

Finchley Progressive Synagogue
Complaints Policy and Procedure



Purpose

This procedure relates to the following categories of complaints:

- a) Complaints from Synagogue members;
- b) Complaints from the general public or ex-members;
- c) Complaints from non-employees in relation to FPS policies or procedures;
- d) Complaints related to the conduct of FPS Council.

It may not apply to the following:

- a) Complaints directed from one member to another;
- b) Complaints or grievances from staff or ex-employees;
- c) Complaints which make serious allegations against an FPS employee(s) (Complaints which make serious allegations against a Synagogue employee(s) should be immediately referred to the FPS staff disciplinary or capability procedure as appropriate.)
- d) Complaints related to individual or collective employee disputes;
- e) Collective community or public complaints, e.g. petitions or campaigns.

Principles

1. FPS is opposed to discrimination on the basis of any of the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
2. FPS strives to be an inclusive, accountable and transparent organisation. We are committed to being a learning organisation and welcome feedback. We want to deal with complaints fairly and openly and with that in mind we want to make it as easy as possible to make a complaint.
3. We recognise that complaints raise issues of serious concern, which we seek to address effectively within an appropriate timescale, with consideration and observing confidentiality at all times. All stages of the complaints procedure will be recorded. Brief written notes will be kept of all discussions, interviews, meetings, and hearings. A record of complaints will be maintained securely in the office. Complaints will be reviewed annually by Council.
4. The procedure specifically excludes any complaint made that could relate to the safeguarding of a child or vulnerable adult. Any such complaint should be made to one of the FPS Designated Safeguarding Leads, Paula Kinchin Smith, and Rabbi Rebecca Birk, and should be addressed under the FPS safeguarding policy.
5. Any complaint relating to racism will be dealt with according to the Macpherson principles, i.e. all complaints about incidents of racism should initially be recorded and investigated as such, when they are perceived by the complainant or someone else as acts of racism. A complaint related to security, or a serious antisemitic matter may be referred to CST.

6. Resolution of a complaint could, depending on context and circumstances, require one or more of the following remedies:

- Further discussions between the two (or more) parties to support them in resolving their differences;
- An apology, expressed individually or collectively;
- An explanation of what happened and why decisions were made as they were;
- An acknowledgement of how matters could have been handled differently, individually, or collectively;
- An assurance that previous mistakes will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that will be taken to make the changes needed so that a similar occurrence will not be repeated;
- A commitment to make changes to policies and processes to enable the prevention of a similar occurrence;
- Recommendations for further action/improvement.

7. This procedure will be reviewed annually by FPS Council.

Procedure

Our complaints procedure has three stages, and it is expected that complainants will follow this procedure, as this will mean a more timely and effective resolution.

Where it is possible, we would strongly encourage individuals to raise their concerns immediately and directly and informally in order to facilitate a prompt, effective, and lasting resolution before having recourse to the complaint's procedure. We would hope that most concerns can be resolved informally but recognise that this might not always be possible.

Stage 1

1. Where the complainant has been unable to resolve their complaint informally, the complainant should set out their complaint in writing to the Chair.
2. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and fully respond to the complaint within twenty working days. The Chair will normally meet with the complainant and other appropriate parties to determine an appropriate response with the aim of resolving the complaint if possible. Meetings will be recorded, and formal notes taken.
3. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from Stage 1, they should proceed to appeal against the decision under Stage 2.

Stage 2 Appeal

1. Where it has not been possible to resolve the complaint at Stage 1, the complainant should write to the Synagogue President, Paul Silver-Myer - paulsm@fps.org (Contact details can be found on the FPS website) within twenty working days of the completion of the Stage 1 process. The President will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five working days and aims to respond to the complaint within twenty working days.
2. The President will convene within 15 working days a Complaints Panel of three members of Council not previously been involved in the complaint. If further time is needed by either side, a new deadline for response will be communicated to the complainant.
3. The Panel will hear the appeal case made by the complainant in full. The Synagogue respondent will be able to respond to the complainant's case. Both parties will be able to ask questions and call witnesses.
4. In determining the outcome of the Hearing the Panel may:
 - dismiss the appeal in whole or in part;
 - uphold the appeal in whole or in part;
 - propose further action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - make proposals to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur;
 - recommend appropriate internal management action.
5. An appeal outcome letter setting out the Panel's decision will follow within 5 working days. The decision of the Complaints Panel will be final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.
6. A record of the complaint, and investigation and resolutions agreed will be kept securely in the office.

Delegation and Substitution

1. Any person with functions under this policy may nominate an appropriate Executive Officer or Council member to exercise those functions (either generally or specifically), provided that other has had no involvement in either the consideration of the complaint or its substance and that the Chair and President may only delegate their functions to a member of Council.
2. The subject of a complaint will not be able to consider that complaint at Stages 1 or 2. In the event of a complaint concerning the Chair, the Vice-Chair will consider it at Stage 2. In the event of a complaint concerning President, the Vice-Chair will convene the Complaints Panel. In case of necessity, the Honorary Secretary will act in place of the Chair, President or Vice-Chair.

Review of policy

Council will review the terms and operation of this policy annually.

Publication of policy

This policy and the complaints form will be made publicly available on the FPS website and in hard copy on physical noticeboards in the synagogue building.

Signed: Beverley Kafka

Position: Chair

Date: May 10th, 2022

Position: Chair

Reviewed: May 2023

Reviewed: November 2024

Reviewed: May 2026

Complaints Form

Name:

Address and phone number:

Date:

Please give full details of your complaint and whether you have spoken to anybody in the Synagogue about it. If the complaint relates to a specific individual have you spoken to them?

What actions and/or outcome would you like at this stage?