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## ***Policy Acceptance***

We, the undersigned charity trustees of Assemble Church, hereby affirm our collective acknowledgment and consent to the policy document presented herein. Having carefully reviewed its contents, we endorse and approve the policies outlined within, recognising their importance in guiding our organisation's actions and upholding our commitment to our mission. This unified agreement signifies our dedication to adhering to the principles and guidelines set forth in this policy, ensuring transparency, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of our charitable endeavours.

## ***Key Individuals***

Any mentions or references within this charitable policy document to specific roles, should be cross-referenced with the most up-to-date information available in the 'ACP00-Policies-Procedures-Key-Individuals-People-Register'. This comprehensive register is diligently maintained to ensure accurate identification of the current relevant individuals holding such roles within our organisation. It is essential to consult this register for the latest details on key personnel to maintain alignment with our governance and operational practices.

## ***1.Introduction***

We recognise that our church members and all those who visit our church or any of our church activities have the right to expect high quality services. However, we also appreciate that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect.

Your continued goodwill is greatly valued, and we expect to resolve any day to day difficulties or complaints informally and as quickly as possible. In the first instance we would ask you to raise any complaint directly with the church member concerned. If their response does not meet expected standards, then you have the right to complain.

## ***2.Scope***

**2.1** A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church.

The complaint could be about:

- conduct of our leadership and/or some or all members of our church
- the standard or sort of service we provide
- discrimination
- provision of inaccurate information
- poor administration, including delays in responding to enquiries



We will consider any complaint using the procedures set out below.

### ***3.Purpose***

- To protect the interests of all church users and visitors
- To improve the quality of services we provide by responding to the views and needs of people affected
- To enable church users and visitors to propose improvements to our ways of working
- To protect our minister(s) and church members
- To provide a means of monitoring our performance

The leadership and Trustees should be familiar with the process. Complaints against the minister(s) should be passed to the Trustees.

### ***4.Safeguarding***

If a complaint or grievance relates to or includes an allegation that a child or adult who may be vulnerable has been harmed or is at risk of harm, it must be responded to through the Safeguarding Policy for handling allegations of abuse.

### ***5.Complaint Procedure***

#### **5.1 Informal Procedure**

When responding to complaints and grievances, the aim is always to enable them to be resolved informally, speedily, and fairly by mutual discussion.

- The person making the complaint should in the first instance speak to the person(s) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet, which will hopefully be resolved in this way.

- A note should be prepared at the end of the discussion, summarising the complaint, the date, who was involved, and the agreed-upon outcome, and passed to a member of the Leadership Team to ensure lessons are learned by the church.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, the complaint should move to the Formal Procedure.

### 5.2 Formal Procedure

- The complaint should be made in writing (or by email), marked “confidential”, to the Lead Pastor, who will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing (or by email) within ten working days. If the complaint is about the Incumbent, the complaint should be addressed to the Trustees.
- The receiver of the complaint (the Trustees or the Lead Pastor) will investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint and will communicate the results of the investigation to the complainant within a reasonable time – normally within 20 working days of the complaint being received. If the investigation includes a meeting with the complainant, they may be accompanied or supported by a friend, but not a legal representative.
- If the complaint is found to be justified, the investigator will agree on any necessary further action with the complainant.
- At this time a note should be prepared summarising the complaint, the date, who was involved, and the agreed-upon outcome, and passed to a member of the Leadership Team to ensure lessons are learned by the church.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, they should move to an Appeal stage.

### 5.3 Appeal

- The complainant will have the right, if dissatisfied with the results of 4.2, to put their case, in writing (or by email), to an Appeal Panel of no less than three members of the Senior Leadership Team, which will include at least one Trustee. The written appeal case should be addressed to the Trustees.



- The Appeal Panel shall be coordinated by a nominated Chair, with sufficient time given to ensure an appropriate location is found and booked, invitations are sent out etc.
- If the appeal is found to be justified, the Appeal Panel will agree on any necessary further action with the complainant.
- The Appeal Panel response will be confirmed in writing (or by email) within ten days of the meeting held to hear it.
- At this time a note should be prepared summarising the complaint, the date, who was involved, and the agreed-upon outcome, and passed to a member of the Leadership Team to ensure lessons are learned by the church.
- The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and no further appeal is possible.

## ***6.Initial Contact***

If you have a complaint, contact:

Samantha O’Connell – Lead Pastor – Assemble Church  
Assemble Church  
Northgate Business Centre  
38-40 Northgate  
Newark Upon Trent  
Nottinghamshire  
NG24 1EZ  
[samantha@assemblechurch.com](mailto:samantha@assemblechurch.com)

## ***7.Escalation***

Where we have exhausted all avenues and the complainant is still dissatisfied, they may contact the Charity Commission as follows:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>