

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### 1 Opening Statement

Coventry Vineyard recognises that from time to time the quality of services provided may not meet up with the standards that individuals have come to expect. We 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. Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly.

Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly.
- keep matters low-key.
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

This policy ensures that we provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

### 2. Definitions

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction; however, it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

### 3. Purpose

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

## **4. Responsibilities**

The Charity's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge a formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the Charity's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in the Charity;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow the Charity a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Charity's control.

## **5. Confidentiality**

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the Charity maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## **6. Complaints Procedure**

Written records must be made by the Charity at each stage of the procedure.

### **Stage 1**

In the first instance, staff member(s) must establish the seriousness of the complaint. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

### **Stage 2**

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the member of the public should be advised that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them. It may sometimes be appropriate for a different member of staff, preferably a trustee or senior pastor, to make this explanation.

- a) A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing the attached form should be used. If verbally, a statement should be taken by a trustee or senior pastor.

- b) In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to the **Chair of Trustees via [trustees@coventryvineyard.org.uk](mailto:trustees@coventryvineyard.org.uk)**. In the event of a complaint about the Chair of Trustees, contact should be made with **[office@coventryvineyard.org.uk](mailto:office@coventryvineyard.org.uk)** the complaint will be passed **a nominated trustee**, and if the complaint is about one of the senior pastors, this must be passed on to **Chair of the Trustees**.
- c) The **Chair of Trustees** or **nominated trustee**, depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
- d) One of the above will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the staff member involved and their Line Manager, or in the case of a senior pastor, with the senior pastor and chair of trustees.
- e) The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within four weeks of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter must be sent explaining why.

### **Stage 3**

- a) If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, then **for example a sub-group of the Trustee Board will be convened**.
- b) The sub-group will examine the complaint and may wish to carry out further interviews, examine files / notes, arrange for VCUKI to be informed as needed (via area leaders or relevant channels). They will respond within four weeks in writing. Their decision will be final.

## Complaints Form

### The Complainant

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Mobile:

Email Address:

Please note: Consent form needs to be completed & signed by the complainant to enable the complaint to be processed.

### About your Complaint

In relation to the raised concern, Coventry Vineyard trustees & Senior Pastors will be informed in the investigation process. Please confirm you are happy for this to occur: Y/N

Date of occurrence of the concern: \_\_\_\_\_ (If this has been more than 8 weeks since the concern, please state the reason for this.)

Details of complaint:

Signed (Complainant):

Date:

## The Complainant

Office use only:

Person who took the complaint:

Date of receipt:

Person dealing with complaint:

Date of receipt:

Actions:

Final outcome/Resolution: