

Relating well together

a suite of template policies
for Parishes



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

January 2025

Foreword

Dear sisters and brothers,

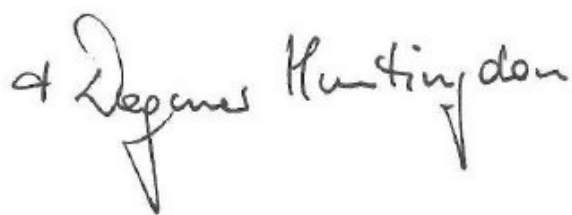
In recent years we have seen heightened attention given to complaints of unfair treatment or abusive behaviour in church and society. We can view this as positive or negative. Perhaps it is a sign of the Spirit at work stirring us out of complacency, alerting us to injustice and oppression. Or maybe it is a sign of increasing individualism, manifesting as a “my rights” culture over against a culture of service and submission (both of which words have deep Christian roots).

Whatever the cause, we need to decide how we keep everyone safe in this evolving situation. As we adopt robust and reliable standards and policies for safeguarding, we also need consistent and fair processes for handling all those complaints, concerns and relationships where there is friction that falls outside the scope of safeguarding legislation and processes.

This suite of resources aims to equip our Diocese and your parishes with frameworks appropriate to handle conflict in various contexts.

The fact that Bishop’s Council and I have worked hard to produce this suite of resources aims to encourage you that there are safe and wholesome ways of disagreeing well within our church and society. We want clergy and lay leaders to be able to lead with confidence and grace in our complex society. We know that conflict will occur, especially as we bring the perspectives of Christ to bear on the challenges that face us as a church and society. I am confident that we can lead well and learn from our mistakes.

I pray that these resources will serve our diocese and your parishes in bringing the grace and truth of Jesus to our communities.



Parish Support Team

This document refers to the '**Parish Support Team**'.

The Parish Support Team are the people within the EDBF Office and Bishops' Offices that seek to support parishes and include:

- The Diocesan Bishop of Ely
- The Suffragan Bishop of Huntingdon
- The Archdeacon of Cambridge
- The Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech
- The Diocesan Secretary
- The Departments within the Diocesan Office:
 - The Mission and Ministry Department
 - The Church Buildings and Pastoral Department
 - The Safeguarding Department
 - The Finance Department
 - The Housing Department
 - The Assets Department



Template Policies

The following policies are ones that we recommend each PCC considers implementing.

- They are templates which can be adopted for use by the PCC.
 - The policies need to be appropriately amended and considered by the PCC and then formally approved at a PCC meeting.
 - The policy needs to be communicated to those who will be responsible for its implementation.
 - The PCC have an ongoing role of monitoring policy implementation and review.
 - Policies can also be agreed by a Joint Council if it exists, but thought should be given to the effective communication of policies.
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- **Relating well together** – pastoral principles into practice.
 - **A Parish Code of Conduct** – a template for PCCs to adopt, so that we set a culture of respect and consideration towards each other.
 - **Bullying and Harassment Policy** – a template for PCCs to adopt, so that we are clear on the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and how we will challenge those who fail to respect those boundaries.
 - **Violence and Aggression Policy** – a template for PCCs to adopt, so that we keep each other safe.
 - **Complaints Policy and Procedure** – a template for PCCs to adopt.
 - **Whistleblowing Policy** – a template for PCCs to adopt, so that people know how to raise concerns.
 - **Raising a Concern** – a poster for use in our buildings.



Template Behaviour Policies

that we recommend each PCC
considers implementing.



Relating well together

Pastoral principles into practice:
to ensure the flourishing of all

The Bishop's Council invites the PCCs to adopt these principles and to reflect on them once a year, at or following, the APCM meeting.

*These principles were adopted by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this guidance is **1 year**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature



Pastoral Principles into Practice: to ensure the flourishing of all

**The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.**

We seek to develop a culture within our churches where the fruits of the Spirit are able to grow.

We recognise the responsibility we all have in enabling that to happen.

Based on the Pastoral Principles for Living and Learning Well Together, we will ensure that we are –

1. Addressing ignorance and paying attention to power.

To help us do this, we commit to:

- Being more aware of our ignorance about each other's experiences, challenges and perspectives.
- Listening more attentively and speaking more bravely.
- Noticing how power affects our relationships and church communities.
- Being more careful about the way power is handled in our church communities.

2. Talking about confidence and casting out fear.

To help us do this, we commit to:

- Helping people articulate their fears, both as individuals and as members of our church communities.
- Creating relationships and communities that help people feel safe.



Pastoral Principles into Practice: to ensure the flourishing of all

**The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.**

3. Talking about respect and acknowledging prejudice.

To help us do this, we commit to:

- Becoming more aware of our prejudices as individuals and as a community.
- Helping each other address some of the prejudices that affect our relationships and attitudes.

4. Talking openly and speaking into silence.

To help us do this, we commit to:

- Paying attention to areas of life about which we as individuals and as a church community are silent.
- Understanding the impact of silence on our relationships and life as a church.
- Addressing unhelpful silence in our church community.

