

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, ULVERSTON (GBCU)

Whistleblowing Policy

Church Details

Church address: Quebec Street, Ulverston, LA12 9AD

Church Trustees: Ole Kristian Hunt; Dave Whitworth; Andrew Hewitt; Matt Rawlinson

Elders: Ole Kristian Hunt (Pastor)

Deacons: Dave Whitworth; Andrew Hewitt; Matt Rawlinson

Safeguarding Lead: Chrissie-Mary Hunt

Assistant Safeguarding Lead: Natalie Hewitt

This policy first adopted / last reviewed: January 2026

This policy should be reviewed bi-annually. The next review is due on: January 2028

Version	Details of change	Page / paragraphs affected	Date of up-issue
Draft (1)	New document drafted	New document	14 January 2026
Draft (1.2)	Slight wording changes	Sections 5 & 6	
1.1	Approved by Andy Hewitt & Ole Hunt	N/A	25/01/2026

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1. GBCU is committed to conducting its ministry and operations with integrity, transparency, and accountability, in a manner consistent with Christian values and legal obligations.
- 1.2. The purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to:
 - 1.2.1. Encourage individuals to raise serious concerns in confidence and without fear of retaliation
 - 1.2.2. Provide a clear process for reporting concerns
 - 1.2.3. Ensure concerns are investigated properly and addressed appropriately
- 1.3. This policy supports honesty and openness while protecting those who speak up in good faith.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to:
 - 2.1.1. Church leaders and trustees
 - 2.1.2. Church officers
 - 2.1.3. Employees
 - 2.1.4. Volunteers
 - 2.1.5. Contractors and consultants
 - 2.1.6. Church members and regular attenders
- 2.2. It applies to concerns about activities connected to GBCU, whether they occur on church premises, during church activities, or in related online or administrative contexts.

3. What Is Whistleblowing?

- 3.1. Whistleblowing is the reporting of serious concerns about wrongdoing that affects others or the church as a whole. It is different from a personal grievance, which should be addressed in reference to our Internal Complaints Policy.
- 3.2. Concerns that may be raised under this policy include, but are not limited to:
 - 3.2.1. Safeguarding failures or risks to children or vulnerable adults
 - 3.2.2. Financial misconduct, fraud, or misuse of church funds
 - 3.2.3. Abuse of power or authority
 - 3.2.4. Criminal activity
 - 3.2.5. Serious breaches of church policies or the law
 - 3.2.6. Health and safety dangers
 - 3.2.7. Deliberate concealment of any of the above

4. Safeguarding Matters

- 4.1. If a concern relates to the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, it must be reported immediately in line with GBCU Church's Safeguarding Policy and may need to be referred to external safeguarding authorities without delay.
- 4.2. Whistleblowing does not replace mandatory safeguarding reporting requirements.

5. How to Raise a Concern

- 5.1. Concerns should be raised as soon as possible to allow proper investigation.
- 5.2. You may raise a concern with:
 - 5.2.1. The Pastor
 - 5.2.2. An Elder
 - 5.2.3. A Deacon
 - 5.2.4. A Church Trustee
 - 5.2.5. The Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (if relevant)
- 5.3. If the concern involves one of the above, or if you feel unable to raise it internally, you may raise the concern with:
 - 5.3.1. The Grace Baptist Trust Corporation
 - 5.3.2. Leaders of other local churches in fellowship with GBCU - such as North Preston Evangelical Church and Ingleton Evangelical Church
 - 5.3.3. A relevant external body (e.g. charity regulator, safeguarding authority, or law enforcement)
- 5.4. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Where possible, you should provide:
 - 5.4.1. The nature of the concern
 - 5.4.2. Relevant dates, times, and locations
 - 5.4.3. Names of individuals involved
 - 5.4.4. Any supporting evidence
- 5.5. You are not expected to prove the concern—only to raise it honestly and in good faith.

6. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- 6.1. GBCU will treat all whistleblowing concerns sensitively and confidentially.
- 6.2. Your identity will be protected so far as is reasonably practicable
- 6.3. Anonymous reports will be considered, though they may be harder to investigate
- 6.4. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis

7. Protection from Retaliation

- 7.1. GBCU Church will not tolerate retaliation, victimisation, or disadvantage against anyone who raises a concern in good faith.
- 7.2. This includes protection from:
 - 7.2.1. Dismissal or loss of role
 - 7.2.2. Disciplinary action
 - 7.2.3. Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination
- 7.3. Any retaliation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

8. Investigation and Response

- 8.1. All concerns raised under this policy will be taken seriously. The church will:
 - 8.1.1. Acknowledge receipt of the concern
 - 8.1.2. Assess the concern promptly
 - 8.1.3. Appoint an appropriate person to investigate
 - 8.1.4. Take proportionate and lawful action where wrongdoing is identified

- 8.1.5. The whistleblower will be informed, where appropriate, that the matter has been addressed, although full details may not always be shared due to confidentiality or legal constraints.

9. Malicious or False Allegations

- 9.1. GBCU, as any local church of Christ (who is “The Truth” John 14:6), is committed to truth and truthfulness.
 - 9.1.1. Concerns raised in good faith will not result in action against the whistleblower, even if they are not upheld.
 - 9.1.2. However, deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.