## COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. **Introduction**

1.1. Rochester Cathedral takes complaints about its work and quality of services it provides very seriously. If people are not satisfied with our services or any other aspect of our work wherever possible, we will attempt to put right any mistakes made and use it as an opportunity to learn from those mistakes to improve the way we work in future.

1.2. Our Policy is:

- to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- to publicise our complaints policy/procedure so that people know how to make a complaint
- to be open about how we will deal with complaints
- to make sure that everyone at Rochester Cathedral knows what to do if a complaint is received
- to ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- to make sure that all complaints, wherever possible, are resolved and that relationships are repaired
• to gather information to help improve our service.
• to treat all complaints as confidential

2. Definition of a Complaint
For the purpose of this policy a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, about any aspects of our services, safeguarding, its operations, its mission and ministry.

3. Responsibility

3.1. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Cathedral’s Chapter.

4. Complaint’s procedure

4.1. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue that is being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, we expect that all reasonable efforts will have been made to resolve it swiftly if possible and appropriate (informal resolution). However, we appreciate that this isn’t always possible or appropriate and therefore have the following three step process in order to deal with all complaints raised.

4.2. Safeguarding - If a complaint relates to a safeguarding issue it should be referred to the Cathedral’s independent Safeguarding Advisor, Greg Barry – greg.barry@rochester.anglican.org

5. Stage 1 - Making a Complaint

5.1. Initially the complaint should be made in writing to the Chapter Clerk – Executive Director (CCED) at the following address:

Chapter Clerk-Executive Director
Rochester Cathedral
Garth House
The Precinct
Rochester    ME1 1SX
Or by e-mail to: chapterclerk@rochestercathedral.org

5.2. Should the complaint be about the CCED then the complaint should be directed in writing to the Dean at the above address or by email to: dean@rochestercathedral.org

5.3. Verbal complaints can also be made by phone to: 01634 843366 or in person to any member of the Cathedral’s staff either in the Cathedral or in the offices at Garth House. Complaints received by telephone, or in person, must be recorded in writing and shared with the complainant to ensure accuracy and transparency. The following must be recorded:

• the facts of the complaint
• the complainant’s name, address and telephone number
• relationship of the complainant to the Cathedral
5.4. The complainant will then be acknowledged and responded to within two working weeks (i.e. 10 working days) and a copy of this complaint’s procedure will be supplied.

5.5. Within this timescale the CCED/Dean will do the following:

- make all necessary and appropriate enquiries to establish the substance of the complaint and any attempts already made to resolve the matter informally
- form a view and decide who the best person to respond to the complaint would be
- initiate discussions or meetings with the complainant to fully understand their issue, seek clarity and be clear on what would constitute a resolution for them
- arrange any necessary mediation between the parties and any necessary, subsequent action(s).

5.6. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within fifteen working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

5.7. It is hoped that an acceptable resolution can be found, and the complaint can be concluded to the complainant’s satisfaction at this level. However, if this is not the case, the complainant must inform the CCED/Dean, within two working weeks (i.e. 10 working days) of the decision to initiate stage two, which will be progressed as below.

6. Stage Two

6.1. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by Chapter. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Dean or if not appropriate passed to the Bishop.

6.2. The request for a Chapter level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

6.3. The Dean may, himself, investigate the facts of the case or delegate to a suitable member of Chapter to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

6.4. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

6.5. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within fifteen working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

6.6. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

6.7. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chapter decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.
7. **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

7.1. The Chapter may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Dean should not also have the Dean as the person leading a Stage Two review. Should the complaint be about a safeguarding issue the Cathedral’s Safeguarding Officer will be notified and dealt with by the Cathedral’s safeguarding policies and procedures.

8. **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

8.1. Complaints received are reviewed annually by Chapter to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.