5. Talking about integrity and admitting hypocrisy.

To help us do this, we commit to:

- Examining and confessing some of the ways in which we, as individuals and as a church community, may be guilty of hypocrisy.
- Encouraging each other to be honest and humble in our words and behaviours.

Parish Code of Conduct

*This code of conduct was adopted by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this guidance is **2 years**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature





Parish Code of Conduct

**The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.**

This Parish seeks to provide safe spaces where all can flourish.

We all share a responsibility in helping to achieve this and we ask that people are considerate and respectful of our staff, volunteers, and of the space.

We will not tolerate disrespectful behaviour in the Church or the church grounds such as:

- Abusive comments
- Threatening behaviour
- Creating an unpleasant atmosphere
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- Vandalism

Dealing with Bullying and Harassment Policy:

A template for Parishes



Dealing with Bullying and Harassment Policy

Introduction

Within the Church are ‘all sorts and conditions’ of human beings, diverse in age, gender, ethnicity and with different kinds of ability; there are professionals and volunteers, there are ordained and licensed ministers and faithful members of congregations. The Church is a body whose members acknowledge their individual needs and which recognises the human capacity for even the best to go wrong. Indeed, a number of the letters in the New Testament are written to dysfunctional churches struggling with damaged and damaging human relationships.

Sadly, illegitimate use of power, bullying and harassment occurs within the Church as in other areas of human society. In a community called to witness to the eternal dignity of every human being, we have a unique responsibility to challenge such behaviour and create communities where each person has the sustaining reassurance that they will be treated with the respect that is due to all human beings made in the image of God and precious to God.



The resources that Christians bring to that task will include, but not be confined to, good professional practice and the expertise of those experienced in the dynamics of working relationships. The commandment to ‘love one another as I have loved you’ (John 13: 34) is central to our Christian discipleship. We follow the Servant leader who washed the feet of the man about to betray him. St. Paul was not content to leave ‘unfinished business’ between Philemon and Onesimus but sought reconciliation. A concern is that the call to love and forgive may lead individuals who feel bullied or harassed to hesitate before, or even refrain from, seeking appropriate support and help.

We therefore want to emphasize that it is distinctively Christian to ‘go to one who sins against you and show them their faults’ (Matthew 18:15), and that bullying and harassment, whether intentional or not, can greatly undermine the effectiveness of individual Christians and the Church to which they belong, as well as being extremely hurtful for those involved. The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework in which, wherever possible, relationships can be rebuilt and trust restored. In this, as in everything, we depend on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to form each of us more into the likeness of Christ.

(Acknowledgement: material in this Introduction is partly drawn from the Archbishops’ introduction to the Safeguarding Adults policy)

Statement of commitment

1. The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Abuse, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated in our Church. All complaints of abuse, harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Standards of behaviour

2. The members of our PCC are committed to striving to contribute to a culture of mutual respect where individuals feel respected and safe and treat one another with dignity. Members recognise the importance of setting a good example in this work and undertake to participate in training in support of this policy.

What is bullying and harassment?

3. Any behaviour that could potentially undermine someone's dignity and respect should be regarded as unacceptable. If it is not challenged, it is likely to escalate and lead to significant difficulties for all concerned.



4. In establishing the links between ‘unacceptable behaviour’, ‘bullying’ and ‘harassment’ as well as drawing together the common themes and issues, the following broader definition may be helpful:

“Any behaviour, always involving a misuse of power, which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group should be regarded as unacceptable... ‘Unacceptable behaviour’ changes its label to ‘bullying’ or ‘harassing behaviour’ when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time. Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused. The degree of intent is only relevant in terms of how the behaviour should be challenged and the issues subsequently resolved.”

(Adapted from Fergus Roseburgh, Senior Staff Representative, Unite the Union, The Children’s Society. March 2007)

5. The legal definition of harassment as set out in discrimination legislation and as applied to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (together, the “Protected Characteristics”), is: ‘unwanted conduct that violates people’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment’. A single incident can amount to harassment. Additionally, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it illegal for someone to pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment.

6. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. It is most easily identified when it is continuous, frequent, repetitive and part of an overall pattern. However, some behaviour is serious enough to be recognised as bullying even if the behaviour occurred only once.

How can bullying and harassment be recognised?

7. Bullying may manifest itself in a variety of different ways. It is usually persistent, and often unpredictable, and can amount to severe psychological intimidation. It is insidious and undermines the ability and confidence of the person suffering from it. It can lead to fear, isolation, demotivation and reduced output, poor concentration, symptoms of stress, a noticeable level of sickness absence or stubborn attendance when obviously unwell, psychological, emotional and physical harm.

8. Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of individuals. It may be related to one or more of the Protected Characteristics (including theology or church tradition), or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. Differences of gender or ethnic background, for example, may mean that what is said or done is not understood or heard as it was intended. The important point is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient.

