



Complaints and whistleblowing

Organizations which work with children or vulnerable adults, like others, are nowadays to be expected to have a complaints policy. Parishes count as voluntary organizations and may find it useful to have such a policy.

Parishes count as employers not only in respect of paid clergy or lay staff but also in respect of volunteers. Organizations are also nowadays expected to have a whistleblowing policy, i.e. one which allows those with a genuine concern to bypass formal structures to share their concern with an appropriate person without fear of retribution.

The following model policy is suggested to cover both these areas:

Complaints about how a church discharges its safeguarding responsibilities should be addressed to the parish safeguarding officer or equivalent, or to the incumbent.

Complaints about the incumbent or the parish safeguarding officer should be addressed to the area bishop or archdeacon.

Concerns which an individual considers cannot be raised through these channels can be directed to the diocesan bishop or, for safeguarding issues, to the diocesan safeguarding adviser with a request that the individual's identity is withheld from those in the parish. However, it needs to be understood that the church cannot act on anonymous allegations or take formal action in the absence of reasonably substantiated concerns.

Those who raise issues under this provision must have a reasonable belief that it is well founded. However, appropriate action will be taken if a malicious allegation is made.

If an investigation is required, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that this is appropriate and practical in the circumstances.

The person raising complaints or concerns will be informed of the outcome subject to the normal rules on confidentiality of personal information.

Agreed by Board of Mission 24 October 2011

Adopted by St. Luke's PCC 09th March 2021

This review: 4th July 2023

Next review: July 2025