

# **Essex Association of Change Ringers Complaints Policy**

---

Whilst we make every effort to meet peoples' expectations, circumstances may arise where an individual has a concern and wishes to bring this to our attention. We will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, in everyone's best interests.

For very serious concerns, such as individual's safety being placed at immediate risk, take such action as is appropriate. For example, by calling the emergency services.

## **INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Anyone who has a concern should initially raise this with an association officer at the time, as this enables us to respond and deal with an issue quickly.

We will seek to resolve this and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have, ideally to their satisfaction. If unable to, make a note of:

- The complainant's name and contact details, unless they are unwilling to provide these.
- The nature of their concern and anything that they wish to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including when, where any action was taken, and the details of others who were present/involved.

Advise the complainant that their concern will be passed to the principal officers.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINTS**

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, they should be provided with the email address of the Association Secretary and/or our registered address, as they wish. Correspondence should be marked private and confidential. They should be provided with a copy of this policy by post or email.

To help resolve the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible, the individual making the complaint should do so as soon as possible and should include in it:

- Name, organisation (if relevant), address, telephone number and email.



*The Essex Association of Change Ringers*

Founded 1879

Charity Registration Number 292250  
www.eacr.org.uk



- If they do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will of course respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is they felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What they believe should be done to address their concern.

Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 calendar days. The complaint will be considered by the principal officers who will decide if an investigation is required, and how any investigation will be conducted including the level of independence necessary. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, the Association Secretary will contact the person complaining to request this. If the complaint concerns one of the principal officers then the complaint should be sent to any other trustee who will take the necessary steps.

A response will be sent within 14 calendar days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 14 calendar days advising when we estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain our findings and what action we will be taking/have taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may appeal the decision, by writing to the Association Master, the contact details of whom will be included in our response. Appeals must be submitted within 28 calendar days of our response to the complaint. If the complaint concerns the Association Master then the complaint should be sent to any other trustee who will take the necessary steps.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

Appeals will be considered by someone not connected to the initial complaint response.

A decision will be notified within 28 calendar days and will be final.



The Essex Association of Change Ringers

Founded 1879 Charity Registration Number 292250  
www.eacr.org.uk



## **WIDER ACTION**

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, we will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action and/or statutory reporting to the Charity Commission, H&SW Executive, other regulator, or the Police.

Consideration will also to be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked in to. However, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and their contact details. This will also allow us to advise them of the outcome.

## **VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

Vexatious complaints will be managed in line with best practice as set out by the Charity Commission.

## **POTENTIAL COMPENSATION CLAIMS**

If a complaint may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal issue, our insurers are to be notified.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The complaint will be treated as confidential and any communication on this issue, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.



*The Essex Association of Change Ringers*

Founded 1879

Charity Registration Number 292250  
www.eacr.org.uk



## AVAILABILITY

This policy is to be made publicly available and given to anyone who advises that they wish to submit a complaint.



*The Essex Association of Change Ringers*

Founded 1879 Charity Registration Number 292250  
[www.eacr.org.uk](http://www.eacr.org.uk)



## VERSION CONTROL - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1	Management Committee	01 Feb 2025		3 years



The Essex Association of Change Ringers

Founded 1879

Charity Registration Number 292250  
www.eacr.org.uk