9. Bullying and harassment may take place in churches, offices, church halls and houses used for church meetings. A list of examples of bullying and harassing behaviour is provided at Appendix 1.

10. It is important to distinguish between bullying, and behaviour that is reasonable in a particular context. For example there may be occasions where shortcomings in performance are being addressed and more incisive behaviour is interpreted as bullying, simply because the recipient is unused to being challenged or asked to account for their actions.

11. In deciding whether conduct constitutes bullying or harassment, the following must be taken into account:

- The perception of the individual making the allegation
- The other circumstances of the case.
- Whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

12. Any person making an allegation of bullying or harassment must describe the behaviour complained of, and the occasion(s) when it occurred in order for it to be considered and investigated. However, deliberately malicious complaints will be regarded very seriously and may lead to disciplinary or civil action.

Harassment Advisers

13. The Diocese of Ely is committed to identifying and training Harassment Advisers. These will be members of the clergy and laity who have received special training for this role and have the full support of the Bishop. They are available to any member of the clergy or laity to offer advice and information as required in the context of a confidential relationship (see paragraph 18). They are also able to oversee the informal process for complaints and, if suitably trained, to negotiate or mediate between the parties concerned. Details of how to contact Harassment Advisers will be available on the Diocesan website, once they are trained.

Dealing with allegations of bullying or harassment

14. Every complaint of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. It may be very difficult for someone who is a target to make a complaint.

15. The scope of this policy extends to clergy and lay people including LLMs and Churchwardens, other than those who are employed by our Parochial Church Council, to whom the terms and conditions of that employment will apply. The procedure to be followed in the event of allegations should be that applicable to the alleged perpetrator. The procedure to be followed is set out in Appendix 4.

16. This policy does not apply to situations involving children or vulnerable adults; the Policy document, "[Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement \(2017\)](#)" should be used where children or vulnerable adults complain of bullying or harassment.

At any stage, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team must be consulted if there is any uncertainty as to whether the allegation should be raised as a Safeguarding concern within the definitions set out in the House of Bishops practice guidance.

17. Where an allegation of bullying or harassment is made directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor that does not, in their professional opinion, meet the threshold set out in the House of Bishops practice guidance, the Adviser may refer the complainant for support from the Incumbent, or one of the Harassment Advisors or the relevant Archdeacon.

First Informal steps

18. If either an assistant member of clergy or a lay person considers that they are a target of bullying or harassment, they should speak to the Incumbent of the Benefice or Rural Dean (during a vacancy). If the Incumbent is the alleged perpetrator or complainant then they should speak directly to the Harassment Adviser. The Incumbent or Harassment Adviser will ensure that appropriate pastoral care is offered to all parties. It is important that the role of pastoral care and the role of investigation are carried out by two different people. It is helpful to aim to speak to the Incumbent as soon as possible after the incident concerned. It is, however, recognised that complaints of this nature may relate to cumulative actions taking place over a period of time. The complainant may also contact one of the Harassment Advisers (see paragraph 13). Further advice is offered in Appendix 2.

19.

i) The Incumbent or Harassment Adviser should pursue the informal process and, if appropriate speak to the alleged perpetrator in order to seek an informal resolution. It is the Incumbent's responsibility wherever possible to take speedy action to stop harassment and it is important that it is made clear to the alleged perpetrator that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Silence or inaction can be seen as collusion and endorsement of such behaviour. If the Incumbent is the complainant or alleged perpetrator then the Harassment Adviser will investigate.

ii) Those conducting the informal review of the claim of harassment should consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion, and particularly the perception of the complainant, as harassment is often felt differently by different people. Having gathered all the evidence those investigating should ask themselves "could what has taken place be reasonably considered to have caused offence?" In some cases it may be possible to rectify matters informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. It may be that the complainant will choose to do this themselves, or they may need support.

iii) It is recommended that electronic communication such as email should only be used, if at all, for administrative purposes such as setting up meetings, and not for discussion of any allegations made.

20. Incumbents and Harassment Advisers should balance the importance of a swift response to allegations of bullying and harassment, with the need to spend appropriate time investigating and reflecting on the issues.



21. Incumbents are strongly encouraged to draw upon the advice and support offered by Harassment Advisers who have been trained for this work and appointed to it by the Bishops. Initial complaints should be made in writing, with as full details as possible, including the name and contact details of the victim/target. However, it is recognised that some complainants may be reluctant to write or may need assistance with formulating their concerns. Harassment Advisers may assist a victim/target to formulate concerns.

Formal Procedures

22. If an informal approach does not achieve satisfactory results, or the nature of the incident(s) prompts the person who feels harassed to take a more formal approach, a complaint should be made to the Archdeacon. Anyone bringing an issue forward may be accompanied by a friend or colleague if they so wish.

Confidentiality

23. These matters are to be treated as confidential unless safeguarding issues arise in which case appropriate action in line with other diocesan policies must be taken. Persons affected by bullying and harassment should be offered appropriate support, and action taken only with their consent.

