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**Introduction:**

Kehillah North London's Concerns and Complaints procedure is aimed:

- to support people who feel they have had negative experiences at Kehillah North London that need to be acknowledged, rectified and learned from
- to support the trustees and staff of the synagogue to deal with concerns and complaints fairly and transparently.

The procedure offers two pathways for this that can be used separately or successively:

- to give feedback and raise concerns in a more informal way;
- or make a formal complaint.

Anyone who comes into our community can give us feedback or raise an issue; and anyone can make a formal complaint.

It's important to note that of course, people can mention things that haven't worked out well at any time, and often things can be resolved completely informally. Our 'concern' and 'complain' pathways are here, rather, to provide clear channels for potential change and redress when people have negative experiences or things aren't right.

You can find out more in our 'Supporting Information' section about why we have introduced these two channels for talking about things that have gone wrong. We hope these mechanisms will help us contribute towards living out our commitment to social justice in our community and beyond.

**2. Accessibility.**

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If this procedure and additional information is not easy to understand or read for any reason, please contact Kehillah by phone (020 3951 8113) or email: [info@kehillah.org.uk](mailto:info@kehillah.org.uk). A Kehillah member can get in touch to provide a verbal or easy-read version of the policy, as required.

### **3. KNL's concerns and complaints procedure.**

We have two procedure pathways to deal with things that have gone wrong or where you have had a bad experience that you want to raise with Kehillah North London.

You can:

- give feedback and raise a concern;
- or make a formal complaint.

You can decide which of these two ways feels better for you.

You can give feedback and raise a concern as a first step, and then subsequently make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

You can also make an official complaint immediately. You do not have to raise a concern or give feedback first. It is your choice.

#### **Giving feedback and raising a concern**

- If you have had a negative experience at Kehillah North London, you are invited to give feedback or raise a concern, if you prefer a less formal route to address and resolve the problem.

The aim of this informal route is

- For you to make sure your concern is heard by someone within the organisation
- For you to help us consider ways in which we could make changes and respond
- These are the ways you can get in touch with us.
  - Speaking to or contacting a member of the KNL Trustee board
  - Speaking to or contacting our Rabbi, Leah Jordan
  - *Using our 'feedback' box (which can be found on our website: XXXX)*
- A member of the KNL Trustee board or the Rabbi will listen to what you have to say.
  - They may be able to listen to you immediately, or will contact you with a time to have a conversation.
  - They will talk with you about what you feel went wrong, and discuss with you ways to remedy it, including your own suggestions.

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- They will make a note for the wider Trustee board that a concern has been raised.
  - They may make brief written notes to share your thoughts with Trustees and staff.
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- As an informal route, this may have no set timeframe but we will work on the basis of trying to discuss and resolve the issue in a timely way, which involves setting expectations with the trustee or Rabbi about when they will get back to you. The trustee(s) or Rabbi will discuss with you what remedies have been suggested, to see if you feel satisfied with the approach.
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- This is a new approach, and we will ask you for feedback on it, which will be your choice.

### **How to make a complaint**

You can make a complaint at any time:

- Immediately, when you have had a negative experience at Kehillah North London
- If you are unhappy with the response to your raising a concern or giving feedback

Here is how to contact us to make a formal complaint, at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 (see below)

- By phone on 0203 951 8113. You may need to leave your name, telephone number and let us know you have a complaint, as we are a small organisation so the telephone may not be answered.
- By email on [info@kehillah.org.uk](mailto:info@kehillah.org.uk). Let us know you are making a complaint - by putting 'complaint' in the email title or making it clear in the email.
- By letter or written statement: KNL, 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9JQ. Let us know you are making a complaint - by putting 'complaint' in the title or making it clear in the letter.

The person who receives your complaint will:

- Record full details of your complaint in writing, if you have not sent an email or letter.
- Record the complaint in our Complaints Register (see 'Supporting Information')
- Contact you with 3 working days of receiving the complaint, providing you with a summary of your complaint and asking if you wish to make any amendments.

