

Addendum to Diocese of Leicester Complaints Policy and Procedure

Vexatious complaints

Just as people have the right to complain when they believe that something is wrong, so staff, volunteers and clergy have the right to protection from complaints which are made aggressively, unnecessarily frequently, or without any foundation in fact.

Examples of what might be viewed as vexatious behaviour include

1. Repeated phone calls or emails during or after the complaints process making similar points to those already made.
2. Sending similar complaints to a range of diocesan staff or clergy when the matter is being attended to in line with the policy or when the procedure has been completed.
3. Lodging a series of similar or closely related complaints with the Diocese or other Church bodies.
4. Communication that is rude or personal, or unnecessarily persistent or repetitive.
5. Behaviour that causes undue stress to a member of staff, such as complaints about trivial matters that appear to be made with the express purpose of causing distress.

In the event that the Chief Executive or Bishop (or person delegated by them to handle a complaint) considers a complainant to be vexatious they will make contact with the complainant and either:

1. Ask the complainant to desist and explain that further contact will be ignored or blocked, usually giving an explanation as to why except where there are valid reasons why this is not possible or appropriate. OR
2. Ask the complainant to use the complaints policy and reassure them that the process will be followed explaining that the matter cannot be revived after the formal stage has been completed, other than by referring the matter to the Charity Commission.

Incidents of actual or alleged vexatious complaint will be reported to the Trustee Board of the DBF.

For the avoidance of doubt, this procedure covers “complaints’ or issues of concern about individual members of clergy” as described in the section of the Complaints Policy and Procedure under the heading ‘Complaints about clergy which may come under this policy’.