Procedures

24. When both the alleged perpetrator and the complainant are licensed or ordained ministers holding office under Common Tenure, formal complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the complainant's consent, be brought under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

25. When the alleged perpetrator is a lay person, and the complainant is either ordained or lay, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the complainant's consent, be dealt with in one of a number of ways according to the circumstances. This may include a formal, personal letter from the Bishop to the alleged perpetrator, setting out the standards agreed under this policy.

26. After the investigation and action are concluded, the Incumbent or another nominated suitable person should monitor the situation and ensure that appropriate continuing support is offered to the parties involved.

27. This Policy and a report of activity related to the policy, will be reviewed regularly by the PCC.

*This policy was approved by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this policy is **2 years**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature



Appendix 1:

Examples of bullying and harassing behaviour

This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment:

- removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice
- isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities
- consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing
- setting out to make someone appear incompetent
- persistently picking on someone in front of others
- deliberate sabotage of work or actions
- deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
- displays of offensive material
- sexual harassment
- use of e-mails, either to the individuals or to third parties, to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failings
- repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private
- spreading malicious rumours to third parties
- public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and 'putting down'
- personal insults and name-calling
- aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation
- persistent threats about security
- making false accusations
- aggressive bodily posture or physical contact
- talking/shouting directly into someone's face
- direct physical intimidation, violence or assault
- The most serious incidents might result in:
 - creating an unsafe environment
 - ignoring signs of overwork and extreme stress
 - putting someone's health physically, emotionally or psychologically at risk by making them upset, frightened and/or ridiculed

Appendix 2:

I think I have been the target of bullying or harassment, what can I do?

1. 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.

Actions you can take yourself

2. Keep a factual log of all incidents of bullying – dates, times, nature of incident, details of accusations, criticisms, emails and other correspondence. This may be needed as evidence should harassment, victimisation or bullying continue or subsequently recur. If others have witnessed bullying incidents, ask if they will support you.

3. The Bishops have appointed Harassment Advisers, who have been specially trained to be available to support and accompany you and you are strongly advised to use this support. Harassment Advisers guarantee appropriate confidentiality and will meet with you in private to talk through your complaint. They will advise you on procedures for dealing with claims of bullying and harassment and help you to clarify the impact of the behaviour you are experiencing so that you can decide what you want to do about it.

Informal action

4. It may be possible for the complaint to be resolved quickly by explaining directly to the harasser or bully the effect their behaviour is having, and that you want it to stop. By trying the informal route you may be able to get the harasser or bully to stop their behaviour and so prevent the matter becoming public, or of escalating and making your situation more difficult.

5. It is rarely advisable for an individual to confront a bully alone, without professional support. Consult a Harassment Adviser or your Incumbent and discuss with them whether to confront the alleged harasser, alone or with their support or whether you would like them to talk to the alleged harasser on your behalf.

6. Every effort should be made to use informal means, including considering alternative dispute resolution such as mediation or restorative justice, to stop the offensive behaviour before formal procedures are invoked. **It is worth discussing whether mediation is an appropriate response in the particular situation before proceeding further.** You should also make it clear that if the behaviour continues you will make a formal complaint. This may be enough to sort things out, particularly if the person(s) involved was/were unaware that their behaviour was causing offence.

7. Whenever possible, any complaint of bullying or harassment should be notified, in confidence, to your Incumbent or Archdeacon. Once the situation has been concluded, the Incumbent will monitor the situation as appropriate.

8. The transition to a formal process will involve consulting the Archdeacon. If the Archdeacon decides the matter is sufficiently serious, they will make a file note of action taken and with your permission, institute an investigation under the formal procedures. Harassment Advisers will be able to contribute to this decision-making process.



Appendix 3:

I have been accused of bullying or harassment, what can I do?

1. Bullying and harassment are matters that must be taken seriously. An accusation does not signify a judgement that you are guilty, and there will need to be a discussion with you in order to establish the true nature of the situation. It is possible that there might be a problem that has arisen because you have not realised the effect of your actions and you may not have intended the effects complained of.

2. The perception of the person complaining of bullying or harassment is, however, an important factor in determining whether or not harassment has taken place – simply to deny there is a problem, or that the problem lies with the person complaining won't normally be sufficient.

3. You are encouraged to contact your Incumbent or Rural Dean if you are accused of harassment. The aim of the person you contact will be to facilitate discussion with a view to resolving the problem at source if possible.

4. In many cases the problem will be resolved informally through discussion. You will be asked to reflect on your behaviour and the possibility that you might be at fault, whether consciously or not.

