

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of the Romford Baptist Church complaints procedure is to provide a process for dealing with complaints relating to the behaviour of, or activities and decisions taken by, the church's staff, charity trustees, or volunteers. Please note that there is a separate complaints procedure for complaints about a nationally accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor. That procedure is available at:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint_against_Accredited.aspx

You can find out if someone is a nationally accredited Baptist Minister by looking them up on the directory of nationally accredited Baptist Ministers at

<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/504943/Ministries.aspx>

2. General Principles

Wherever possible the church would prefer to follow Scriptural principles of reconciling differences. However, on occasion attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate.

We will ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and do our best to see that relationships are repaired.

A formal complaints process is available for such cases.

A formal complaint is not the same as raising a concern. The latter can often be dealt with by taking the matter up with the Minister Team Leader before there is a need to raise it to the level of a formal complaint.

3. Can I make a complaint?

Yes. You do not have to be a member of the church to make a complaint. If you believe you have reasonable grounds to make a complaint and you cannot resolve the issue informally or believe it would not be appropriate to do so, you can make a complaint.

4. What kind of complaint can I make using this procedure?

You can make a complaint about the services that the church provides: Examples include but not limited to

- Toddler groups, foodbanks, baptisms, weddings and funerals.

- Poor service might include dirty facilities or the trustees failing to carry out fire extinguisher tests or other health & safety requirements.
- The behaviour of a church employee, trustee or volunteer that has affected you or someone for whom you are responsible.
- Inappropriate language or behaviour; persistent late payment of bills; sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.
- The application of church policies and procedures, or decisions made by the church, that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible.
- The church withdrawing financial support for a community group.

You should report any safeguarding concern to the church's safeguarding officer.

www.romfordbaptist.org.uk/safeguardingofficer.

5. What kind of complaints are not suitable for this procedure?

Safeguarding concerns relating to child or adult protection.

Any safeguarding concern should be reported to the church's safeguarding officer in accordance with the church's safeguarding procedure

www.romfordbaptist.org.uk/safeguardingofficer.

A complaint about the conduct or service of an accredited Baptist Minister, Baptist Minister in Training, Nationally Accredited Baptist Church Worker, or a Nationally Recognised Baptist Pastor.

This should be made following the procedure for accredited Baptist church workers:

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint against Accredited.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/520969/Complaint%20against%20Accredited.aspx)

An employment grievance.

The church has a staff grievance procedure which is set out in the employee's contract of employment.

Employment-related grievances should be dealt with in accordance with that grievance procedure.

6. How do I make a complaint and how will the church deal with it?

You should submit your complaint in writing using the church's complaints form (see flowchart in Appendix 1) to the Minister Team Leader

We will then enter a Pre Stage 1 Informal procedure where we will establish:

- Have you sort to resolve this complaint informally with the person the complaint is with?
- Have you met with the Minister Team Leader or another Pastor to try and resolve this complaint?

If the above has not resolved the issue it will be decided whether your complaint will move onto the formal Complaints procedure.

If your complaint does not move onto Stage One of the Complaints procedure you will, at this point, receive a written response.

If your complaint enters the Complaints procedure, please refer to the below and appendix 1:

Three-stage complaints procedure:

- **Stage One** is part of the formal complaints' procedure but resolution of the complaint or issues is achieved by informal conversations and correspondence rather than a formal investigation.
- **Stage Two: Formal Stage.** If your complaint moves to this stage, on receipt of your complaint the church, acting through its charity trustees, will acknowledge it within 7 days and outline the next steps. This is the stage where formal processes should be used which includes a formal investigation into the complaint.
- **Stage Three: Appeal**
If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the process or outcome of the investigation, they can appeal the decision in writing to the Church Secretary within 7 days of receipt of the outcome.

The Church Secretary will consult with the Church Officer(s) to determine if other members of the Leadership Team can review your appeal and if so confirm the timeframe for the appeal.

If the church is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, the church secretary will let you know, and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission.

An appeal should not include new evidence, unless you could not with reasonable diligence, have provided that evidence when you first complained.

If you are unhappy with how the church deals with your complaint, you may choose to contact the Charity Commission, the regulator of charities, using the following form: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-aboutcharity/>.

The more complex the complaint is, the longer it may take the church to respond. This is especially likely if the complaint relates to historic matters or several people need to be interviewed.

