

St Mary's Complaints Procedure

St Mary's is a contemporary, charismatic Christian church in London.

1.0 Problem solving

We are committed to taking your complaint/grievance seriously, confidentially and quickly. Our aim is to resolve (where possible) any problems informally, speedily and fairly by discussion, problem solving, mediation and negotiation. Problems should therefore be brought direct to the person(s) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet, and will hopefully be resolved in this way.

If the complaint does not concern a child or adult who may be vulnerable (in which case it must be responded to through the Diocesan procedures for handling allegations of abuse), and the person bringing it is not satisfied with the outcome at the problem-solving stage, s/he may then invoke this formal procedure. Please see our safeguarding policy.

Sometimes we can put things right, sometimes we can only explain ourselves and apologise. We are committed to treating your complaint seriously, confidentially and quickly.

2.0 What counts as a complaint or grievance?

A complaint is a written expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet concerning an action, or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church in the course of their duty, or in a way that brings disrepute to St Mary's, or has behaved in an unacceptable way.

When a complaint is made by someone who is deployed within the parish, whether paid, or holding unremunerated office it is usually referred to as a grievance.

Complaints and grievances against clergy are handled through the Clergy Discipline Measure. Complaints or grievances against clergy should be addressed to the archdeacon or the area bishop.

Complaints and grievances against licensed or commissioned ministers are handled through a separate Diocesan procedure. These complaints or grievances should be addressed to the incumbent of the parish.

3.0 Making a formal complaint, stage 1

A grievance should be submitted in writing to the person to whom the subject of the grievance is accountable; this will be the direct line manager of the paid employee, or the person responsible for co-ordinating the work of a volunteer. If however, the person who is

accountable is the subject of the grievance, or if you are unsure of who to submit it to, the grievance should be sent to our complaints department: complaints@stmaryslondon.com.

A complaint should be submitted in writing in English to our complaints department, this can be in the form of a letter sent to the address at the end of this document or via email to: complaints@stmaryslondon.com. There is also a form which can be obtained from our staff and sent back to our complaints email. We do not accept formal complaints via telephone or social media.

Your complaint will be logged onto our St Mary's central complaints register and you will be sent an acknowledgement letter, with a unique reference number. The letter will let you know who is going to investigate your complaint. It is our policy (in line with Diocesan discipline procedure) to pass on your complaint to a churchwarden (who is not themselves the subject of the complaint). The appointed person will be able to meet with the complainant to listen to and note the facts of the complaint/grievance and give these to the subject of the complaint. They will then meet with the subject to listen to their response on the complaint brought against them. The churchwarden/line manager will let you know the formal outcome in writing. St Mary's aims to respond to your complaint within 20 working days. However, if the issue is complicated, we will write and let you know what is happening and how long we think it will take us to reach a conclusion about your complaint.

4.0 Making a formal complaint, stage 2

If the reply given at stage 1 does not satisfactorily resolve the complaint or grievance, it should then be put in writing to a churchwarden, no later than 10 working days after the outcome of the initial complaint, who will take it forward to the PCC. The PCC will appoint a panel of three members who have not been involved in the process before.

The panel members will form a judgement and make a decision about the complaint/grievance based on all the documentation from the previous investigation at stage 1 and interviews/witnesses that they see fit to conduct and call upon. They will inform the complainant and the subject of the complaint or grievance of the outcome within a month of the complaint being made.

The decision of the panel representing the PCC will be final.

Postal Address:

Complaints Officer
St Mary's Office
255 Old Marylebone Road
London
NW1 5QT

Email Address:

complaints@stmaryslondon.com