



*The Parish of St. Neots
with Eynesbury*

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

The Parish of St Neots with Eynesbury follows the Diocese of Ely Whistleblowing Policy, which is set out below.

The Diocese of Ely is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity and recognises that clergy, lay staff and volunteers are often the first to become aware of or identify serious concerns. When such concerns arise, barriers to coming forward could be in relation to misplaced loyalty to colleagues or the Church, or fear of harassment or victimisation.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the 'Act') protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with the Act, the Diocese of Ely welcomes clergy and staff members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Diocese's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the Diocese.

The Church of England and Diocese of Ely rely heavily upon the contribution of volunteers and recognise that they are in an important position to recognise and report concerns. While voluntary roles are not included within the Act, the Diocese of Ely encourages volunteers to use this process with the relevant principles of protection applied to them.

This policy is in place to ensure that an internal process is available to encourage and enable workers and volunteers to raise serious concerns which would not meet the criteria for a complaint in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the Diocese of Ely continues to provide the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- All Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- All Office Holders and lay staff are responsible for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour, safeguarding concerns and any health and safety risks. We also invite volunteers to raise these matters.
- The Diocese of Ely does not tolerate victimisation or harassment and will take action to protect clergy, lay staff and volunteers when they raise a concern in good faith.
- The Diocese of Ely will endeavour to protect the identity of any individual who raises a whistleblowing concern and wishes to remain anonymous. However, in certain circumstances, such as any inquiry arising from the concern, the individual may be required to provide a signed statement. In certain circumstances the Diocese may have to disclose the identity of the individual without their consent, for example where there is risk to others involved. The reasons for this will be discussed with the individual.

Support

Clergy, lay staff and volunteers who raise concerns will be offered appropriate advice and support and kept informed in relation to the progress and outcome of any inquiries.

Dependent on the circumstances and the wishes and needs of the person raising the concerns the support offered could include arranging a named supporter with independence from the situation, pastoral support, spiritual support, signposting to independent sources of support and advice or counselling support.

Any person receiving a whistleblowing disclosure should discuss support needs with the person raising the concern.

How to raise a concern:

The Diocese of Ely recognises the difficulties in raising a concern about the behaviour of a colleague. However, raising the concern at an early stage may protect others, prevent the problem getting worse, and prevent individuals themselves becoming implicated.

Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns in cases where: the law may have been broken

- House of Bishop's or Diocesan policies and procedures may have been breached
- there are concerns of a safeguarding nature

Who to tell:

- Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers should raise concerns initially with their incumbent, line-manager, volunteer co-ordinator, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Archdeacon or Bishop. This will be dependent upon the nature of the concerns and who might be involved.
- Alternatively, office holders, lay staff and volunteers may approach the Diocesan Secretary - 01353 652701 or the contact details to be found at www.elydiocese.org

Special Note: Safeguarding Concerns

The Parish of St Neots with Eynesbury is committed to safeguarding and the protection of children and adults at risk of harm. The Parish Safeguarding Policy should be consulted if there are matters of safeguarding concern in the parish.