Please understand that if the police investigate the person who is the subject of the complaint in relation to the same or related matters, the church may not be able to begin or complete the review until the police have completed their investigations.

Please be aware that the church may decide that it is under a duty to report the matter to statutory authorities or the Charity Commission. If this is the case, the church will write to you to tell you this.

The church will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with the church's data protection policy www.romfordbaptist.org.uk/dataprotection.

However, on occasion, the church may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of the complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice, and consequently the church cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential.

You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required. Once you have submitted your complaint and while the matter is being reviewed, you should avoid communicating with the person complained about.

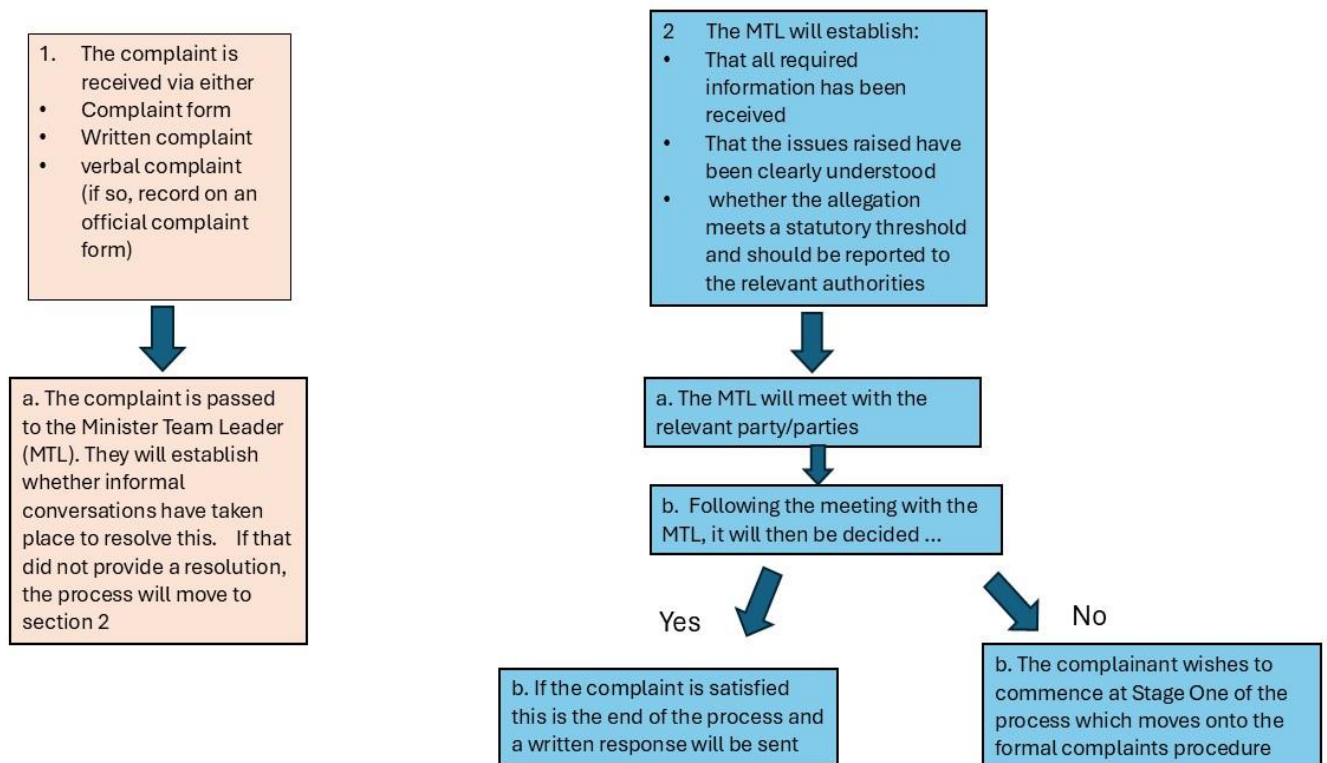
7. Petty or Vexatious Complaints

If the complaint is considered petty, it will not be considered using our formal process. This will be stated back to you. Examples of petty are such as did not like a song, preacher spoke to quietly, food at an event not being to your taste etc.

