

Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality

Complaints Policy

Purpose

The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS), hereinafter referred to as “the Centre”, is committed to providing a supportive and enriching environment for all individuals who engage with our services, programmes and community.

This Complaints Policy outlines the process for addressing concerns or complaints relating to our people (friars, lay volunteers, students, retreatants and employees), ensuring that all feedback is handled in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

Scope

This policy applies to all participants, visitors, staff and stakeholders associated with the Centre. It covers complaints related to behaviour, the quality of services, organisational policies and any other concerns that may arise.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as any allegation, expression of concern or distress by any person in CACS or associated with CACS. It also relates to dissatisfaction or concern regarding the services provided by the Centre, including but not limited to:

- Programme quality, assessment and delivery
- Safety and accessibility issues
- Policy implementation
- Facilities and resources.

Principles

The Centre will adhere to the following principles in handling allegations and complaints:

- They will be managed in a transparent manner according to our policies and processes to ensure the welfare of everyone concerned.
- The principle of justice and due process will be adhered to, ensuring fairness and balance in the carrying out of every aspect of the inquiry.

- All complaints will be treated with impartiality and without bias.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled confidentially to protect the identity of the complainant except where there is criminal liability as in the case where minors or vulnerable adults are involved.
- **Timeline:** Complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable timeline, with the first communication of a complaint acknowledged within five business days.
- **Respect:** All parties involved will be treated with respect throughout the process.

How to Make a Complaint

Individuals wishing to lodge a complaint can do so by following these steps:

Verbal Complaint

For minor issues, we encourage individuals to speak directly to either the staff member involved or the program coordinator. Many concerns can be resolved informally at this stage.

Written Complaint

If the issue is not resolved informally, or if a formal complaint is preferred, we recommend completion of the complaints template, which is on our website. Please submit this via email or post (contact details can be found at the end of this policy).

If you prefer to write to us instead of using our complaint form, please include the following:

- Your name and contact information
- A clear description of the complaint
- Relevant details, such as dates and names
- Any supporting evidence or documentation.

Complaint Handling Process

Acknowledgment

All written complaints will be acknowledged within five business days by one of the safeguarding personnel.

Investigation

One of the safeguarding personnel at the Centre will conduct a thorough investigation of the complaint. This may involve gathering information from relevant parties and reviewing documentation. Relevant outside agencies, if identified as appropriate to be involved, will be contacted.

Resolution

Following the investigation, the Centre will determine an appropriate course of action. The complainant will be informed of the outcome within thirty business days of the acknowledgment.

Follow-up

If necessary, the Centre may follow up with the complainant to ensure satisfaction with the resolution.

Appeals

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint resolution process, they may appeal the decision by submitting a written request for appeal within fourteen days of receiving the outcome. The appeal will be reviewed by a designated CACS senior staff member not involved in the original complaint.

Record Keeping

The Centre will maintain a record of all complaints received, including the nature of the complaint, the investigation process and the outcome. This information will be used to improve services and address systemic issues. All complaints are stored securely, with only the safeguarding personnel and prior having access.

Review of Policy

This complaints policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary amendments will be made to improve the complaint handling process.

Contact Information

For further inquiries regarding this policy or to lodge a complaint, please contact us at:

Email: complaints@cacs.org.uk

Post: The Safeguarding Team, Carmelite Priory, Chilwell, Boars Hill, OX1 5HB

Conclusion

The Carmelite Centre for Applied Spirituality values feedback and is dedicated to continuous improvement. We encourage all individuals to voice their concerns and help us enhance our services and community. Thank you for your engagement and support.