



## Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh

### SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINTS POLICY

This Policy is in accordance with the Archdiocesan Complaints Policy and has been approved by the Trustees of the Archdiocese. Our safeguarding complaints procedure looks at the way enquiries/cases were handled by our Safeguarding team.

The Archdiocese welcomes all forms of feedback, including concerns and complaints. We encourage members of the public to raise matters informally in the first instance. However, where informal discussion does not resolve the matter, or where the complainant does not feel able to raise the matter informally, the following procedure will be followed.

Our Safeguarding complaints procedure assists us to build positive relationships with our parish communities. We will strive to rebuild trust when things go wrong. We aim to address concerns or complaints effectively, resolve them in a timeous manner and learn from them so that we can make improvements.

#### **The definition of a safeguarding complaint is:**

An expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem about the Archdiocesan Safeguarding team.

#### **Where the team may have:**

- Done something wrong.
- Failed to do something it should have done.
- Acted unfairly.
- Not acted in accordance with the procedures as outlined in *In God's Image*.

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We welcome all feedback and can help with concerns or complaints about:

- **How a case was handled:** the way individual matters (enquiries/cases) were handled by our safeguarding team.
- **Personal experiences:** concerns or complaints around how a complainant was treated when in contact with our safeguarding team.

#### **What we cannot help with (safeguarding)**

- Any concerns or complaints unrelated to safeguarding.
- Complaints relating to members of a Religious Order. These cannot be resolved by the Archdiocese but will be forwarded to the Superior of the Religious Order.
- Any complaints which predate the implementation of this policy.

#### **Who can raise a concern or complaint?**

We understand that some people may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint, therefore we also accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our safeguarding team, and who has the written consent from the person making the complaint.

Those who may wish the services of an advocate from an advocacy service are welcome to nominate the person of their choice. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) can assist with signposting to advocacy services in the local area.

#### **How to contact us**

The quickest and most effective way to share feedback or raise a concern or complaint is to contact us via email, letter, or via our website tab. Emails or letters should be sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor or the Chief Operating Officer.

## **Raising a Safeguarding complaint**

### **Stage 1 Raising a Formal Complaint**

Concerns or complaints will be assessed by a member of the Archdiocesan safeguarding team. If the concern or complaint relates to a certain member or members of the safeguarding team, they will not be involved in the process.

As per **The Apologies (Scotland) Act 2016**, we will apologise where it is appropriate and aim to be open and honest with people when unintended harm or distress has resulted from actions of the Safeguarding Team.

We aim to acknowledge a complaint within five working days, setting out what further steps will be taken. The member of the Safeguarding Team designated to complete the Stage 1 will contact the complainant and give them the opportunity to discuss their concern or complaint either in a face to face meeting, in a telephone call or another method as selected by the complainant. The record of this interview will be available to the complainant.

The Stage 1 Review is normally completed within 20 working days. However, it may in some instances take longer. If this is the case, the complainant will be informed.

The person designated to complete Stage 1 will feedback in writing to the complainant.

Other parties may need to be consulted during this process. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response or the way it was handled, they can ask for a review of the case which will escalate the complaint to **Stage 2**.

### **Stage 2: Appealing a Stage 1 decision**

If Stage 1 has not been successful in resolving the concern, the complainant can ask for a review within fifteen days of receiving the outcome of Stage 1. This will be carried out by a senior person in the Archdiocese who has had no previous involvement in the case. The person who conducted Stage 1 enquiries will not be involved in decisions on Stage 2, to ensure objectivity and transparency of the assessment.

The person appointed to lead the Stage 2 appeal will follow the same procedure as for Stage 1.

The Stage 2 investigation should normally be completed within 20 working days however on occasion this may take longer. The designated investigator will feedback in writing to the complainant. Any learning or actions which arise during Stage 2 will be implemented.

### **Stage 3: Final Appeal**

If a complainant is still not satisfied with the Outcome of Stage 2, they can submit the reasons for this in writing. This will then be reviewed by a suitable person outwith the Archdiocese and a decision will be issued. This completes the complaints process.

Approved by Trustees, Nov 26, 2020