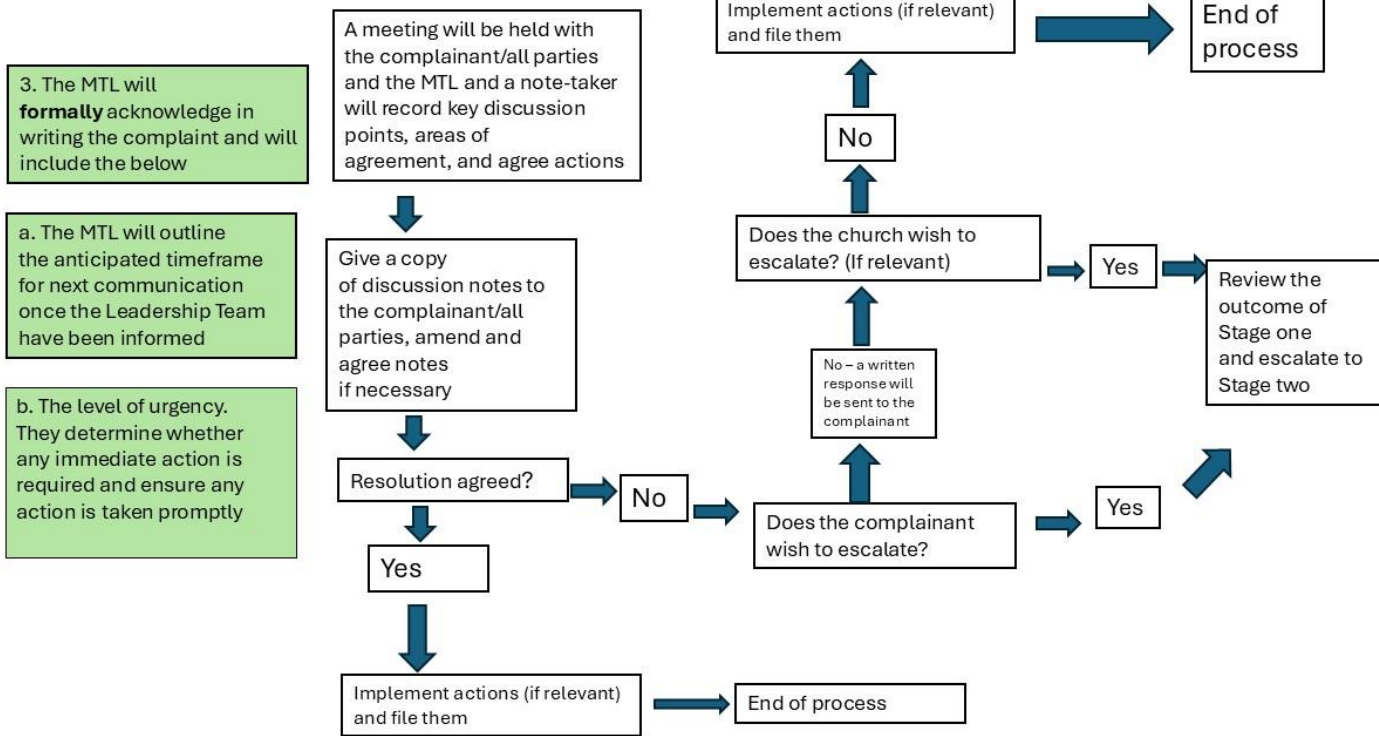
If it is concluded that your complaint is vexatious and you are a church member exercising church discipline may be considered.

If you are not a church member you may not get any further answers to any further complaints you make.

