

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE



PURPOSE

Our hope is that there is never a need to send us a complaint, because we try hard to meet the high standards we set for ourselves. However, we recognise sometimes things go wrong and there may be cause to make a complaint. This policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and resolved as far as is possible to the complainant's satisfaction. King's Arms Trust views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future. As noted below, safeguarding and criminal matters are not covered in this policy and may require special consideration and external involvement.

POLICY

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure the trustees and staff team at King's Arms Trust know what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints, other than those judged to be vexatious or trivial, are investigated fairly, impartially, in a timely way, and proportionately to the complaint.
- To aim to have complaints resolved and relationships repaired wherever possible, and where necessary complainants receive a response detailing the findings and any action taken.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone with reasonable grounds to make a complaint where the issue cannot be resolved informally, or where it would be inappropriate to do so, can make a formal complaint.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of King's Arms Trust.

Examples of a complaint may relate to or include, but are not restricted to; -

- Any of the services the Trust provides.
- The behaviour of a trustee, employee or volunteer.
- Issues concerning the administration or finances of the Trust.
- A breach, or potential breach, of law or guidelines relevant to the Trust.

However, it must be noted that unreasonable behaviour or language towards King's Arms trustees or staff in the course of making a complaint will not be tolerated.

This policy does not cover complaints in respect of employment related issues. Employees of the Trust should refer to their contract (statement of particulars) and the King's Arms Trust Staff Handbook.

This policy also does not cover concerns over Safeguarding. Any concerns or issues regarding Safeguarding should be reported immediately to our Safeguarding team at this email address: safeguarding@kingsarms.org

Where do complaints come from?

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in King's Arms Trust. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

Confidentiality

All information relating to a complaint will be handled sensitively and the relevant data protection requirements will be followed.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the trustees of King's Arms Trust, however this is delegated to the Head of Governance on a day-to-day basis.

How to make a complaint?

All complaints should be made in writing and either sent; -

By post addressed to; -

Head of Governance, King's Arms Trust, King's House, 245 Amptill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ

By email to; -

complaints@kingsarms.org

How is the church led and governed?

This church is given spiritual direction by a team of Elders, appointed by external apostolic oversight within our family of churches. The Church is then led by a team of staff and volunteers who work in team to enable the church to flourish. The Church is legally governed by a Trustees board as per charity commission regulations and guidelines.

PROCEDURE

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through any number of sources, however complainants, and those receiving complaints on behalf of the Trust, are asked to use the channels noted above to ensure the Trust can be consistent in following up the complaint in accordance with this policy.

Complaints may be received by phone or in person. Whoever receives a phone or in person complaint should note the complainant's contact details (name, email address and/or

phone number), brief details of the complaint and then forward the details by email to the Head of Governance.

Complaints received by email or post will be forwarded to the Head of Governance and a designated Trustee.

Initial review and response

On receipt of a complaint the Head of Governance, or depending on the circumstances the person to whom they have delegated the responsibility, will:

- Assess the nature of the complaint and decide whether
 - o it is trivial or vexatious, and therefore does not require a response
 - o an informal complaint/conversation is required
 - o it needs further investigation, resolution and a response
- Where appropriate, contact the complainant and establish whether they are simply bringing something to our attention, whether the issue can be resolved informally or if they wish to make a formal complaint.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it is expected to take.

Resolving formal complaints

Wherever possible the Trust would prefer to follow Biblical principles of reconciling differences. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible. However, on occasion attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. A formal complaints process is available for such cases as follows; -

Stage One

- The Head of Governance will investigate the issue, or delegate the responsibility to an appropriate person, before taking further appropriate action.
- Acknowledgement of the formal complaint should be made within a reasonable time and ideally complainants should receive a reply within four weeks, subject to the complexity of the issues and availability of those involved, otherwise a progress update should be communicated with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is found to be justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the trustees. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees who, in consultation with the other trustees, will review the evidence of the case, make any further investigations if necessary or delegate the issue to a suitably senior person or panel of trustees for investigation, review and conclusion.

- As with Stage One, Stage Two of the formal complaint should be completed within a reasonable time and ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks, subject to the complexity of the issues and availability of those involved, otherwise a progress update should be communicated with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the trustees decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance for resolution.

External Stage

- The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities
- Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Trust may seek external assistance, professional mediation or legal advice as appropriate at any stage.
- On occasion it may also be appropriate for King's Arms Apostolic input to be involved with certain complaints from within the Catalyst and wider Newfrontiers networks.
- Criminal activity should always be referred to the appropriate authority or Police department

Variation of the complaints procedure

The trustees may vary this procedure for good reason, for example to avoid a conflict of interest and ensure that nobody will be given responsibility to investigate a complaint about themselves.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed and updated regularly. Complaints are also reviewed to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action or areas where the Trust can improve.