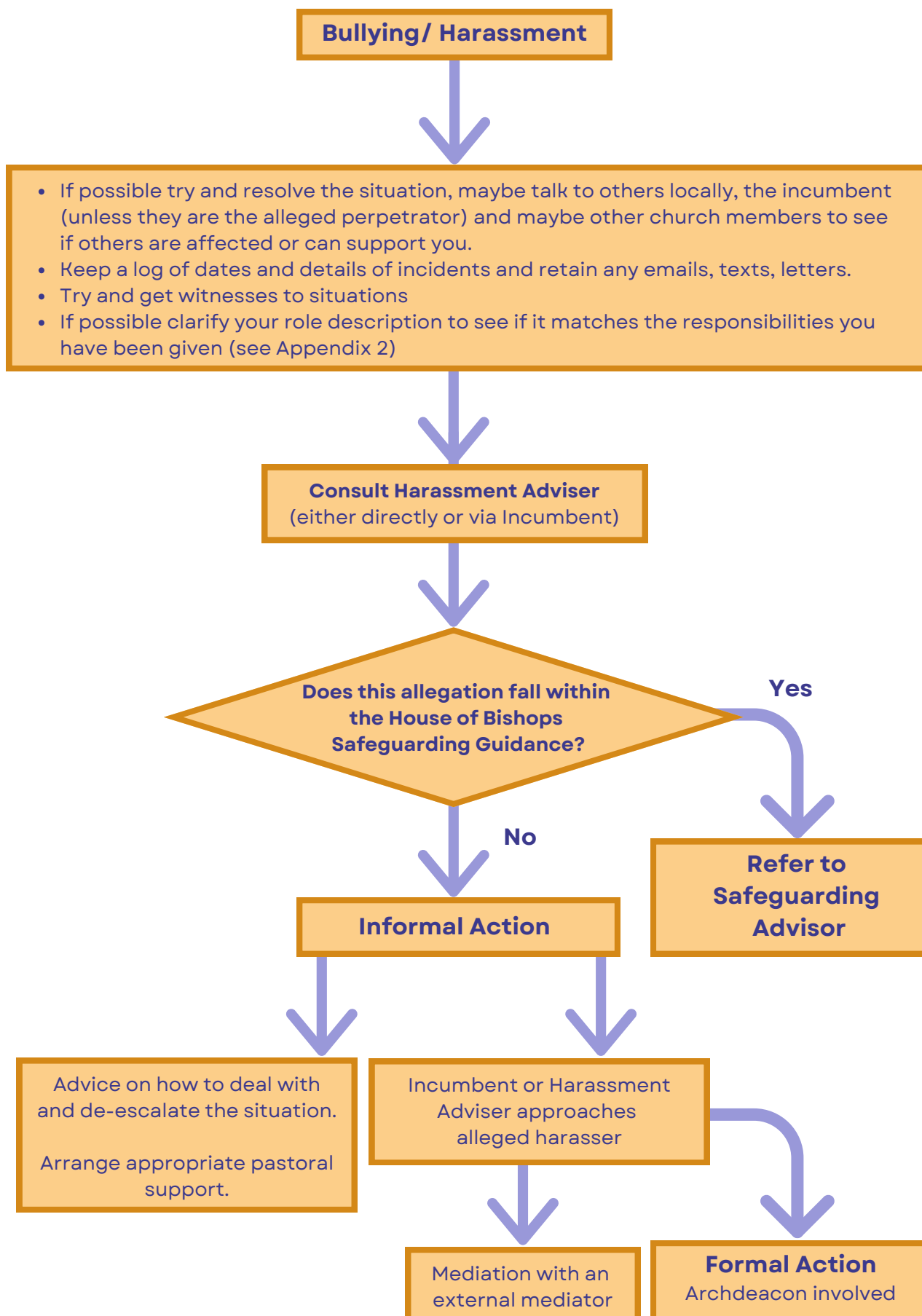
Mediation with an external mediator might be appropriate.

5. If an informal process is unsuccessful, consideration will be given to moving to a more formal process involving the Archdeacon. The Diocese must ensure that any formal procedures are fairly and properly followed. Details relating to the circumstances that gave rise to the complaint, the evidence of witnesses and the nature of the relationship between the person complaining and yourself will all be taken into account.

6. Throughout any informal or formal procedures the principal objective is that of identifying the underlying issues and eliminating the cause of offence as quickly as possible and with minimal recrimination.

7. As a result of informal or formal action you may be offered help to recognise, understand and modify your behaviour; you are strongly advised to accept this help. Under certain circumstances a refusal to accept help could be a disciplinary issue.

Appendix 4: Summary Flow Chart of Process



Violence and Aggression Policy:

A template for Parishes



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Violence and Aggression Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to address instances of unacceptable behaviour which may cause harm or the fear of harm to any person within **Parish/ Benefice**. The scope of this policy is therefore:

*Instances of violence or aggression committed by any person, towards any other person on the **Parish/ Benefice** premises, or whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the Incumbent, PCC, or whilst using parish social media accounts.*

2. Definition

- **Violence** is the use of force against a person and has the same definition as “assault” in law (i.e., an attempt, offer or application of force against the person). This would cover any person unlawfully touching any other person forcefully, spitting at another person, raising fists or verbally threatening to strike or otherwise apply force to any person.
- **Aggression** is regarded as threatening or abusive language or gestures, sexual gestures or behaviour, derogatory sexual or racial remarks, shouting at any person or applying force to any property in **Parish/ Benefice** or the personal property of any person in **Parish/ Benefice**.