The Chair of KNL's Management Committee, or someone they delegate, will handle all complaints and if necessary will escalate these to the Management Committee depending on the complexity or seriousness of the issue.

### **Complaint: first stage**

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A complaint should be passed by the physical recipient to the KNL Chair, and acknowledged by the Chair within five working days of receipt.

- a. The Chair is the usual person to oversee the process, or another trustee can oversee the process with agreement. In case of absence, KNL Trustees can select a delegate from within the Trustee committee to oversee the process below.
  - b. If the complaint is about the Chair, the other Trustees should select a delegate from within the Trustee committee to oversee the process set out below.
2. The person who made the complaint should receive an acknowledgement saying who is dealing with the complaint and when they can expect a reply.
  - a. A copy of this procedure should be attached.
  - b. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply and resolution within 15 working days of receipt.
3. If there is a person or people who are implicated in the problem or behaviour alleged in the complaint, the Chair will bring the complaint to that person or people's attention. The Chair will work to address the area swiftly with that person.
4. If the complaint relates to a specific person or people, that person or people should be given a fair opportunity to respond.
5. The Chair will discuss the complaint with at least one other member of the Trustee board, to reflect on the complaint and investigation, before making a decision whether to uphold the complaint.
6. The person who has made the complaint will receive a reply, ideally within 15 days, describing
  - a. Whether the complaint has been upheld, dismissed or whether a definitive response has not been possible.
  - b. The action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and, subject to the terms of KNL's Data Protection policy and Data Protection law, any action taken as a result of the complaint.
7. If a final response upholding the complaint or dismissing the complaint is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a short progress report should be sent to the person who made the complaint with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
8. If the complaint is upheld, the Chair will offer to discuss with the complainant what changes could be implemented in the community processes to make improvement and change, and offer an apology.
9. If the complaint is not upheld, the KNL Chair will offer to have a conversation with the person who made the complaint, to discuss the findings.

### **Complaint: second stage**

1. If the person who made a complaint feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at wider Management Committee level.
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2. The complaint will be passed to the whole Management Committee. The request for Management Committee level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will be the contact-point for the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
3. The Management Committee may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the Chair or person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1. The Chair or person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 should be kept informed of what is happening.
4. If the complaint relates to a specific person or people, they will be informed again and given a further opportunity to respond.
5. Ideally, the person who made the complaint should receive a definitive reply within a month.
6. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
7. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Management Committee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

#### **4. If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint**

KNL is a registered charity and a member of Liberal Judaism, so a complainant can complain to the Charity Commission and/or to Liberal Judaism at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>.

Information about complaints to Liberal Judaism can be found here:

<https://www.liberaljudaism.org/who-we-are/governance/complaints-procedures/> and complaints can be addressed to [complaints@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:complaints@liberaljudaism.org)

#### **5. Safeguarding, and concerns and complaints.**

If your concern or complaint is a safeguarding issue, for example where someone could be at risk of or experiencing any abuse, neglect or danger, please immediately contact: xxxxx at Kehillah North London. We will follow our safeguarding policy in the first instance: *embed here*

If a safeguarding issue comes to light due to a concern or complaint, safeguarding may temporarily take precedence over the progression of the complaint.. We will work to keep you informed.

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#### **Supporting information.**

##### **Why we have a concern and complaints procedure and policy**

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Both this procedure and KNL's Covenant have been written in response to the recommendation made by Stephen Bush, in his report for the Board of Deputies' Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community, that:

"Communal bodies should ensure that complaints processes are accessible, transparent, fair and robust, with all complaints related to racism handled according to the Macpherson principle, and specific new processes for handling complaints about security."

We have take this as a responsibility to

- listen to and learn from people when they say that racism, and other structural injustices, may feed into the experiences in Jewish communal organisations
- to pay particular attention to processes where racism and other injustices are likely to show up: for example, synagogue security arrangement

Our thinking about concerns and feedback has also been guided by the insights of feminist academic Sara Ahmed that complaints mechanisms in organisations do not always work for people experiencing social injustices, and should be accompanied by other options for raising feedback and a shift in communal culture. We hope that establishing the expectation that people can, if they want, raise issues and provide feedback when something goes wrong will be less alienating. We also hope that it establishes the expectation that when things go wrong, the work of 'change' is more broadly shared onto all of us as a community.

