



Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB)

COMPLAINTS & DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

The Context

The LCiGB is committed to treating all people with respect and dignity. The LCiGB hopes that every contact with the church, whether at an event, through its website, or during a visit or worship in a congregation, the LCiGB demonstrates that commitment to each and every individual.

However, the church recognises and acknowledges that, like every organisation, it can make mistakes, and this policy sets out how the LCiGB finds out about things that have gone wrong. It is only by communicating when mistakes have occurred that a response is able to be made, and enables the church to correct itself and prevent things going wrong in the future.

Therefore, The Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB) is committed to taking seriously and considering carefully any complaint or dispute involving the church, its trustees or its practices in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

NB. This policy and procedure does not address the conduct of pastors. Complaints relating the conduct of a pastor are dealt with under a separate policy and procedure, found in the Rules and Regulations of the LCiGB, under (1) *Responsibilities & Duties of Pastors within LCiGB*, and (2) the *Disciplinary Procedure for Pastors of the Church*. (See link below):
http://www.lutheranchurch.co.uk/userfiles/file/LCiGB%20Rules%20and%20Regulations_v%2017_updated%2014%20January%202016.pdf

Step 1: Do you have a complaint?

- A complaint may be made about an activity of LCiGB
- An event hosted by the LCiGB
- The conduct of a trustee
- The conduct of a volunteer acting on behalf of the LCiGB
- A member of staff or an independent worker acting for or contracted by the LCiGB

Step 2: How to make a complaint

A complaint may be made to any of the trustees of the LCiGB but normally is raised initially with the Chair of the Council (which is the Board of Trustees).

Contact details for the LCiGB are found on the church's website www.lutheranchurch.co.uk and can be found also on the Charity Commission website under our registered charity number 1137050.

A complaint may be made orally or in writing but, to be dealt with under this procedure, it must be a formal complaint and therefore submitted in writing, and sent to: The Secretary, Lutheran Church in Great Britain, 30 Thanet Street, London WC1H 9QH, and by email attachment to secretary@lutheranchurch.co.uk.

The Secretary will acknowledge the receipt of your complaint and, if possible, address your complaint within 14 days of receipt. If the matter cannot be resolved within a mutually agree time, then the complaint will move on to Step 3.



Step 3: A meeting to discuss and resolve the problem

A meeting will be arranged between the Chair of the LCiGB and the complainant and two additional members of the Council within 21 days of the referral to Step 3. The meeting will exclude any person about whom the complaint is made.

A formal note of the meeting will be written and a copy of the note of the meeting will be given to the complainant and also placed on file with the LCiGB. It is hoped that a decision and action to resolve the complaint will be satisfactorily reached at this stage.

Step 4: Still not satisfied?

If a satisfactory result is not achieved during the meeting, then the complaint procedure may move to Step 4. During this stage, the complaint is referred to a full Council meeting. Normally this is the next scheduled meeting of the Council but, alternatively, a special meeting can be organised sooner. The complainant is invited to attend the Council Meeting and state the details of the complaint. The Council can decide to discuss the matter in private and report back to the complainant. The complainant does not have the right to be present during the Council discussion and will be asked to leave the room when the details about the complaint have been reported to the Council.

The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the Council's discussion and any action agreed. If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, s/he may ask for the matter to be considered by an independent enquiry panel. The Council will undertake to contact the Council of Lutheran Churches (CLC) to recommend panel members not associated with the LCiGB and who will hear the complaint as an Appeal Panel.

The advice of this Appeal Panel will be presented to the Council of the LCiGB for a full decision and this decision will be final.

Notes:

1. During any of the steps outlined above, a complainant has the right to be represented by a person of his/her choice, whose role must be agreed with the Chair of the Council of the LCiGB.
2. Should the complaint involve misconduct by a Trustee, volunteer, a representative of the LCiGB or someone employed to undertake work for the LCiGB, the Chair of the Council of the LCiGB may request the matter be referred for disciplinary action.
3. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, and communicated only to those who need to know and following relevant data protection requirements.
4. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with The Council (the board of trustees) of the LCiGB.
5. This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted at the LCiGB Council at a meeting held on 5 March 2016, and noted in minute ref. 7.10.