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Complaints Handling Policy

1. General policy

1.1 The trustees of Urban Expression take complaints seriously and commit to deal with all complaints in a confidential, timely and appropriate manner.

1.2 Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints policy which is clear and easy to use;
- To make sure that trustees, volunteers and staff are aware of this policy and know how to handle complaints;
- To ensure in all cases that complaints are handled using biblical principles and that, wherever possible, disputes and disagreements are amicably resolved and that relationships are restored;
- To gather information which helps us improve what we do in the future.

1.3 All complaints and any associated information provided will be handled sensitively and in accordance with relevant data protection requirements. However, the trustees reserve the right to involve external parties (including the police and other authorities) and to take legal advice where this is considered necessary.

1.4 The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the trustees of Urban Expression.

1.5 In constructing this policy, the trustees have paid due consideration to the good governance code referred to in the Charity Commission guidance on completing annual returns.

2. Receiving complaints

2.1 Complaints should in the first instance be considered by those directly involved and, wherever possible, resolved by peer-to-peer conversations.

2.2 Where this fails to achieve resolution, complaints may be addressed to any trustee either:

in writing by email to admin@urbanexpression.org.uk with the subject line 'Complaint for chair of trustees only'

orally by emailing the above address, asking for a phone call, and including your phone number.

2.3 At the time of receiving the complaint or within any initial response, complainants will be informed of the existence of this policy and provided with a copy if requested.

2.4 Urban Expression operates a *Safeguarding Children and Other Vulnerable Beneficiaries* policy. Where complaints refer to people or activities covered by that policy, such complaints will be handled in accordance with both policies. In instances where the policies conflict, those contained in the safeguarding policy will carry precedence.

2.5 In the case of complaints made by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult to any member of the children's or youth ministry teams, these will automatically be passed to the designated Safeguarding Lead. Such complaints will then be handled in accordance with the *Safeguarding Children and Other Vulnerable Beneficiaries* policy.

2.6 In certain cases and for the avoidance of doubt, the trustees may request oral complaints to be repeated in writing and reserve the right to share complaints with other trustees as they see appropriate.

2.7 Oral complainants must be informed that certain aspects of oral complaints will be recorded (either at the time or later) including but not limited to:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- The date and time that the complaint was received;
- The substance of the complaint;
- Any formal relationship that the complainant has with Urban Expression.

2.8 Oral complainants must be informed that, although complaints will be handled confidentially, the trustees may share these with other trustees in accordance with this policy.

2.9 Where the complaint relates to a specific person, the trustees may choose to inform that person of the nature of the complaint and to receive a formal response from them. The name and any other sensitive information provided by the complainant will not be shared with the subject of the complaint.

3. Resolving complaints

3.1 Complaints will be acknowledged by the trustees within two weeks of being received and will include details of who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect to have a response. Any first response should include a copy of this policy, if not already provided.

3.2 The trustees will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within two months of receiving the complaint. If, because of ongoing investigations or for other reasons this is not possible, a progress update will be provided to the complainant within two months of receiving the complaint.

3.3 A definitive response will include:

- Actions taken to investigate the complaint;
- Conclusions drawn from the investigation;
- Actions taken as a result of the investigation.

3.4 Any conclusions and further action required as a result of this review will be formally recorded in the minutes of a trustees meeting.

4. Appeals and escalation

4.1 Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should inform the trustees of this dissatisfaction in writing within three months of receiving the response.

4.2 Due to the size of Urban Expression it is likely that the same group of trustees that dealt with the original complaint will be responsible for reviewing the appeal. Wherever possible, a different trustee will take the lead in investigating the appeal.

4.3 As long as this notice of dissatisfaction is received within the timeframe set out in 4.1, the trustees will acknowledge this correspondence within two weeks and will use best endeavours to provide a definitive response within two months. Notices of dissatisfaction that are received outside of that timeframe will be considered at the discretion of the trustees.

4.4 This appeal decision will be considered final.

At any time, the complainant can complain directly to the Charity Commission or any other appropriate regulating authority. The information about the types of complaints that the Commission can become involved with are set out on their website.

5. Adoption of this policy

5.1 The trustees of Urban Expression formally adopted this policy at the trustees' meeting held on 23 April 2026.