

Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF) Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

The Diocese of Ely is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity and recognises that clergy, lay staff and volunteers are often the first to become aware of or identify serious concerns. When such concerns arise, barriers to coming forward could be in relation to misplaced loyalty to colleagues or the Church, or fear of harassment or victimisation.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the 'Act') protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with the Act, the Diocese of Ely welcomes staff members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Diocese's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within the Diocese.

The Church of England and Diocese of Ely rely heavily upon the contribution of volunteers and recognise that they are in an important position to recognise and report concerns. While voluntary roles are not included within the Act, the Diocese of Ely encourages volunteers to use this process with the relevant principles of protection applied to them.

This policy is in place to ensure that an internal process is available to encourage and enable workers and volunteers to raise serious concerns which would not meet the criteria for a complaint in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the Diocese of Ely continues to provide the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

All Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.

All Office Holders and lay staff are responsible for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour, safeguarding concerns and any health and safety risks. We also invite volunteers to raise these matters.

The Diocese of Ely does not tolerate victimisation or harassment and will take action to protect Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers when they raise a concern in good faith.

The Diocese of Ely will endeavour to protect the identity of any individual who raises a whistleblowing concern and wishes to remain anonymous. However, in certain circumstances, such as any inquiry arising from the concern, the individual may be required to provide a signed statement. In certain circumstances the Diocese may have to disclose the identity of the individual without their consent, for example where there is risk to others involved. The reasons for this will be discussed with the individual.

Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers who raise concerns will be given appropriate advice and support and kept informed in relation to the progress and outcome of any inquiries.

Any malicious or vexatious allegations made by clergy or lay staff may lead to a disciplinary process for the individual concerned.

How to raise a concern:

The Diocese of Ely recognises the difficulties in raising a concern about the behaviour of a colleague. However, raising the concern at an early stage may protect others, prevent the problem getting worse, and prevent individuals themselves becoming implicated

Office Holders, lay staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns in cases where:

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

Special Note: Safeguarding

The Diocese of Ely is committed to safeguarding the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk of harm. Concerns about the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm should be raised without delay to prevent any ongoing risk of harm.

If the individual who has a concern does not feel confident to report the matter within the Diocese they are encouraged to refer directly their relevant Local Authority or Constabulary

Who to tell:

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

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concerns and who might be involved.

Alternatively, clergy staff and volunteers may approach the following:

Paul Evans - Diocesan Secretary - 01353 652702 or 07837 767516
paul.evans@elydiocese.org

Rebecca - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser 01353 652731 or 07904 487912
rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org

Clergy staff and volunteers can call, write to, or arrange to meet with either of the above. In the case of a meeting, the individual raising the concern may wish to invite a supporter.

Written concerns should:

- identify that it is a whistleblowing disclosure;
- detail the background and history of the concerns;
- give, dates and places (where possible); and
- note the reasons why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.

What could happen?

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concern. The matter may be:

- investigated internally
- to the Police and / or other statutory agencies
- independently investigated
- referred for consideration under the Clergy Discipline Measure; or
- a combination of the above

Anonymous Allegations

The Diocese of Ely encourages staff, Office Holders and volunteers to identify themselves when reporting a concern. However, any anonymous concerns will be investigated as far as reasonably possible based upon the information provided.

Or contact:

Cambridgeshire or Norfolk Police - dial 101 or in an emergency dial 999

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Children's Services

Tel: 0345 045 5203 (Cambridgeshire)

Tel: 01733 864170 or 01733 864180 (Peterborough)

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Adult Services

Tel: 0345 045 5202 (Cambridgeshire)

Tel: 01733 747474 (Peterborough)

Emergency Out of hours (Cambridge & Peterborough Children and Adults) Tel: 01733 234724

Norfolk Children's Services

Tel: 0344 800 8020

Norfolk Adult Services

Tel: 0344 800 8020

Independent, free, expert help and advice in relation to whistleblowing is also available from **Protect**

Tel: 0207 3117 2520

whistle@protect-advice.org.uk