

“I HAVE A COMPLAINT – WHAT CAN I DO?”

A high standard of integrity and service is expected of our staff and clergy. Mostly that standard is met, but occasionally individuals can fall short of what is expected. When this occurs there are different ways to respond, as this leaflet explains.

At whatever level you are concerned, please be assured that your complaint will be taken seriously.

Our principles

When dealing with a complaint about a member of the clergy, we will seek to:

- not be defensive when dealing with your complaint;
- deal with all the points raised in your complaint and offer a suitable solution for each one at the same time. If this is not possible, we will communicate why;
- show concern and understanding and make an apology if one is appropriate;
- communicate with you in writing (email or letter) when we have looked into your complaint to let you know what has been decided and any practical solutions we may believe are appropriate.

We will endeavour to deal with your complaint discreetly. You must tell us from the outset if you wish us to conceal your identity when dealing with your complaint, although this may limit our investigation or the action which we take. In certain circumstances you may be entitled to special protection either under the law related to public interest disclosures (sometimes called “whistleblowing”), or under the formal procedure for complaints about members of the clergy (the Clergy Discipline Measure). The person handling your complaint will be able to provide more information.

If, after we have had an opportunity to deal with your complaint you are not satisfied, we will provide information about what further options are available to you.

Making a complaint

If you are unhappy about the conduct of a member of staff in the diocesan offices, your complaint should be made to the Head of Human Resources. Diocesan staff are employees of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and complaints are handled according to our disciplinary and grievance policy. Further information can be obtained from the Head of HR.

If your complaint is about a member of the clergy, you there are a number of possible responses.

1. When it is a minor incident or behaviour, you are encouraged to share your concern with the Clergy person and try to resolve it together. Sometimes, we will ask you to speak to the person concerned before involving anyone else.
2. When that is insufficient, you may wish to bring your concern to the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon will speak to the member of the clergy concerned, or arrange for another suitable person to do so, so that the matter can be dealt with and rectified informally. The Archdeacon may ask the Area Dean to be involved.
3. If the problem is more serious and may amount to misconduct which warrants disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to make a formal complaint to the Diocesan Bishop. If informal resolution is not appropriate or has been unsuccessful, a formal complaint is normally handled according to the procedure set out in the Clergy Discipline Measure. A leaflet is available explaining the process.¹

Assistance and support

We understand that making a complaint can be difficult and we want to help. For assistance in making your complaint, you can contact one of the following people:

For complaints about diocesan office employees:

Debbie Clark in the Diocesan Human Resources Department
Telephone 01962 737353 or e-mail debbie.clark@winchester.anglican.org

For complaints about members of clergy:

The Revd Mat Phipps, Chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester
Telephone 01962 854050 or e-mail mat.phipps@winchester.anglican.org

They can help you by:

- Providing information about how to make your complaint and how it will be dealt with;
- Giving advice in relation to providing the information that may be required for your complaint to be investigated
- Putting you in touch with someone who will listen to you and provide you with pastoral support through the process of making a complaint.

Safeguarding concerns

If you are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk or has been harmed, or are concerned about the behaviour of someone towards children or vulnerable adults, you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager on 01962 737317. **If you are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult may be at immediate risk you should call the police on 999 now.**

¹ A copy may be found on the Church of England's website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/makingcomplainta4.pdf>