

Complaints and Allegations Policy and Procedure

Approved by the PCC on 13 March 2023

Complaints and Allegations Policy

The PCC's policy is:

- to follow up any allegation regarding safeguarding issues, bullying, harassment or domestic abuse, whether or not made in writing;
- to follow up any other complaint or allegation which is made in writing.
- to respond to any other complaint or allegation which is made verbally, and to advise the complainant whether or not it should be submitted in writing.

Reference Policy Documents

The following documents provide further guidance and should be consulted as appropriate:

- [Parish Safeguarding Handbook](#), principally Section 7, *Responding promptly to every concern or Allegation*.
The flowchart from this handbook is appended below.
- [Practice Guidance: Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers](#). House of Bishops, 2017. NB, this document is 102 pages long, so unsuitable as a quick reference guide.
- Bath & Wells [Diocesan policy for preventing bullying and harassment](#).
- The [Clergy Discipline Measure](#), which covers more serious situations that cannot be handled locally or by communication with the archdeacon.

How to report a complaint, concern or allegation

Contact either the vicar, a churchwarden or the Parish Safeguarding Officer verbally in the first instance, in case a rapid response is needed.

If none are available, send an email marked "important" to one or more of the above people.

Their contact details can be found on the church website, on the weekly bulletin, in the latest church magazine, and on noticeboards in the church.

If you get no response within 24 hours, and you are concerned that a child or adult is being abused, contact Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care and/or the police directly.

Procedure for handling complaints and allegations

In the case of a safeguarding issue, the Parish Safeguarding Officer must be involved in the investigation from the outset, and the procedure in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook must be followed and undertaken in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA).

Other complaints are to be first investigated by the Vicar and Churchwardens.

The *Diocesan policy for preventing bullying and harassment* says "If a member of clergy or Reader is the perpetrator and it has not been possible to resolve the matter locally then you could contact the relevant Archdeacon." It is taken that this also applies in case of a churchwarden.

For non-safeguarding matters, any complaint made in writing is to be notified to the PCC, who will then decide if further action is needed, and if any further response is needed to the complainant. Verbal complaints that are not followed up in writing need not be notified to the PCC.

In all cases, the PCC, as Trustees, should consider whether the nature of the complaint requires a [Serious Incident Report](#) to be made to the Charity Commission.

Appendix

**Parish Safeguarding Handbook Section 7
Responding promptly to every concern or Allegation**

7.1 Quick guide



