

Name	Date	Author	Owner	Next review
Complaints Policy and Process	March 2026	HR	Deputy Diocesan Secretary	March 2028

Complaints Policy and Process

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the various ways in which complaints to the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance will be responded to, and to ensure people working or volunteering in these offices, trustees, board and committee members know what to do when a complaint is received.

1.2. The overriding principles are that all complaints will be:

- normally in writing, anonymous complaints will rarely be followed up. If telephone or email complaints are raised, these will be followed up so that clear information is received/agreed with the complainant (e.g. telephone notes that are taken);
- responded to promptly and with confidentiality so that only those needing to know or be involved are included and in line with data protection rules;
- investigated fairly and with pastoral care and sensitivity;
- resolved as amicably as possible in any situation. Complainants, where appropriate, will be asked about how they would like their complaint(s) resolved if it is/they are upheld;
- reviewed by an appropriate member of diocesan senior staff (ordained or lay);
- reviewed at the end point to ensure learning takes place at organisation and other appropriate levels.

Complaints therefore can be made about issues of policy, action, or individual service/action by a member of (Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance – GDBF) staff or a Trustee/committee member.

1.3. The GDBF aims to be an open and transparent organisation which both welcomes and encourages challenge, where there are perceptions that decisions or actions may reflect potential discrimination. This applies to the widest contexts of justice and

equality, racial justice and all protected characteristics as set out in law.

- 1.4. Complaints cannot be made about decisions or actions that have been taken following legal national Church processes protocols, due process and appeal processes.
- 1.5. Under no circumstances will the GDBF accept vexatious, threatening or intimidating complaints made about any individual. These may be referred to the statutory authorities as appropriate.

2. Who can make a complaint and where should it be directed?

- 2.1. Complaints about a member of staff employed by the GDBF should be directed to the appropriate departmental senior manager, the HR Department, or the Diocesan Secretary. These will be followed up through normal HR processes and potentially may include, as appropriate, capability, and/or disciplinary processes
- 2.2. Complaints about a member of clergy should be directed to the relevant Archdeacon or the Bishop who will follow them up within the frameworks of national and diocesan protocols and policies.
- 2.3. Complaints about decisions taken by directors, boards or committees within the synodical context of the diocese should be directed to the Chair of that particular board or committee (information about them is available on the diocesan website or through Reception at Church House).
- 2.4. Internal complaints from and about diocesan employed staff should be taken up using the staff employment handbook's Grievance and Whistleblowing policies.
- 2.5. Complaints about the action of an individual member of a board or committee should be directed to the Chair of that board/committee so that appropriate follow-up can take place.
- 2.6. Complaints from diocesan clergy should be taken up using the grievance procedures outlined within the Clergy and Readers handbook ([Clergy and Readers' handbook – Diocese of Gloucester](#)).
- 2.7. Complaints about any diocesan safeguarding decisions should be directed to the Chair of the Safeguarding Advisory Panel. Please refer to the Safeguarding Complaints process by referring to this link: [Contacts – Diocese of Gloucester](#)
- 2.8. Concerns relating to local parochial issues or concerns should be directed to the local incumbent or PCC.

2.9. Concerns relating to a church school should be directed to the school's Chair of Governors so that the school's own complaints policy can be followed.

3. What will happen if a complaint is received?

- 3.1. A complaint received by email/letter will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will state what further steps will be taken, and what the complainant can expect will happen next. (Complaints could be varied, so it is important that each is dealt with according to issue, need, level of seriousness, further information needed, etc.).
- 3.2. Where a complaint is taken by telephone, the details will be confirmed including name, address, contact details, nature of complaint – and this will be passed on to the appropriate senior manager/Chair to call back to confirm the details and seek any clarification or further information that would be needed to progress the complaint.
- 3.3. Paperwork relating to all complaints received, actions taken, etc will be recorded and stored within data protection provisions.

4. How will complaints be progressed and resolved?

- 4.1. Wherever possible complaints will be resolved amicably, professionally and with pastoral care and sensitivity.
- 4.2. Individuals making complaints will be dealt with courteously and professionally. Information may be clarified and any further information sought.
- 4.3. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will set out how the complaint was progressed and conclusions and set out how a referral can be made (see Section 5 below).
- 4.4. As appropriate, where actions/decisions are taken in relation to a complaint, these will be shared with the complainant. This will not include personal employment information about any member of staff.
- 4.5. Each senior manager progressing a complaint will keep clear notes, and copies of any correspondence related to it (kept and stored within data protection provisions).

5. What happens if a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint?

- 5.1. Diocesan staff and clergy raising a complaint will be written to as part of their grievance, to confirm details of any appeal process.

- 5.2. All other complainants who feel that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at the first stages set out in 4 above are able to refer their complaint to the Diocesan Secretary or if they have already been involved the Chair of the Board of Finance. Either may appoint an independent board or committee member, or fellow member of senior staff who has not been involved at this stage to investigate what has occurred, review any paperwork and report back to them.
- 5.3. Referrals may take up to 28 days to complete (and practical extensions may be required) – however, the complainant will be kept informed about progress from the Diocesan Secretary/Chair of the Board Finance.

6. What is the role of the Charity Commission?

- 6.1. The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. The Commission's involvement in looking at complaints is limited to issues that pose a serious risk of significant harm to a charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website:
charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

7. Complaints involving others

- 7.1. As an employer the GDBF has a duty of care to ensure that all staff are treated with respect and dignity at work and managers take up this day-to-day responsibility.
- 7.2. On occasions, concerns and complaints may be raised against members of the public, contractors and others where their inappropriate use of language in diocesan work-related emails, phone calls and meetings has caused offence to members of diocesan staff.
- 7.3. All concerns should be raised with the immediate senior manager so that appropriate follow-up actions can be taken, and the Diocesan Secretary and Deputy Diocesan Secretary can provide further advice and guidance. They can be contacted via reception at Church House at RCH@glosdioc.org.uk

8. Making a complaint

- 8.1. Written complaints may be sent to the Diocesan Secretary or the Chair of the Board of Finance, or appropriate senior manager and addressed to: Church House, 5 Denmark Road, Gloucester, GL1 3HW.
- 8.2. Telephoned complaints can be made via Reception: 01452 410022

9. Reviewing this policy

- 9.1. The Diocesan Secretary and Deputy Diocesan Secretary are responsible for ensuring this policy is shared across the management structures of the central diocesan offices, and with key staff.
- 9.2. The Finance Committee may review this policy annually or at any time it sees fit. The date of the policy/policy version will be indicated at the beginning of this policy.