



British Province of Carmelites

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Why we have this policy

The British Province of Carmelites (including The Carmelite Charitable Trust & The Friars Aylesford) welcomes feedback. We see complaints as a chance to listen, learn, improve and, where possible, put things right.

We want our complaints process to:

- Provide a fair, clear and accessible complaints procedure for anyone who wishes to raise a complaint
- Make sure people know how to contact us to share feedback or make a complaint
- Make sure everyone in the British Province of Carmelites, and those who work for it or for The Friars Aylesford understands what to do when a complaint is received
- Make sure complaints are looked into fairly, respectfully and without delay
- Work towards resolving complaints wherever possible and rebuilding trust and relationships
- Learn from feedback so we can continue to strengthen what we do

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when someone is unhappy with any part of the work or ministry of the British Province of Carmelites. This could relate to administration, personnel (Friars, Third Order, Staff or Volunteers), or ministry.

An individual may make a complaint if they feel the British Province of Carmelites has:

- Not provided their ministry to the expected standard, made an error in how it was delivered, or delivered it in a way that feels unfair
- Not acted appropriately.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the appropriate Staff Grievance Policy.



Concern or complaint?

Sometimes a concern can be sorted out quickly before it becomes a formal complaint. We encourage people to raise concerns early so we can respond helpfully and try to resolve the issue.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of your engagement with the British Province of Carmelites, please speak to a member of the Province, or member of staff as soon as possible so we can understand your concern and work with you to put things right.

If you remain unhappy with the response to your concern, or you wish to make a formal complaint, please follow the procedure below.

This policy applies to complaints about the administration, people (Friars, Third Order, staff or volunteers), systems, works or ministries of the British Province of Carmelites. If your complaint is about another organisation working with the Province, we will help direct you to the right place.

This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns. These will be managed under our Safeguarding Policy. However, this policy does cover complaints about how a safeguarding concern was responded to.

Confidentiality

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

How to make a complaint

We aim to make it easy for you to contact us. You can make a complaint by writing to us at

The Carmelite Provincial Office, The Friars, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BX.

Once we receive your complaint, we will contact you within 2 working days. If you give us a phone number or email address, we will use it to confirm the details. Where possible, we will try to resolve the matter quickly. If it needs a fuller review, we will follow the steps below.

When we receive your complaint, we will:

- Record full details of your complaint
- Record the complaint in our Complaints Register



- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the British Province of Carmelites e.g., Parishioner, Retreatant, etc.
- Take all necessary steps to investigate the matter
- Contact you again within 15 working days of receiving the complaint to advise you of our findings or to give you an update on progress
- Continue to keep you informed until the matter is resolved to your satisfaction or until all appropriate steps (in the British Province of Carmelites' reasonable opinion) to resolve the matter have been taken
- The Prior Provincial and Council of the British Province of Carmelites will oversee complaints and, where needed, involve the relevant board of Trustees if the matter is especially serious or complex.

How we will respond

We are committed to responding to complaints in a fair, respectful, open and timely way.

We believe everyone has the right to share their views about us and our ministry, and that these views should be listened to carefully and reviewed when needed.

There are three stages to the British Province of Carmelites' complaints procedure:

- Stage 1 – Investigation
- Stage 2 – Review
- Stage 3 – External support

Stage 1 – Investigation

Many complaints can be resolved by the person responsible for the area concerned, e.g. the parish, Aylesford, St Jude's Shrine, the Third Order etc. They should try to resolve the issue promptly where possible. Whether or not it is resolved, the details must be passed to the Prior Provincial and Council within five working days.

If the complaint has not been resolved, the Prior Provincial will appoint a suitable person to investigate it and take any needed action. If the complaint is about a specific person, they will be told and given the chance to respond.

The person handling the complaint should acknowledge it within five working days. They should explain who is dealing with it and when a reply can be expected. A copy of this procedure should also be included.



We aim to send a full reply within 15 working days. If this is not possible, for example because the investigation is still ongoing, we will send an update and explain when a full response will be provided.

The final reply will explain how the complaint was investigated, what was concluded, and any action taken.

Stage 2 – Review

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the relevant Board of Trustees (The Carmelite Charitable Trust/The Friars Aylesford).

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Trustees. The request for a Trustee review should be acknowledged within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when a reply can be expected.

The Trustees may review the case themselves or delegate this to an appropriate person within the British Province of Carmelites or employee to do so. This may involve reviewing records and speaking with the person who handled Stage 1. That person should be kept updated on progress.

If the complaint is about a specific person, they should be informed and given another opportunity to respond. We aim to send a full reply within one month. If this is not possible, we will provide an update and explain when a full response will be given.

The reply will explain how the complaint was reviewed, what was concluded, and any action taken. The decision at this stage is final unless the Board decides that external support is needed.

External Assistance

If both stages have been completed and the issue is still not resolved, the British Province of Carmelites may seek external support. This would usually only happen in serious cases or where there is a conflict of interest.

Withdrawal of the Complaint

A complainant can withdraw their complaint at any time by writing to the person handling it. The complaint will usually then be closed, unless stopping the process could cause harm to a person or to the organisation.

Confidentiality and Whistleblowing

To investigate a complaint fully, we usually need the complainant's name and contact details. In some cases, however, a person may wish to remain anonymous.



We will do our best to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential if requested, but we cannot guarantee this. In some situations, we may have a legal duty to share this information, for example with:

- The police, fraud prevention agencies, or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- The courts (court proceedings)
- Relevant authorities where there are safeguarding concerns
- Other third parties, e.g., Regulators

Data Protection

To deal with a complaint, the British Province of Carmelites will keep personal information provided by the complainant and by others involved. This information will be stored securely and used only for handling the complaint. The complainant's identity will only be shared with people who need to consider the matter.

However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation is applied, or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

How to Contact the Regulators

If the British Province of Carmelites has completed both stages and the complainant is still dissatisfied, there is no further internal appeal. They may, however, contact one of the organisations below for advice.

- A solicitor - [Home | The Law Society](#)
- Citizens Advice Bureau - [Citizens Advice](#)
- The Charity Commission - <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

This should be done within one month of receiving the outcome from the appeal.

Review of this Policy and Complaints Received

This policy will be reviewed by the Prior Provincial and Council of the British Province of Carmelites, the Trustees of The Carmelite Charitable Trust and the Trustees of The Friars Aylesford every 3 years. Complaints received, along with compliments, will be shared with them at regular meetings so that learning can be identified and services within the British Province of Carmelites can continue to improve.



Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The British Province of Carmelites may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

Approved by the British Province of Carmelites' Trustees (CCT) on 29th June 2026

Signed of behalf of the CCT Trustees
Prior Provincial

Next review June 2027