

KCACR Volunteer Complaint and Grievance procedure

The Kent County Association of Change Ringers (the Association) is committed to bell ringers and officers enjoying a fulfilling experience in ringing. However sometimes things may not always work out well, and a complaint, concern or problem may be raised either by, or about, a ringer, Association member or officer. This procedure lays out how any complaints or problems will be managed.

This procedure applies to matters involving the Association. If the complaint or grievance applies only to a particular tower, the matter should be managed by the tower captain, who may wish to call on the advice of a District Officer. If the matter cannot be resolved, the Tower Captain should inform the priest or church warden responsible (or whoever has overall responsibility if it is a secular tower) and ask them to help resolve the concern or problem in line with that church's policies.

Reasons for a complaint by Association members or Officers might include:

- failure to respect other members and ringers
- a breach of Health and Safety regulations or Safeguarding policies
- taking on tasks which go outside their agreed role or remit
- misuse of the Association's property, or theft
- discrimination on the grounds of disability/race/gender/age and abuse or other offensive behaviour
- acting under the influence of alcohol or drugs or other substance abuse.

In many of these cases a confidential discussion may be all that is needed to agree changes to behaviour or to a role that would enable the ringer or Officer to feel happier and to continue in their role in the Association. Occasionally there may need to be a change in behaviour by the Officer involved, who may not have realised their impact on the complainant, in which case coaching can be provided for all those in Officer roles.

However, if there is a persistent issue then other member's, Officer's or the Association's activities can be disrupted. If a resolution cannot be found, then the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) Any complaints or problems relating to an individual member will initially be discussed between the member and their Tower Captain, and they will bring the matter to the attention of a District Officer. Resolving the problem may involve continuing support, which will be offered within a set time period in which the situation can be monitored to find out if the concern has been resolved or not. In the event that the issue relates to an Officer of the Association then the discussion should be with the District Chairman or their nominated deputy.
- 2) If the matter relates to a safeguarding issue, the District Officer will inform the Association Chairman, and the designated Association Safeguarding Officer who will seek the advice of the relevant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- 3) If the matter cannot be resolved through an informal meeting, then it will be referred to the Association Chairman who will arrange a 'problem-solving

procedure', to enable a fair, consistent and equitable process for dealing with problems or concerns (either raised by, or about, an Officer or member).

If the procedure reaches this stage, it is likely that relationships will have broken down to the point where resolution is unlikely, and the Association will need to consider asking the Officer to stand down or the member to leave.

- 4) A meeting will be convened by the Association Chairman as soon as is practicable. Both the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint may each be accompanied by one person, whose role is to support but not to speak for either person. The grievance or complaint will be circulated in written form beforehand to those attending, together with any relevant information. The aim of the meeting is to identify the problem and agree a solution, which can then be monitored. A written agreed record will be kept.
- 5) If the matter cannot be resolved by agreement, the Association Chairman will bring the issue to the attention of the Association Committee, whose decision will be final.

Mediation

Mediation involving an external third party may be offered as one solution, as a confidential process which is generally completed through discussions between the parties within one day.

The legal position of volunteers

Ringers and Association Officers as volunteers are not covered by employment law and therefore do not have formal rights to redress in an Employment Tribunal. Volunteers do not have the right to insist the Association follows proper investigative procedures when things go wrong. They do not have the right to appeal a decision made by the Association.

Adopted 27th February 2021
For review annually