

Grievance Policy

Approved by Cornerstone Trustees 29th March 2021

Review Due in 2024

If anything in this policy contradicts an employment contract between Cornerstone Church Grays and an employed individual, the employment contract takes precedence.

1. Overview

1.1 This policy helps us deal with complaints, concerns, and problems to do with employment fairly and consistently. Please note that this policy only applies to matters relating to your employment. If you have a separate relationship, such as being a customer or service user, you must use a separate process for concerns.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees, but does not form part of your employment contract, and we may update it at any time.

1.3 You should only use this procedure to raise a grievance connected with your employment. Complaints made against you will normally be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy or Performance Improvement Policy, as appropriate.

1.4 You should also look at our Harassment and Bullying Policy which might be relevant.

1.5 Most grievances are raised individually, but if a group of employees bring substantially the same grievance, we will address it as a group grievance and follow the process described below.

2. Taking informal action

2.1 You should approach the trustee responsible for employment before doing anything else, as we find most grievances can be resolved informally. If your grievance is about the trustee responsible for employment — or there is some other reason you don't want to raise it with them — you must instead notify another trustee.

2.2 If this informal approach does not resolve your problem, you should use the formal procedure.

3. Taking formal action: First stage

3.1 You will need to set out the details of your complaint in writing. Include dates, names of individuals involved, and any other relevant facts, and tell us clearly that you want to lodge a formal grievance. It will be helpful if you set out any steps you have taken to resolve the issue informally.

3.2 You must also explain clearly what you want to see the church do. You could for example say: 'I want you to issue a warning to (the name of the individual you are complaining about)', or: 'I want you to change your policy on overtime working'.

3.3 Send or hand your written grievance to the trustee responsible for employment. If the trustee responsible for employment is part of your grievance, you should send your grievance to another trustee.

3.4 We will write to you to let you know that we've received your grievance.

3.5 You must co-operate with us to ensure our investigation is fair and thorough. How we investigate will depend on the nature of your grievance. We will look at relevant documents and may interview you and/or take a statement from you and from other people able to provide information.



4. Taking formal action: Second stage

4.1 We will invite you to a meeting, usually within 2 weeks of you lodging your grievance. The meeting is your opportunity to explain your problem and how you think we should resolve it, and we ask that you make every effort to attend.

4.2 You can bring a companion with you to the meeting — this will typically be a friend, work colleague or a trade union representative (full details in paragraph 6 below). You must let us know as soon as possible if either you or your companion is unable to attend the meeting and we will try to reschedule.

4.3 Please do not record the meeting without our consent, as this suggests that you do not trust the Church's process or the trustees who are conducting it. If you have misgivings about either the process or the trustees leading it, you should tell us openly so that we can address your concerns. For our part, we in turn will not record the meeting without your knowledge.

4.4 After the meeting, we will take any steps to investigate further that we consider appropriate. Sometimes this will involve looking at documents or interviewing other people. We will not normally allow you to take part in this part of the investigation (for example, you will not normally be allowed to question other people directly). Sometimes, we may ask you for more information or for another meeting. And sometimes, we may think there is no need for any further investigation.

4.5 Within 7 working days of the final meeting (this may be the first or the second meeting, depending on the circumstances) we will write to you with our decision and let you know if we plan to take any action to address your grievance. We will also tell you who to write to if you want to appeal our decision (paragraph 5 below). In complicated grievances, or if the trustee hearing your grievance is very busy, it may take longer than a week to make our decision and prepare an outcome letter. If that happens, we will keep you informed about the likely timescales.

4.6 Sometimes, we may decide it is inappropriate to discuss some, or even all, of the steps we are taking as the result of your grievance with you (usually because the other person involved might have an entitlement to confidentiality, which has to be balanced against your right to know what has happened). We recognise that will leave you feeling dissatisfied, and we would only do this if there was a good reason not to keep you informed.

5. Taking formal action: Third stage

5.1 If you are not happy with our decision, you can appeal in writing within one week of us giving you the decision. Your appeal letter or email must explain clearly why you are appealing. You should also give us any new evidence you may have acquired since the initial investigation was completed.

5.2 We will invite you to a meeting, usually within two weeks of you lodging your appeal. Wherever possible, the appeal meeting will not be led by the trustee who held the original grievance meeting. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague, in line with the process outlined in paragraph 6 below.

5.3 Our final decision will be sent to you in writing. We try to do this within two weeks of the appeal hearing. You do not have any further right to appeal against our decision.

6. Your right to be accompanied

6.1 You are entitled to be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative at any meeting called under this policy.

6.2 If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you. It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not



prevent them from attending, but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work would cause operational problems.

6.3 Your friend, colleague or trade union representative can, if you'd like them to, explain the key points of your grievance at the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meetings. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent us asking questions or outlining our views.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this policy please contact our charity trustees at **trustees@cornerstonegrays.org**

This policy is based on a policy provided by Ashfield HR Limited to the Anglican Mission in England.

Cornerstone Church Grays is a registered charity
Registered Charity Number 1192558
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