



## Diocese of Truro

### Dealing with Complaints

---

The Diocese of Truro recognises that from time to time complaints will arise. Our aim is to have a process that is simple to use and understand.

This policy and the procedures outlined here are applicable for complaints that relate to the way we have dealt with both safeguarding and other issues, however if you have a safeguarding concern or believe somebody's wellbeing may be at risk, please consult the section entitled Safeguarding Concerns.

The process is based on the following:

- There should be no difference in the principles that apply to the approach between clergy, readers, authorised lay ministers, lay people, volunteers, or paid officials;
- The process should be fair and just;
- Help and support should be offered to those making the complaint and those subject to the complaint;
- Confidentiality must be respected;
- Where it is appropriate, the possibility of reconciliation should be explored;
- There should be the possibility of correcting any errors which may have been made;
- Wherever possible the aim is to resolve complaints informally rather than formally, and locally rather than centrally.

Relationship with other processes:

- If other, specifically relevant complaints processes apply, the person complaining will be directed and helped to access them. This includes directing complainants to the six-step, informal process that has been adopted by the diocese for dealing with complaints against members of the clergy, and which itself is capable of resulting in complaints being carried forward under the Church of England's Clergy Discipline Measure.
- This process should not be used where staff have a complaint relating to their personal circumstances in the workplace. The Grievance Procedure should be used in such cases.
- The Whistleblowing Policy outlines the procedure to be used by staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices at the diocese, or potential failures by the diocese or staff.
- Nothing within this complaints process is intended to, or should, prevent staff from complying with their statutory safeguarding obligations.
- If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to an adult or a child, a referral should be made to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, and Adult or Children's Social Care immediately, in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

## Approaches

### The informal stage:

- Think about what would resolve your concern;
- Consider sharing your complaint with the person concerned if this is appropriate;
- Consider asking a friend to support you;
- If you need further assistance in taking your complaint forward, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, if you would like the matter independently reviewed or there is a need for independent reconciliation, ask the priest in charge, a churchwarden or a member of the PCC; or if concerns a staff member at Church House, contact the Diocesan Secretary;
- Most matters can and should be resolved informally and locally.

### The formal stage:

- Matters of serious concern<sup>1</sup> should be referred to the Bishop's Chaplain;
- You should expect an acknowledgement within 10 working days;
- You should expect a definitive reply to your complaint within 28 days or, if for any reason this is not possible, a progress report with an indication of when a full reply will be given;
- In the first instance it will be for the Bishop's Chaplain to decide whether this is a matter that might be better considered locally; or,
- The Bishop's Chaplain might suggest an approach which may require an independent review of a local decision, further reconciliation, internal investigation, or progress to one of the specialist, formal complaints processes;
- It should be recognised that in some instances people will take positions that cannot be reconciled. 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 review stage:

- If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to appeal this decision. If the matter relates to a member of the clergy, the appeal should be made in writing to the Bishop of Truro or, if before the new Bishop of Truro is appointed, to the Bishop of St Germans. For non-clergy related complaints the appeal should be made to the chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

### External stage

- The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about how to make a complaint to the Charity Commission, and the ground on which individuals can complain, can be found on its website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matters of professional misconduct of the clergy, readers or lay ministers should always be referred to The Bishop's Chaplain.

## Contact Points

### **Chaplain to the Bishop of Truro**

Lis Escop, Feock, Truro TR36QQ

[chaplain@truro.anglican.org](mailto:chaplain@truro.anglican.org)

Tel: 01872 862657

### **The Diocesan Secretary**

The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance, Ltd.

Church House, Woodlands Court, Threemilestone, Truro TR4 9NH

Tel: 01872 274351

### **The Bishop of St Germans (until the new Bishop of Truro is appointed)**

The Rt Revd Dr Chris Goldsmith

Lis Escop, Feock, Truro TR36QQ

### **Chairman of the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance**

The Truro Diocesan Board of Finance, Ltd

Church House, Woodlands Court, Threemilestone, Truro TR4 9NH

## Safeguarding Concerns

If you have a safeguarding concern you can contact your parish safeguarding coordinator, whose details should be on the church noticeboard, your parish priest, or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor by phoning 01872 274351, email [sarah.acraman@truro.anglican.org](mailto:sarah.acraman@truro.anglican.org) or write to: Sarah Acraman, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Church House, Woodlands Court, Truro Business Park, Threemilestone, Truro, TR4 9NH.

For an urgent safeguarding response from Social Care (previously known as Social Services), call 01208 251300.

If you believe somebody is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999.

October 2017