community will hear the complainant's appeal, the findings from the investigation, the response and action taken by the investigator and co-worker. Having considered this information, the Warden will advise those involved of her conclusions and decision. The Warden's decision is final.

## Report to Trustees and Record Keeping

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1. The investigator will retain, in accordance with GDPR requirements, the following for the record: the form on which the complaint was raised, the findings from the investigation, the outcome including learning, and action taken e.g. changes made.
2. The investigator will report to the Trustees that a complaint has been made, the nature of the complaint, the key findings of the investigation and the action taken or proposed to be taken. The identity of the complainant will normally remain confidential.

Attachments:            Complaints form

# Hopeweavers Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Hopeweavers Complaints Form

Please ensure you have a copy of the Hopeweavers Complaints Policy and Procedure before completing this form. This may be obtained through our website: [www.hopeweavers.org.uk](http://www.hopeweavers.org.uk) or email [contactus@hopeweavers.org.uk](mailto:contactus@hopeweavers.org.uk) Please send the completed form to this e mail.

<b>Your Name.</b> See Note 1	
<b>Please give details of your complaint, attaching documents, if necessary.</b>	
<b>How did you become aware of your concerns/incident/reason for complaint?</b>	
<b>Is any Member of the Hopeweavers Community involved? If so, please give details.</b>	
<b>Is there any other relevant information we should be aware of to aid our investigation?</b>	
<b>Are you aware of previous concerns being raised in connection with this complaint? Please give details.</b>	
<b>Your e mail:</b>	
<b>Your contact details e.g. mobile no:</b>	

### 1. Notes

We will consider anonymous disclosures; however, the investigation may be hampered by not being able to ask further questions or seek clarification from you and we will not be able to advise you of the outcome and any action taken.