

Time limits for complaints about BUGB Ministers

Purpose

This policy establishes clear guidance on the time limits within which complaints against Accredited Baptist Ministers (including Accredited Evangelists and Youth Specialists), Nationally Recognised Pastors, Recognised Local Ministers, and Ministers-in-Training may be raised.

The aim is to balance the need for accountability in ministry with fairness to ministers, complainants, and wider society.

Principles

Fairness and Transparency: Ministers should not face indefinite uncertainty over potential complaints; complainants should be encouraged to raise concerns promptly.

Pastoral Care: Both complainant and minister must be treated with dignity and care throughout.

Flexibility in Exceptional Circumstances: Recognising the sensitive and often complex nature of ministry, the Union reserves discretion to consider serious matters even if they fall outside the normal timeframe.

Time Limits

Standard Limit

Complaints must normally be lodged within 12 months of the alleged incident or conduct coming to light.

Continuing Conduct

Where the complaint relates to a pattern of ongoing behaviour, the 12-month limit will run from the most recent occurrence.

Historic Complaints

Complaints regarding safeguarding, sexual misconduct, financial impropriety, or criminal activity are not subject to a time limit. These will be considered whenever they arise.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Baptist Union may accept a complaint outside the standard limit where:

The complainant could not reasonably have raised the matter earlier (e.g. due to serious trauma, fear, or lack of awareness of misconduct).

The complaint raises concerns that could significantly affect the safety, wellbeing, or integrity of a church, ministry office, individual or the BUGB.

Procedure for Late Complaints

A complaint received outside the 12-month limit will be reviewed by the Ministry Team Leader and the Moderator of the Ministerial Recognition Committee to determine whether an exception should be made.

If the matter is deemed inadmissible due to time limits, the complainant will be made aware of this in writing.

If the matter is deemed admissible, it will proceed under the standard disciplinary procedures.

Ministries Team
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