

Appendix F- I think I have been the target of bullying and harassment, what can I do?

If you are experiencing bullying or harassment you should not suffer in silence or feel that you are to blame in some way for inviting bullying behaviour or feel inadequate for being unable to deal with it. Whilst it may be tempting to delay in the hope that things will improve, it is best to take action as soon as possible, as dealing with the matter early can prevent it becoming public or escalating.

Actions you can take yourself

- **Keep a factual log of all incidents** as soon as possible after the event: dates, times, nature of the incident, witnesses, details of accusations or criticisms and how you felt in response, copies of emails and other correspondence. This will help you see more clearly whether there is a pattern of behaviour (even if the incident/s) seem relatively trivial). It can also provide evidence, should harassment, victimisation or bullying continue/recur, or action become necessary.
- Where feasible, **avoid situations where you are alone with the bully and try to get witnesses to bullying incident:** if possible, talk to those who witnessed what has happened and ask if they will offer support and corroboration. Try to find out if you are the only person being bullied or whether other people are also affected now or have been in the past.
- If appropriate, **speak to the line manager/ supervision minister** to clarify what your job/role description is, so that you can check whether it matches the responsibilities you are given.
- **Get support:** the Diocese of Oxford has appointed Authorised Listeners (Bullying & Harassment) who are specially trained volunteers. An authorised listener is available to listen and talk through your complaint and help you along the way clarifying options so that you can decide what you want to do about it. In doing so, they will signpost you to the relevant resources available, provide clear information, Alternatively, you may prefer to contact a member of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) a confidential support service available to all clergy and ODBE/ODBE employees within the diocese or talk in confidence to a trusted colleague.
- Take Informal action as described in the procedure within this document. Often concerns can be resolved informally, especially when someone is unaware that their behaviour has caused discomfort or offence, or where there is a reasonable prospect of resolution. Where appropriate, individuals are therefore encouraged to try and resolve matters informally as this is often the quickest and most effective method of dealing with bullying and harassment.
- Request use of the formal procedure described in this document, if anything else fails
- Please be aware that, in circumstances where you wish to remain anonymous, there is limitation in the action/s to be taken, if any. However, the concerns will be considered by the person to whom the concerns were raised, taking into account the seriousness of the issue/s raised, the creditability of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from first-hand evidence.

REMEMBER: The Earlier Action is Taken the Better!

Resources available to support understanding of the issues involved as well as ways of handling a bullying and harassment case

Related national policies for those in ministry

- **Dignity at Work** – working together to reduce incidents of bullying and harassment; a policy issued by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council 2008 (under review). <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/dignity%20at%20work%20booklet.pdf>
- **Promoting a Safer Church**; House of Bishop's policy statement (2017) – safeguarding policy statement for children, young people, and adults. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>
- **Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy** <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/guidelines-professional-conduct-clergy/guidelines-professional-conduct>
- **Grievance Procedure Code of Practice** issued by The Archbishops' Council 2009. For anyone dealing with a grievance raised by any person holding office on common tenure must have regard to this Code of Practice. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/grievanceprocedure%20cop.pdf>
- **Grievance Procedure for Licensed Ministers**; issued by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council 2005. For all clergy and licensed or accredited lay ministers exercising ministry within the Church of England. [https://www.oxford.anglican.org/archive/diocesan_clergy_handbook_\(section_10\)-doc-1.pdf](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/archive/diocesan_clergy_handbook_(section_10)-doc-1.pdf)
- **Clergy Discipline Measure 2003** – as amended by the Clergy Discipline (Amendment) Measure 2013 and the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/cdm-2003-as-amended-by-scdm-jan-2017-as-published_0.pdf

Related policies for ODBF/ODBE employees

- **Grievance procedure, Disciplinary procedure and Whistleblowing policy** can be located under section 8 – professional conduct policies and the **Capability procedure** under section 9 of the relevant staff handbook [ODBE](#) / [ODBF](#).
- For those employed by a PCC or volunteer refer to your entities related policies. Alternatively, refer to the **Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)** Code of Practice on [Discipline and Grievances at Work – The ACAS Guide](#).

Support

- The **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** with Health Assured offers a range of confidential support services to all clergy and ODBF/ODBE employees within the diocese, designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting their mental health and wellbeing.
 - The free 24-hour confidential helpline: 0800 028 0199. Health assured website can be accessed [here](#).

- Alternatively, you can download 'My Healthy Advantage' which will prompt you for the employer code. A member of the HR team will be able to provide you with the login details and/or the employer code.
- The **Parish Toolkit** provides PCC's within the diocese with advice and guidance on the employment lifecycle available [here](#).
- **Safeguarding** in the Diocese of Oxford website [here](#):
- Safe Spaces – Victim Support helpline
- The society of Mary and Martha at Sheldon, (caring for people in ministry): <https://www.sheldon.uk.com/>

Advice

The following external websites have useful information:

- ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service): <https://www.acas.org.uk/>
- Bully Online: <https://www.bullyonline.org/index.php>
- National bullying helpline: <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>
- Bullied & abused Lives in Ministry: <https://www.balmnet.co.uk/>
- Unite the Union: <https://unitetheunion.org/>