

Concerns and Complaints Policy

God's word compels us to love and care for all people and to treat them with dignity and respect whether they are a member of the public or part of the church family. Everyone working or volunteering at Asha is committed to reflecting God's character in maintaining and upholding Biblical standards of integrity and love in the work we do. But there may be a time when you need to complain.

This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the Asha Trustees are responsible that have affected them. Prior to using this formal procedure, we encourage an informal approach to the person directly to see if the matter can be resolved in that way (cf Matthew 18). It is also worth highlighting that feedback is very much welcomed within the church so we would encourage you to make use of regular channels of communication, for example speaking to an elder or member of Asha known to you.

But if your complaint is about:

- **Safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults**

If the complaint involves an allegation or disclosure of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult, whether present or historic, please follow our safeguarding policy. More information can be found in our safeguarding policy.

- **Whistleblowing**

If the complaint is about serious malpractice or wrongdoing that is in the wider public interest (for example, a criminal offence or a breach of a legal duty), you can follow the complaints policy below or you may prefer to contact the one of the partner churches and organisations supporting Asha (namely, Bob Heppe at Serge, William Taylor at St Helen's Bishopsgate or Tony Uddin at Tower Hamlets Community Church), the Police or a whistleblowing charity, such as Public Concern at Work. Those raising legitimate concerns of this nature are protected by law and will never be victimised for making such a report.

- **Your employment or volunteering**

If you are an employee or have a formal volunteer agreement, please refer to the grievance policy within your contract or agreement for details about how to raise a complaint.

Making a complaint to the Trustees

If informal resolution is not possible or practicable then complaints should be made in writing or by email to the Asha Trustees using the contact details below. The Asha Trustees will ensure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially.

You should complain within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about. You need to set out:

- your full name and address
- what you think went wrong and how it has affected you including enough details to show why you are aggrieved
- what (if anything) you think the trustees should do to put it right.

If someone else complains on your behalf, the Asha Trustees need written confirmation from you saying that you agree for that person to act for you. The Asha Trustees will immediately record receipt of your complaint in a secure log.

How your complaint will be dealt with

The Asha Trustees will write to you or send you an email to confirm receipt of your complaint within 7 days of its receipt and may arrange for it to be considered by a Panel of 3 Trustees or their representatives. If your complaint refers to particular individuals who are members of the Trustee Body, the Asha Trustees will meet without them being present. In some circumstances the Asha Trustees may respond directly to your complaint without involving a Trustee Panel. The reasons for doing so would be outlined in their response.

The Panel will look fairly into your complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any individuals to which your complaint refers.

The Trustee Panel may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend / representative if you wish. The Chair of the Panel will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be held as informally as is appropriate and will be minuted by the Panel.

The Chair of the Panel will write to you with the conclusions from the Panel's review and reasons for that outcome. They will aim to respond to you in this way as soon as possible, and no longer than 6 weeks after receipt of your complaint.

Review of complaints

If the complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may request a review of the Panel's decision. Requests for review should be made in writing to Asha Trustees and the review will be dealt with impartially by a further Panel of Trustees or their representatives who were not involved in the previous Panel. This second Panel will write you within 4 weeks of your request for review. This will be the Asha Trustees' final response to your complaint.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to consider contacting the FIEC or the Charity Commission.

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