

Hillsong Complaints Policy and Procedure



Updated: 17 November 2020

Hillsong Church London (“Hillsong”) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Hillsong’s policy is:

- to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use
- to publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact Hillsong to make a complaint
- to make sure everyone at Hillsong knows what to do if a complaint is received
- to make sure that complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way, and that confidentiality is maintained where appropriate
- to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- to appropriately support all parties through the process, providing access to support and psychological services where required (see Annex A)
- to gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Hillsong’s processes, service, staff or volunteers.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to Hillsong’s Grievance Procedures.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Complaints Handling Procedure

Complaints can be made in the following ways:

1. Face to face: if you are dealing with a member of staff or volunteer and you wish to complain, then please speak to them directly. It may be possible to resolve the issue immediately. However, if that is not possible, then he/she will record the details of your complaint and will send it through to Hillsong’s Legal Department.
2. You can call the Hillsong office on 0207 384 9200 and your complaint will be documented.
3. You can email the Legal Department at legal@hillsong.co.uk

In all instances where a complaint is made using the above means, we will contact you within 72 hours of receiving the complaint. If you provide us with a telephone number and/or email address we will contact you by either of those means to discuss the matter further and to officially record all necessary details. If the issue is complex and an investigation is required, we will do the following:

The person who receives a complaint will:

- Record full details of the complaint
- Record the complaint in our Complaints Register
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Hillsong
- Explain the complaints procedure
- Contact you again within one (1) month of receiving the complaint to advise you of our findings or to give you an update on progress
- Continue to keep you informed every 15 working days until the matter is resolved to your satisfaction or until all appropriate steps (in Hillsong's reasonable opinion) to resolve the matter have been taken.

Resolving Complaints

Hillsong will address each complaint in a sensitive, fair, transparent, equitable, professional and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process. We will not, however, tolerate any abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour towards any of our staff or volunteers, and may decline to investigate a complaint further in such circumstances.

Stage 1

In many cases a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Legal Department within five working days.

On receiving the complaint, if not already resolved, an appropriate person will be delegated to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within one (1) month. 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.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and (subject to the terms of Hillsong's Privacy Policy) any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage 2

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved in Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Executive level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the General Manager. The request for Executive 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.

The General Manager may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person

who dealt with the complaint in Stage 1. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within one (1) month. 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. 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. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Executive decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

As Hillsong is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>.

Review of this Policy and Complaints Received

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every 24 months and all safeguarding complaints, or other serious complaints received will be brought before the Board for review.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The procedure may be varied for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

Contacts

Hillsong Church London

0207 384 9200

Data Protection Officer

dataprotection@hillsong.co.uk

Hillsong Legal Department

legal@hillsong.co.uk

ANNEX A: Access to Support and Psychological Services

Hillsong recognises that it is a public organisation, and that as an organisation it interacts with volunteers, church members and the wider public community. Hillsong has in place a Complaints Policy and Procedure, to ensure that there is an opportunity for this wider group of people to report any dissatisfaction, and that there is a process to make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.

Hillsong also recognises that as a people focused organisation, an essential part of this Complaints Policy and Procedure is to ensure there is a way for any parties involved in a complaint or similar issue, to be appropriately supported through this process, and have access to care that is needed, including access to psychological services.

This process focuses on any parties involved in a complaint or incident, and the ability of these individuals to access health services, including brought-in psychological services and reviews from External Advisors, sponsored by Hillsong. This access will be limited to where the need is deemed to be linked to actions of Hillsong UK.

Process of Access to Psychological Services

Key roles in process:

Role	Current person(s) in role
Hillsong UK Pastoral Staff	Location Pastor, Other Pastors,
Hillsong UK General Manager (“GM”)	Adam Spies
Wellbeing Department Head (“Wellbeing”)	Matt Whittaker
HR Legal Counsel (“Legal”)	Katie Newton
External Health and Wellbeing Advisor (“External Advisor”)	Ana Loback

Goal of process:

To describe clearly to any parties to a matter brought via Hillsong UK complaint procedure, that they may have access to psychological support, and to describe the process if a party is referred for support services.

Process:

Step 1: Referral

Referral to the psychological services that Hillsong UK has access to will happen in one of the following circumstances:

Circumstance	Referring Party	Description
1. As a result of complaint procedure	GM / Legal	As part of complaints procedure, any external party involved in the issue, or bringing the complaint, may be referred. This applies to cases in “Stage 2” of the complaints procedure, or any serious issue as defined by complaints policy.
2. Significant pastoral matter	Pastoral Staff	Pastoral staff may become aware of significant pastoral issue. This may be cause for referral.
3. Volunteer complaint / grievance	GM / Legal	Where there is a complaint received via the volunteer grievance process, it may result in referral (i.e. of volunteers)

A referral consists of the presentation of all relevant information to the External Advisor. This information should include:

- Details of individual, their current role within Hillsong, if any
- Description of current issue identified, or complaint raised
- An assessment of situation by pastoral staff who is part of the situation. If there is no one, an pastoral staff member will be appointed
- Details of action taken so far, including who has been main contact for person being referred
- Initial plan to maintain regular contact / catch ups with individual

Step 2: Initial assessment and communication

The referral to the External Advisor and the provision of the information above will result in an initial assessment by the External Advisor.

The intended outcome of this referral is the development of a support plan.

At the time of referral, if they are not already aware, the following parties will be informed of the referral:

- Pastor / Leader responsible for areas relevant to church
- GM
- Legal

The responsibility for informing the parties falls to GM.

An initial assessment may involve direct contact between the individual involved and the External Advisor.

Step 3: Support Plan

An initial assessment will be made by the External Advisor at the time of referral. This assessment may not necessarily mean immediate access to psychological services, but is intended to produce a support plan that will result in the relevant individuals being cared for, with a recovery plan in place.

The proposed support plan will be developed by:

- External Advisor
- Healthcare professional (where appropriate)
- Pastoral Employee
- Wellbeing
- Individual

Developing a support plan involves discussion, negotiation, decision-making, and review.

The support plan will include the following items:

- Recommendation for action from External Advisor
- Referral details to psychological services (if part of recommended action)
- Details on the individual's wellbeing needs and the related actions and goals
- Appointed parties to maintain contact with individual, to provide support and record feedback on progress
- Any action required to continue / return individual to church involvement and / or volunteering
- Timelines of expected / desired progress and reports
- Which parties will be kept up to date on progress
- Details of any other legal matters relevant to situation

If the External Advisor does recommend the provision of psychological services, the support plan will be updated to include:

- Recommended treatment plan by healthcare professional
- Agreed funding from Hillsong UK
- Milestones to receive report from healthcare professional (strictly only on recommended treatment, never on content of treatment / therapy).

The support plan will include details on responsible parties, however it is the responsibility of GM and Legal (as responsible parties for the complaint policy) to ensure the plans are in place.

The support plan will also attempt to describe how the matter will be deemed to be concluded / resolved and what milestones / objectives are required to see that.

ANNEX B: Access to Support and Psychological Services - Process