Trying to create a culture of accountability and listening is less common than it might be, and we will try to learn from others around us who have been practising this for a while. The possibility of going straight to a formal mechanism will always be available, and the choice of the person who seeks redress.

### **Our concerns and complaints policy - commitments**

- This concerns and complaints procedure will be made public and accessible
- It will be revised every two years at a minimum.
- Those with leadership responsibility at KNL know what to do if a complaint is received.
- Our commitment is to take concerns and complaints seriously.
- We aim to address each concern and complaint in a sensitive, fair, transparent, equitable, professional and unbiased manner through the procedures outlined above.
- We will try to make sure that concerns and complaints are resolved, if possible positively and constructively
- We will work to repair relationships if possible.
- We recognise the role that social inequality and injustices play in negative experiences in organisations and institutions in the UK
- We will endeavour to recognise when we do not have lived or learned expertise to understand an issue, and learn from others

### **Definitions:**

*A concern:* an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, that is brought to our trustees or Rabbi within the parameters of our concern process.

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*Complaint:* A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which has been formally raised with Kehillah North London through its complaint procedure

Concerns and complaints can be about any aspect of Kehillah North London, for example, administration, a staff member, event or service. Concerns and complaints might arise from structural exclusion, injustices and inequalities, through which a person's experience of the community diverges from the values upheld in our Code of Conduct (Our Covenant).

### **When we don't respond to a formal complaint**

There may be rare occasions when we choose not to respond to a concern or complaint:

These might include:

- When a complaint is about something that KNL has no direct connection to (we may choose to reply to clear our name but we are not obliged to)
- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to; they may be given information on where to take their complaint outside of KNL but we may choose not to reply again. We will always inform them of our decision to do this.
- When someone raising a concern or making a complaint is being: abusive; discriminatory; or offensive in their manner. We recognise this can be subjective so trustees will need to consider carefully the behaviour in question.
- When the person raising a concern or making a complaint is harassing a staff member or trustee (for example, phoning or emailing repeatedly). This can leave people feeling unsafe.
- When a concern or complaint is incoherent or illegible. However, we realise that we have a duty to try to understand concerns and complaints so trustees will need to consider carefully whether there are ways to better understand what is being expressed.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email. In this instance we can choose whether it is necessary for us to reply or not.
- When we do not respond to a concern or complaint, KNL's trustees will consider the pastoral implications for the person making the complaint referring to our safeguarding policy [presuming we have one] to uphold the complainant's' safety and wellbeing.
- KNL cannot respond to concerns and complaints made anonymously. However, we will discuss the concern and investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way that we can, if it is upheld.

### **Who does this policy cover?**

This policy covers members of KNL and visitors. It does not cover complaints from staff, temporary or permanent, who would refer to KNL's Grievance Policy.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **Review of this Policy and Complaints Received**

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This policy will be reviewed by the Management Committee every 2 years. All concerns, complaints received (and compliments) will be brought before the Committee for review at our regular Committee meetings. Through this process of regular review we aim to improve our services to you and to ensure that any lessons learned are implemented within the organisation.

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Management Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or Committee Member should not also have the Chair and/or Committee Member involved as a person leading a Stage 2 review.

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Appendix 1

The complaints register will be kept electronically with suitable data safeguards in the following format:

Date of complaint	
Name of person making complaint	
Relationship of person to KNL, eg, Kehillah Member, Visitor to one of our Events, User of one of our services.	
How person wishes to be contacted and details (phone/email/postal address)	
Date of confirmation of receipt of complaint	
Summary of complaint (to be agreed with person complaining)	
Date of resolution of complaint and at what stage it was resolved e.g. informal, Stage 1 or Stage 2.	

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