



## The Bridge Battersea Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with your interaction with someone at The Bridge Battersea, or with any aspect of any of our activities, please tell us.

As such, this page describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

We will ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and do our best to see that relationships are repaired.

Our leaders, trustees and staff will always aim to reflect on the experiences to help improve what we do and how we do it.

We will aim to publicise the existence of our complaints policy and procedure so that people know how/who to contact us to make a complaint. Similarly we will aim to ensure everyone at the Bridge Battersea knows who to pass a complaint to if one is received.

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### What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of church life. This can be about a person, or persons, an activity, or a group or about a service provided by the church.

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### How we handle different complaints and allegations

The Bible itself offers guidance for certain complaints:

- If a complaint is against a fellow church member, we should deal with it in the manner of Matthew 18.
- If it is in relation to a pastor or elder, then 1 Timothy 5 should be followed.

Complaints against staff in regards to their employment may lead to recourse by us to the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure accepted by that staff member as part of their employment contract.

Any staff complaining about any aspect of their employment should follow the Grievance Procedure similarly accepted by that staff member as part of their employment contract.

Allegations of a safeguarding nature will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. In addition, a 'Whistleblowing' complaint would be coming forward and sharing knowledge on any wrongdoing which you think is happening in an organisation such as bullying and/or abuse of position, criminal activity, danger to health and safety, failure to comply with any legal obligation, bribery or the deliberate concealment of any of the above. We are in process of adopting a Whistleblowing Policy; in the meantime please email us (see below) if you wish to report in this way and we will send you a procedure we propose to adopt, rather than your using this policy.

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## Your responsibilities in a complaint

When you complain, we ask you to follow these guiding principles:

- provide adequate details of your complaint and your cause for dissatisfaction
- explain what you believe to be a satisfactory outcome
- treat us with good manners, politeness and civility at all times
- accept that we will act fairly in dealing with your complaint and avoid conflicts of interest (for example we will require someone other than the person you are complaining about to handle the complaint)
- be realistic. It may not always be possible to achieve the outcome you want.

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## How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any event organised by the Bridge Battersea (and that person will redirect your complaint as best as possible), either verbally or in writing, on the contacts page of our website [www.batterseachurch.co.uk](http://www.batterseachurch.co.uk), or by email to [complaints@bridgebattersea.co.uk](mailto:complaints@bridgebattersea.co.uk). Alternatively please write to Sarah Dowding, one of our trustees, at Flat 33, Goulden House, Bullen Street, London, SW11 3HG.

If you wish to make your complaint in person, we will make sure it is a comfortable and non threatening environment, and you can bring a friend with you if you wish.

If we don't hear the complaint face to face, we may ask you to kindly meet face to face as often that is the best way to resolve matters. However whether you agree to do this will be entirely your choice.

### What happens when I have complained?

We may give an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem, and at the same time we may offer you pastoral support if this seems appropriate.

Otherwise we will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint (one of our trustees/directors has been designated to do this) and provide contact details. If necessary we will recommend we go straight to a 'stage 2' approach (see below), or you can yourself opt for that.

We aim to respond to complaints quickly where possible, within five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will either explain our response in person or on the phone, or we will follow up in writing if this seems more suitable.

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### What if I'm still dissatisfied?

If you are not satisfied with the response, we will explain that up to this point can be regarded as 'stage 1' of the process, and then tell you what you can do next. If you choose to do so within a certain period (usually we ask within the next 14 days) you can take your complaint to 'stage 2'. Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved above, and those that clearly require more investigation and so are handled as stage 2 following discussion and agreement with you.

At stage 2, we will confirm our understanding of the complaint, we will investigate what outcome you are looking for, and we will try to resolve your complaint where we can, normally within one month.

Where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, again normally within one month.

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### Bringing the matter outside The Bridge Battersea?

After we have given you our decision or response above, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask 'Co-Mission' (<https://co-mission.org>) as stated above, a support umbrella organisation to which we are affiliated, to look at it. Details are available on request.

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## Keeping matters confidential

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information concerning the complaint will only be shared on a need-to-know basis (including abiding by our safeguarding policy) and complying with any data protection procedures or GDPR requirements.