This policy applies throughout the parish church of **Parish/ Benefice** itself and all other parish premises or social media.

3. Responsibilities

Officer holders, staff and volunteers should:

- Take responsibility to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues at work. It is essential, therefore, that all are familiar with policies and procedures, equipment and precautions adopted to combat the risk of physical and verbal abuse.
- Familiarise themselves with policies and procedures, guidelines and instructions.
- Use any equipment or devices provided for ‘at risk’ situations i.e., alarms, or walkie talkies.
- Participate in relevant training made available by the parish.
- Report all incidents of physical and verbal abuse (threatened or actual).
- Record details of incidents in compliance with parish procedures.
- Contribute towards reviews concerning any incidents in which they have been involved.
- Suggest precautionary measures involving changes in the layout of the work environment that can reduce risk.
- Make use of any available support and counselling.
- Advise the Health and Safety Officer of any perceived risks involved in parish activities.

The Responsibilities of the parish:

- Carry out risk assessments to assess and review the duties of office holders, staff and volunteers, identifying any ‘at risk’ situations and taking appropriate steps to reduce or remove the risk.
- Assess and review the layout of premises to reduce the risk to officer holders, staff, volunteers, visitors and worshippers.
- Assess and review the provision of personal safety equipment, i.e. alarms.

- Develop policies, procedures and guidelines for dealing with physical and verbal abuse.
- Provide support and counselling for victims of any incidents of violence and/or aggression or refer to suitably qualified health professionals.
- Make officer holders, staff and volunteers aware of risks and ensure the provision of relevant training courses.
- Record any incidents and take any remedial action to reduce the risk of similar incidents taking place.

4. What to do

If violence and aggression are encountered:

- In the first instance, office holders, staff or volunteers should ask the perpetrator to stop behaving in an unacceptable way and request assistance as soon as possible. Sometimes a calm and quiet approach will be all that is required. If the situation allows, try to obtain the person's name and address as this will assist with recording the incident.
- If the unacceptable behaviour continues after reasonable requests to stop, then the perpetrator should be requested to leave the parish premises.
- If the person is acting in an unacceptable and unlawful manner, causes damage or actually strikes another, then the police should be called immediately.
- If the police have been called office holders, staff and volunteers should attempt to evacuate the area and move themselves and visitors away from the person who is being violent or aggressive.
- Should it prove necessary to protect others or themselves from harm, then office holders, staff or volunteers should not, except on the most extreme occasions, attempt to physically intervene and use only reasonable force when doing so.

- Office holders, staff and volunteers who are involved in or witness an incident of violence or aggression must complete a written note of the incident, detailing in chronological order what has taken place and the exact words used, prior to leaving the building where possible.
- It is the policy of the parish to press charges against any person who damages or steals parish property or assaults any office holder, staff member or volunteer.

5. Procedure following an incident

The **Relevant Person** will:

- Review the incident with the office holder, staff member or volunteer immediately to determine severity
- Determine if the police should be called if they have not already (e.g., if a crime may have been committed)
- Make a record of the incident (even a brief record if it is a 'low-level' or repeat incident) to assist with building up a chronology of events should it be required by the police or another statutory agency. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed of additions to this log.
- If a person has been physically hurt, the incident must be additionally recorded in the relevant Accident Log
- Risk-assess whether any additional measures or changes in practice are needed.

6. Support for Office Holders, staff or volunteers subjected to abuse

The **Parish/ Benefice of XXX** takes a serious view of any incidents of physical and verbal abuse against those individuals affected and will support them if assaulted, threatened or harassed.

The first concern of **Parish/ Benefice** after an incident is to provide appropriate debriefing and counselling for those affected. Depending on the severity of the incident this counselling may be undertaken by trained professionals.

The **Relevant Person** will assist victims of violence with the completion of the formal record of the incident and where appropriate will report the incident to the police.

*This policy was approved by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this policy is **2 years**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature

Complaints Policy and Procedure:

A template for Parishes



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Notes for the PCC:

In adopting this policy, the PCC will need to decide:

- Who will receive complaints? This would normally be the PCC Secretary or Parish Administrator. It could be a Churchwarden or incumbent.
- Who will review complaints? The PCC should nominate a Complaints Committee (this should have a list of names with reserves if necessary) at the first meeting after the APCM each year. It may be that the PCC decides that the Standing Committee should act as the Complaints Committee.
- The timescales that will apply to complaints made to your PCC.

The Policy and Procedure should be adapted accordingly, including the link to the **Diocesan Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns Policy**. Having decided how to proceed the PCC will need to pass a resolution appointing the Complaints Committee, authorising it to act as such and requiring it to report back on its work.

The Diocesan Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns Policy can be found at: elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the board of Trustees of the parish church. It includes the vicar or minister of the parish and is a charity, governed by Charity Law and Church of England Canons and Measures. It is committed to its role which primarily includes “*co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.*” It strives to be open, honest, fair and responsible, but recognises that from time to time it will fall short of expectations and there may be a time when you need to complain. This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the PCC is responsible that have affected them. Prior to using this formal procedure, the PCC encourages an informal approach to the Vicar or a Churchwarden to see if the matter can be resolved in that way.

