



Complaints Policy and Procedure

- **Status of Policy:** Non-contractual
- **Policy applies to:** Employees of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF)
- **Date of Last Review:** 2017
- **Future Review Date:** 2022

1. Introduction

Whilst we hope you will never have to cause to complain, sadly, sometimes things do go wrong. The Diocese of Bristol views complaints as an opportunity to put things right, learn and to make improvements for the future.

The Diocese of Bristol has a Complaints policy which gives initial guidance and will direct you to the appropriate procedure or course of action. The Policy and Initial Guidance can be found here.

This procedure relates to complaints about the Diocesan Support Services, its employees and other employees of the DBF. If the complaint relates to a complaint about the safeguarding service, a separate procedure should be followed.

2. Resolving Complaints

Informal Approach

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Most matters can and should be resolved informally and locally.

If for example a person is dissatisfied with the service they have received, then in the first instance they should tell that person of their dissatisfaction. He or she should be willing to listen, to discuss the matter and seek to satisfy the concerns where justified. If a person remains unhappy, the member of staff will arrange for the concerns to be discussed with a more senior member of staff.

If following the informal process the complainant remains dissatisfied or the informal route is inappropriate, then the formal procedure should be followed.

Formal Stage One

Initially, the complaint should be made in writing to the Diocesan Secretary. The complaint will be acknowledged as soon as it is received by the Diocesan Secretary and a copy of this complaints procedure will be supplied.

The Diocesan Secretary will decide who is the best person to investigate the concerns and appoint them to do so. This person will provide a formal response within two working weeks (i.e. 10 working days) following the acknowledgement of the complaint.

It is hoped that, on receipt of the formal response to the complaint, an acceptable resolution can be found and the complaint can be concluded to the complainant's satisfaction at this level. However, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, s/he is able to proceed to formal Stage Two (see section below).

Formal Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, the complainant must within two working weeks (i.e. 10 working days) of receiving the formal response request the Diocesan Secretary to initiate Stage Two.

At this stage, the complaint will be considered by the Diocesan Secretary or, if s/he has already been involved in responding to the complaint, the Chair or Vice-Chair of the DBF or Chair of the HR & Remuneration Committee as appropriate.

A suitably senior person may be appointed to investigate the facts of the case. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with anyone who may have been involved in dealing with the complaint at the informal stage and Formal Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. The person who dealt with the original complaint at the informal stage and/or Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening where appropriate.

The reply (within 20 working days where possible) to the complainant will inform them of the action(s) taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint that can be shared. It is not normal practice to share details of whether the DBF decide to take any internal action and, if so, the outcome of such processes, due to the requirement to maintain the confidentiality of any parties involved.

It should be recognised that in some instances people will take positions where the matter cannot be resolved. However, the aim should be to ensure that the process respects those involved and is just in providing an active concern to those who are vulnerable, marginalised or oppressed.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the DBF decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution. A log of the complaint will be kept.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. The Commission's involvement in looking at complaints is limited to issues that pose a serious risk of significant

harm to a charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

3. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The DBF may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading the formal process.

4. Privacy and Data Protection Statement

In accordance with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), employees have a right to access information that the DBF may hold on them. This includes information regarding any HR processes undertaken (e.g. flexible working applications, grievances, disciplinary action etc), or information obtained through monitoring processes (e.g. collation of information about number of days sickness absence). The way in which information about an employee will be used is outlined within the DBF Privacy Notice, copies of which are available from the HR Team. The DBF is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses personal data and to meeting its data protection obligations. To this end, the DBF undertakes that the employee will be made aware of any information regarding them that is gathered as part of a HR process.

As a data subject, each employee has a number of rights (outlined in the Privacy Notice). If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact the Diocesan Data Protection Officer.

DBF and other related policies

Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Complaints Policy and Procedure

DBF Speaking Out Policy

DBF Disciplinary Policy

Template Speaking Out Policy for parishes