
Safeguarding Complaints Procedure

Informal Resolution

In many cases, a concern or complaint raised is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue that is being complained about or their senior/line manager. We expect that all reasonable efforts will be made to resolve an issue informally and in a timely way if this is both possible and appropriate (informal resolution). However we appreciate that an informal resolution of the complaint isn't always possible or appropriate and therefore have the following process in order to respond to any formal complaints raised.

Formal process

- 1 The formal complaints procedure is for the use of those wishing to complain about how a safeguarding issue has been handled in the Diocese of Gloucester. We are committed to ensure that complaints made about our safeguarding decisions or practices are followed up independently; and that anyone who raises complaints with us about how a safeguarding issue has been handled is treated with respect, listened to and supported, and dealt with fairly and in a timely way.
- 2 All information about a complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- 3 Complaints which fall under this procedure may include;
 - How a referral to us; our practices; and how any decision making, was handled.
 - How a response was made to a child, vulnerable adult, or the parent/carer or to an alleged perpetrator.
- 4 Complaints should relate to the process followed, not to the original incident which gave rise to the allegation.
- 5 Whilst every effort will be made to resolve your complaint informally if it is not possible to do so, you may make use of this formal complaints procedure and contact the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board for the Diocese, Simon Atkinson.

You can write to him:

Simon Atkinson
Chair of the Safeguarding Board
Diocese of Gloucester
c/o Church House
College Green
Gloucester
GL1 2LY

- 6 Your complaint must state how you consider there has been a failure to comply with national or diocesan safeguarding policy and guidance. It is not enough to say that you disagree with the professional decisions which have been made in your case.

- 7 Complaints should be made:
 - In writing, marked “confidential”.
 - You may telephone to make a complaint – a note of your name and contact details will be taken, and passed on to Simon who will contact you directly.
 - You may also email Simon confidentially at Chairofsgboard@glosdioc.org.uk
 - Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you should complain within 3 months of the event or outcome that you are complaining about.
- 8 The complaint(s) must include / cover:
 - Your full name, postal address and contact details
 - What you think went wrong and how it has affected you, including details of your specific complaint(s)
 - The outcomes you are seeking from your complaint(s) i.e. what might be put in place to put matters right.
- 9 Your complaint must state how you consider there has been a failure to comply with national or diocesan safeguarding policy and guidance. It is not enough to say that you disagree with the professional decisions which have been made in your case
- 10 If you submit a complaint to the Chair of the Board you will receive an acknowledgement by letter or e-mail, to confirm receipt of your complaint, usually within five working days of it being received.
- 11 If the Chair considers that your complaint falls within this procedure, he will arrange to discuss it with you either by phone or in person. At this meeting he may arrange for an independent note taker to be present so that a record is made.
- 12 In some situations the Chair may refer the complaint for further follow up or a full review to a person who will have no previous knowledge of, or involvement with, the matter. Exceptionally, a second person may be appointed to assist. Any person appointed to this independent review will have substantial experience and knowledge of safeguarding.
- 13 The appointed person(s) will read any files and will meet you to ascertain full details of your complaint. You may ask a friend or supporter (but not a legal representative) to attend this meeting with you.
- 14 Such a meeting shall be as informal as possible and the person appointed by the Bishop will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce all persons present and emphasise confidentiality. Proceedings will be minuted by the appointed person who will also establish with you the extent and manner of updating you if necessary on progress. You will be sent a copy of the minutes of the meeting.
- 15 The independent appointed person(s) will look fairly into your complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any person to whom your complaint refers. The appointed person(s) may seek advice/views from others. At the conclusion of their review they will complete a report which will be sent to the Independent Chair.
- 16 The Chair will then write to you, summarising the findings and recommendations of the report and outlining any following actions. Such actions may for example include, where

appropriate, an apology and an explanation of any changes to be made in policies and procedures.

- 17 Where such actions may involve employment issues (such as disciplinary, or training requirements etc) these will be referred to the appropriate senior manager within the diocese central offices.
- 18 The Independent Chair's letter will be the final response to your complaint.
- 19 If, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome and try to reopen the same issue, the Chair will inform you in writing that (in the absence of any new evidence or other compelling reason which has not previously been considered) the procedure has been duly exhausted and that the matter is now closed.
- 20 All information will be handled sensitively, sharing information on a 'need to know' basis only and with due regard to our obligations under the provisions of GDPR/data protection regulations and requirements (diocesan privacy notice regarding how information is collected, shared, and stored appropriately and securely). A record is kept of any complaint received, actions taken and any review processes required:
 - date complaint(s) received
 - name of complainant
 - brief description of complaint(s)
 - details of the person(s) appointed to assist in dealing with complaint(s)
 - summary of the outcome of the complaint(s), and how/when communicated to complainant
 - any verbal/written response(s) to the outcome received from complainant
 - any actions to be taken and any time frame in which such actions should happen.
- 21 If your complaint refers to a member of clergy, including the Bishop of Gloucester or the Bishop of Tewkesbury, Archdeacons or other clergy, the Church of England's Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 rather than this procedure will apply. Information about the Clergy Discipline Measure is available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/clergy-discipline/clergy-discipline-rules>

2018 v2