

## **Complaints procedure (v 1.1)**

### **Introduction**

Taunton Vineyard 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.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to follow for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us in order to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Taunton Vineyard knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Taunton Vineyard

### **Where complaints come from**

Complaints may come from our service users, our customers, our congregation or members of our local community. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone or by email. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees and the Senior Pastors

### **Complaints procedure**

#### ***Receiving complaints***

Written complaints may be sent to Taunton Vineyard, The Parlour, 32A North Street, Taunton, TA1 1LW or by email to [info@tauntonvineyard.org.uk](mailto:info@tauntonvineyard.org.uk). Verbal complaints can be made by phone (01823 275577) or in person to any of Taunton Vineyard's staff or trustees either at our office address or at any of our events or activities

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the complainant's relationship to Taunton Vineyard (e.g. service user, member of the congregation)

- Tell the complainant we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or email so that the complaint is recorded in their own words

## ***Resolving complaints***

### Stage 1

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information (in writing) should be passed to the Senior Pastors within one week.

If it has not already been resolved, the Senior Pastors should delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and take the appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged (by the person handling it) within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 4 weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is 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 2

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at trustee level.

At this stage the complaint will be passed on to the trustee responsible for human resources. A request for trustee level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The trustee responsible for human resources may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the case at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 4 weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions taken from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the trustees deem it appropriate to seek external support (i.e. from Vineyard Churches UKI)

### External stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself with can be found on their website at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx)

**Variation of the complaints procedure**

The board of trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the trustee responsible for human resources should not also have the trustee responsible for human resources as the person leading the Stage Two review.

**Monitoring and learning from complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

**Monitoring and review**

This procedure will also be reviewed on an annual basis

**Chair of trustees**      **Signed:**

**Date:**

**Reviewed:**