

Clergy who are alleged perpetrators of abuse

An alleged perpetrator who is a member of the clergy must be treated in exactly the same way as any other alleged perpetrator (see Responding to alleged or known perpetrators of abuse)

In addition under section 30 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM), a priest who is

- convicted of any offence in England or elsewhere and is imprisoned (including a suspended sentence); or
- is convicted of an offence on indictment in England or Wales; or
- has a decree of divorce or an order of judicial separation made against him/her following a finding of adultery, behaviour in such a way that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent, or desertion and, in the case of divorce, the decree has been made absolute

may be removed from office and/or prohibited from exercising any functions as a priest (whether for life or for a fixed term).¹

Where a priest or deacon is being considered for appointment to a post and that person currently holds, or most recently held, a post in another diocese, the bishop of the 'receiving' diocese should apply to the bishop of the 'sending' diocese for a combined Reference and Current Status Letter in the form approved by the House of Bishops (hereafter in these notes called 'the Bishop's Reference'). The same procedure should apply when a retired priest or deacon applies for permission to officiate in a diocese other than that in which his or her confidential personal file ('blue file') is held.

Part B of the Bishop's Reference should include information relating to any concerns about safeguarding (paragraph 6). Safeguarding concerns could relate (but are not limited) to the protection of children, young people and adults from physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, neglect or domestic violence. Even when the police have decided not to pursue an investigation, or the Crown Prosecution Service has declined to prosecute, any potential risk should still be assessed. If there is any relevant history, the bishop should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser before completing Part B.

¹ Also in this list is a priest who is included in a barred list (i.e. in relation to children or vulnerable adults). The bishop has the power to do this outside the normal complaints procedure but must consult the President of Tribunals first and the respondent can make representations. For further information contact the Diocesan Registrar.