But if your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of Children or Vulnerable Adults; please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 01353 652747

The Vicar or another minister; please raise the matter with the Vicar. If the matter remains unresolved, you may contact an Archdeacon, at:
elydiocese.org/xdb/find-a-person

You may wish to read the leaflet “*I have a complaint about misconduct by a member of the clergy – what can I do?*” at:
[churchofengland.org - makingacomplaint](http://churchofengland.org-makingacomplaint)

Bullying or Harassment; you may find it helpful to consult the Diocesan policies on this at:
elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures

Your employment by the PCC; if you are a PCC employee please refer to and follow the grievance procedure provided for in your terms and conditions of employment.

Making a complaint to the PCC

Complaints should be made in writing or by email to the PCC Complaint Handler whose name and contact details are set out below. The PCC Complaint Handler will ensure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously,
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination,
- treated confidentially.

You should complain within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about. You need to set out:

- your personal details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail, etc.),
- a clear statement of what your complaint is,
- details about the complaint (when, where, what happened, etc.),
- the evidence you provide to justify the complaint (this may be statements, letters, etc.),
- a declaration that what you state is the truth,
- what (if anything) you think the PCC should do to put it right.

If someone else complains on your behalf, the PCC will need written confirmation from you saying that you agree for that person to act for you. If you have difficulty with written material, the PCC can provide a person to assist you.

The PCC Complaint Handler should immediately record receipt of a complaint in a log.

How your complaint will be dealt with

The PCC Complaint Handler will write to you or send you an email to confirm receipt of your complaint within **[X]** days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC's Complaints Committee. If your complaint refers to particular individuals who are members of the Complaints Committee, it will meet without them being present.

The PCC's Complaints Committee will look fairly into your complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any individuals, whether members of the PCC or otherwise, to which your complaint refers. The Complaints Committee may appoint one or more persons to look into the matter on its behalf but it will be the Complaints Committee that makes any decisions. The Complaints Committee and any such appointed persons will treat the matter confidentially.

The Complaints Committee may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend / representative if you wish. The meeting should be held as informally as possible. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be minuted by the Committee.

The PCC Complaint Handler will write to you with the conclusions from the PCC Complaints Committee's review and reasons for that outcome. The PCC Complaint Handler will aim to respond to you in this way as soon as possible, and no longer than 6 weeks after receipt of your complaint.

This will be the PCC's final response to your complaint.



Unacceptable behaviour

‘Unacceptable behaviour’ means acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone’s stress, frustration or anger. It may involve acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour might include someone harassing our staff or volunteers or continuing to contact us about a complaint which has been given a final response. We reserve the right to ignore complaints that are made accompanied by unacceptable behaviour, even if the complaint itself may be valid.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to consider contacting the Charity Commission, as while Parochial Church Councils are independent bodies, they are charities and as such are regulated by the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission can be contacted either via their website gov.uk/complain-about-charity or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

PCC Complaint Handler

Name & Address

Tel Number & email

*This policy was approved by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this policy is **2 years**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature

Whistleblowing Policy

A template for Parishes



Whistleblowing Policy

The Diocese of Ely is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the members of the Diocese, office holders, employees, workers and volunteer. Tackling problems is vitally important to maintaining the Diocese's financial health and achieving its charitable aims.

This policy aims to help office holders, employees, workers and volunteers in the Diocese to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or anything taking place in the Diocese with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

This policy is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the "Act") and other legislation which protects employees and workers who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

Although it was not previously thought that statutory protection under the Act extended to office holders or volunteers, in a recent judgment, the Supreme Court decided that judicial officers can seek the protection of whistleblowing legislation. The position regarding clergy has not been tested but, taking a cautious approach, this policy assumes that the courts would afford the same protection to clergy office holders. In addition, as it is considered best practice for charities to choose to extend similar protections to volunteers, the Diocese of Ely has chosen to extend the same protection to volunteers in so far as is possible and to treat all individuals making a disclosure in the spirit of the Act.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to everyone who works for and in or volunteers within the Diocese of Ely. This means employees, workers, office holders, volunteers, interns, contractors and trustees

What is Whistleblowing?

‘Whistleblowing’ refers to the internal or external disclosure of malpractice and serious suspected wrongdoing as well as illegal acts, or omissions, at work. It covers, for example, how we raise funds, how we commission work or make payments and where there has been a breach of a legal, statutory or regulatory requirement or unethical behaviour.

What types of concerns are covered by this Policy?

To use this whistleblowing policy and be legally protected under the Act, you must make a disclosure about a serious concern. This is known under the Act as a ‘qualifying disclosure’. This means you have information and reasonably believe that one or more of the following matters is happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future:

- (a) a criminal offence (including fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, e.g. theft, fraud or malpractice)
- (b) a miscarriage of justice
- (c) an act creating risk to health and safety
- (d) an act causing damage to the environment
- (e) a breach of any other legal obligation, or
- (f) concealment of any of the above



You do not need to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed.

