

# Living Faith Church Formal Complaints Process



## A formal complaint is submitted

- A complaint may be submitted to the leadership team at any time. The intent of this document is to outline a process for handling formal and serious complaints.
- Each complaint is unique and needs to be handled with grace and wisdom. If the Church Council (CC) agrees by consensus, this process may be varied.
- A complaint may instead be submitted directly to
  - [Uniting Church](#)
  - [Church of Christ](#)
  - [Victoria Police](#)
- Where a serious complaint is against the CC, going directly to the UCA or CoC is recommended.
- Criminal conduct that relates to children or vulnerable adults must be reported to the police, as per the LFC Safe Church Policy. No exemption applies to this requirement.

2

## An Advocate is appointed

7 days

Time requirement: 7 days

- An advocate will be appointed to represent and support the complainant for the duration of this process. This will commonly be a member of the leadership team or Safe Church Operating Team.
- The Advocate will contact the Complainant and work with them to clarify the complaint. This will include;
  - Defining the core, and severity, of the complaint
  - Understanding the level of involvement desired by the Complainant
  - Helping the Complainant to understand the process, timeline, and reporting needs.
  - Identifying the likely range of solutions available.
- Where children or vulnerable adults are involved,
  - Safe Church operating procedure must be adhered to,
  - A Safe Church Contact Person should be brought into the process.
- The Advocate will arrange for the complaint to be added to the Church Council agenda. That date must be within six weeks of meeting with the Complainant.

3

The complaint is presented to the Council

6 weeks

Time requirement: 6 weeks

The Church Council will discuss the complaint and decide on any actions required.

- The Advocate is expected to advocate for and be an ally of the complainant.
  - The Advocate will meet with the Complainant after the meeting to explain any action taken and the reasoning given.
- The Complainant,
  - May be present if they wish, together with a support member of their choosing.
  - May contribute directly to the discussion if they wish.
  - May be asked for further information.
- The Church Council will make an initial determination. This may include,
  - Changes to policy or processes.
  - Choosing not to progress the complaint further.
  - Assign the complaint to a subcommittee or Ministry Team.

### Reporting guidelines

- Resolving a complaint requires a minimum minuted decision of, the nature of the complaint, who was involved, the date, and the response.
- A formal complaint discussed by Church Council will be minuted.
- Confidentiality will be upheld except, where doing so will create further harm.
- Church Council may decide to call a special congregational meeting, if a complaint is serious, urgent, and cannot be appropriately resolved internally.
- Persistent trends and themes should be reported to the congregation.
- Non-disclosure agreements will not be undertaken under any circumstances and will be considered a breach of membership and or contract.
- Changes to policy and processes will be communicated to the congregation where appropriate.