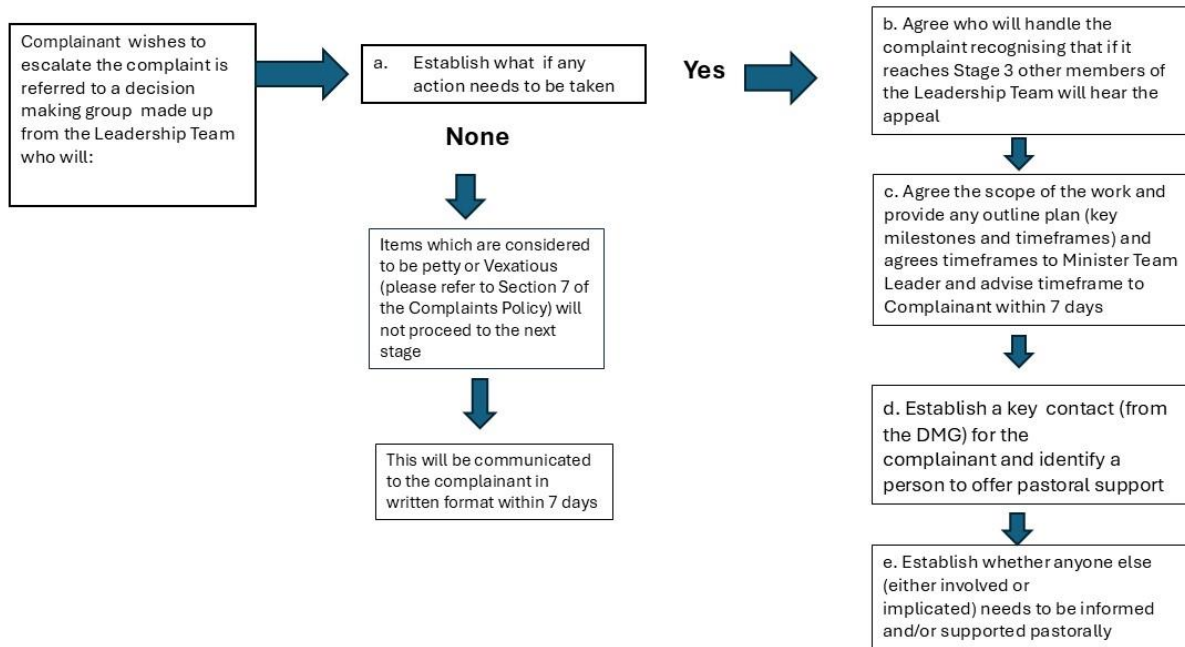
Complaints Process – on Receiving a Complaint

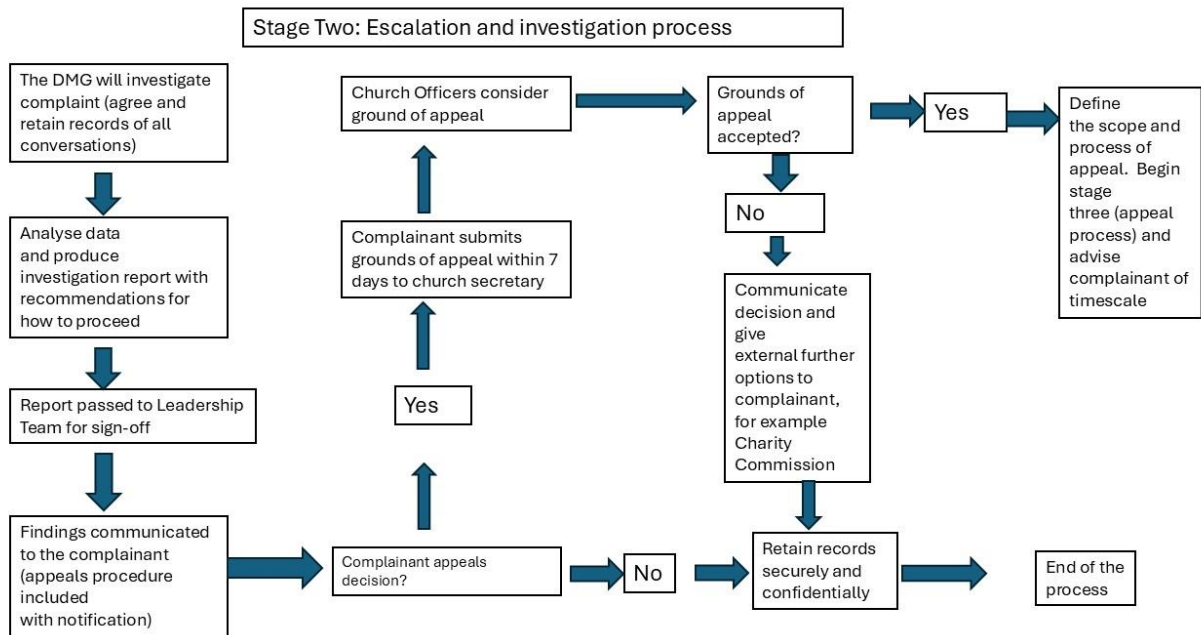


Stage 1: Informal resolution



Process for moving to Stage Two





Stage Three: Appeal Process



Investigate/consider appeal (as appropriate)



Report findings to decision-making group



Decision-making group approve appeal findings



Communicate appeal findings to complainant



Ensure complainant understands further (external) options (eg Charity Commission)



Retain records securely and confidentially



End of Process