You do, however, need to hold a reasonable belief of such an action having been, being or likely to be carried out.

If you feel unable to whistleblow internally, the matter may be reported directly to the relevant regulator, such as the Charity Commission or Church Commissioners.

What concerns cannot be raised as whistleblowing under this policy?

This whistleblowing policy does not apply to:

Complaints: A complaint that is an expression of your dissatisfaction which calls for a response. If you want to make a complaint about the Diocese of Ely or EDBF, you should use our complaints policy, which can be found at:

elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures

Safeguarding concerns: For safeguarding concerns please contact the Safeguarding team on **01353 652747**.

Concerns about other organisations: If you have concerns about the behaviour of another Church of England organisation e.g. local church, school or cathedral, you should raise them through that organisation, following any whistleblowing procedures it has.

Employment related concerns: This policy does not deal with any complaints employees may have about their own employment position, which should be addressed through the EDBF Grievance Procedure, which can be found at:

elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures



How to raise a concern

You should raise your whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. This will make it easier to act and to enable any problems to be resolved or reported quickly.

You can make your disclosure orally but written disclosures are preferable as these will make the process more efficient and effective. In your disclosure, you should:

- (a) provide any relevant context and background, including relevant dates, venues, names etc
- (b) state clearly the reason why the situation causes for concern.

You must say that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish your identity to be kept confidential. While we will make every effort to deal with your case confidentially, depending on the circumstances of the case this may not always be possible (e.g. if the police are involved). Where this is the case, you will be informed of this and the reasons why it was not possible. We prefer non-anonymous disclosures, as anonymity often makes it difficult to properly investigate concerns, protect employees or give feedback on outcomes.

If you are unsure whether to use this procedure, or you want independent advice at any stage, you should contact your trade union or an independent organisation such as Protect.

The **Diocesan Secretary** is designated to handle whistleblowing concerns within the Diocese and is the Diocesan Whistleblowing Officer.

The **Diocesan Secretary** can be contacted on 01353 652702 or diocesan.secretary@elydiocese.org.



You should report your concern in the first instance to your line manager where appropriate, or to the Whistleblowing Officer.

If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with the **Chair of the EDBF**, regardless of what it is about.

Protecting the individual raising the concern

If you raise a concern which you believe to be true, the Diocese of Ely will take appropriate action to protect you from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. Employees and workers who raise a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their job, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures.

The matter will be treated confidentially but if the concern cannot be resolved without revealing your identity, the Whistleblowing Officer (or other person managing the process, where the complaint involves the Whistleblowing Officer) will discuss with you whether and how to proceed. You should note that you will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, you commit a criminal offence.

How will the Diocese of Ely deal with the concern?

How the concern will be dealt with, will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by the Whistleblowing Officer (or other person managing the process, where the complaint involves the Whistleblowing Officer), through the disciplinary process or it may be referred to the police, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, a regulator, other agencies, an external auditor or an independent investigator.



Typically, the matters raised may result in one or more of the following:

- (a) no action required
- (b) action being taken under another policy or procedure
- (c) an internal investigation under this policy
- (d) a referral to the police or other relevant statutory body
- (e) a referral to Lambeth Palace
- (f) a referral to Diocese's external auditors
- (g) a Serious Incident Report being made to the Charity Commission
- (h) an independent enquiry.

It may be necessary for you to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. The Whistleblowing Officer (or other person managing the process, where the complaint involves the Whistleblowing Officer) will give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation, wherever possible.

Allegations that are malicious or known to the individual making them to be false

If it is found that you have knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation or you are involved in any way in the malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions, the Diocese of Ely will take appropriate action in accordance with the appropriate policy.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed and a record retained. Any person raising a concern under this policy will not suffer any detriment for raising the concern unless they are found to have made a malicious allegation.

*This policy was approved by the **Parish PCC** on
Day Month Year*

The review period for this policy is **2 years**.
Date of next review: **Month Year**

Signature



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Raising a Concern

Do you have concerns about safety in your Parish?

Who should you tell?

Office holders, lay staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns where:

- the law may have been broken
- Diocesan policies and procedures may have been breached
- there are concerns of a safeguarding nature

Office holders, lay staff and volunteers should initially raise any concerns with their Vicar, line manager, volunteer co-ordinator, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Archdeacon or Bishop.

Alternatively, Clergy, lay staff and volunteers may contact the **Diocesan Secretary** on **01353 652702** or diocesan.secretary@elydiocese.org

If the concern is related to **Safeguarding**, please contact the **Safeguarding Team** on **01353 652747**

You can read the Diocese of Ely's 'Raising Concerns' Policy on our website: elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures

If you are raising a **Whistleblowing** concern, please contact **Protect** on **0207 3117 2520** or whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Protect offer independent, free expert help and advice in relation to Whistleblowing.