

DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE

Complaints Policy

Policy Summary

The complaints policy will be on the Diocesan website in an accessible format. This version will be available for internal use only.

The Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and its fully owned subsidiary, SDBF Building Consultancy Ltd (SDBFBC) aim to provide high quality services which meet your needs.

In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the processes available should you need to make a complaint. The policy comes into effect from 19th May 2023.

This policy covers the separate processes for complaints against:

- DBF and SDBFBC employees;
- DBF contracted volunteers including trustees; and
- Members of the clergy.

This policy does not cover:

- Complaints about parish volunteers;
- Safeguarding concerns (but does include complaints about the way a Safeguarding case is or has been handled);
- Internal grievances; or
- Whistleblowing.

We would also be delighted to know if you are happy with our services, in which case you should contact us on 01722 411922 or email parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org.

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1 Policy Overview

The Salisbury DBF takes complaints seriously about our work and quality of service in all aspects of the organisation. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn more about what is happening at parish level and improve the way we handle any concerns as part of our continuous support to the parishes.

There are separate processes for complaints about employees or contracted volunteers and complaints about members of the clergy. In handling these, the DBF aims to:

- be open and transparent about how complaints will be dealt with;
- ensure that all complaints are investigated appropriately;
- ensure that complaints are dealt with in a way that is timely and proportionate;
- maintain confidentiality at all times; and
- ensure that lessons are learned so that the DBF processes can continuously improve.

The DBF wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality of opportunity. It is a central part of the Christian faith that all human beings are created in the divine image and all are valued equally by God and share equally in God's love.

The DBF is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination in any form for employees of the DBF under the Equality Act (2010) and aims to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marital status;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, ethnicity, and nationality);
- gender;
- sexual orientation;
- political affiliation; or
- religion or belief.

The DBF is also committed to the principles within its Dignity at Work policy. For further information please contact the HR Support Officer. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details.

2 Signposting to sources of support

When things go wrong, it can be hard to know what to do. This section contains a list of links to resources and people who can help.

2.1 Complaints about parish volunteers

The DBF does not usually intervene with complaints about parish volunteers or church officers. The DBF is the legal entity for the Diocese of Salisbury. Parishes are their own separate legal entities and ideally should have their own complaints policy and procedure.

2.2 Safeguarding concerns

Please note, this procedure is not intended to provide a process for the resolution of safeguarding concerns or allegations. These should be reported in the usual way to your incumbent, Rural Dean, Archdeacon, Bishop, Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or another appropriate person who will refer your concern/s to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser within 24 hours, seeking guidance in line with the House of Bishops' Practice Guidance.

2.3 Grievances

A grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern by an DBF or SDBFBC employee about the way in which an internal matter has been dealt with. Members of clergy can also use the grievance process. For further information or to enquire about the DBF Grievance Procedure please contact the HR Support Officer. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details.

2.4 Whistleblowing (making a protected disclosure)

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work, e.g., an employee of the DBF or SDBFBC or member of clergy of the Diocese, breaking or proposing to break the law, acting dishonestly in any way, or otherwise seeking to cover up any wrongdoing.

Any matters concerning the DBF or SDBFBC employees should be reported to the Diocesan Secretary or the Director of Parish Support, Governance & Administration and will be dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy. For further information or to enquire about the DBF Whistleblowing Policy please contact the HR Support Officer. See [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details.

Any whistleblowing that relates to members of clergy should be addressed to the relevant Area Office. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the contact details of the Area Offices.

Any whistleblowing that relates to parish employees and volunteers should be addressed to the parish in line with their local procedures.

3 I have a complaint about a Salisbury DBF or SDBFBC employee or DBF contracted volunteer

The Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) and its fully owned subsidiary, SDBF Building Consultancy Ltd (SDBFBC) aim to provide high quality services which meet your needs. This section provides guidance on how to make a complaint about an employee or contracted volunteer and how your complaint will be handled.

Please note, we do not encourage anonymous complaints as this may make proper investigation difficult. If, however, you have a particular requirement for confidentiality we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those directly involved with investigating your concern.

3.1 Informal Stage

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue that is being complained about or at the closest level to the person/organisation being complained about.

We expect that all reasonable efforts will have been made to resolve a concern swiftly and informally if possible and appropriate. However, we appreciate that this may not always be possible or appropriate and therefore have the following process in order to deal formally with all complaints raised.

3.2 Formal Stage 1

In the first instance, the complaint about the handling of a matter should be made to the Diocesan Secretary. If the complaint is about the Diocesan Secretary, then the complaint should be addressed to the DBF Chair. This can be in writing (letter or email) or by telephone. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details. All telephone conversations will be recorded in writing and shared with the complainant to ensure accuracy.

You may need to be prepared to share information on:

- what the complaint is about;
- the full name of the person who is complaining;
- the desired outcome; and
- the contact information of the complainant.

All written complaints will be logged.

The Diocesan Secretary or the DBF Chair (if the complaint is about the Diocesan Secretary) will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within ten working days (from the date we receive the complaint); and
- confirm when a response can be expected. The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within fifteen working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with.

If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

It is hoped that an acceptable resolution will be found and that the complaint can be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at this level.

3.3 Formal Stage 2 – Appeal

If the complainant is not happy with the proposed resolution of their complaint at stage one, then within two weeks of being notified of the proposed resolution they can appeal by informing the DBF Chair, who will report the matter to the Diocesan Bishop. This may also be referred to the next meeting of the Trustees (Bishop's Council), who will decide on any further steps to resolve the situation.

If the complaint is in relation to the handling of a safeguarding matter and the complaint remains unresolved or some form of appeal is received, the Diocesan Secretary or DBF Chair can refer the matter to the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel or the National Safeguarding Team for further advice and involvement as necessary.

If the complaint is about the Diocesan Secretary or the DBF Chair, then please contact the Bishop of Salisbury. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details for both the DBF Chair and the Bishop of Salisbury.

The DBF Chair (or Bishop if applicable as stated above) will:

- acknowledge receipt of the stage two complaint;
- confirm when a response can be expected. The aim will be for complainants to receive a definitive reply within four working weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a further letter or email will be sent indicating when a full reply will be given;
- review all documentation and actions taken. Discuss with the complainant the situation from their perspective and why resolution could not be reached. All conversations will be recorded in writing and shared with the complainant for accuracy; and

- reply to the complainant within four weeks, where possible, and inform them of the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation under formal stage 2, and any action to be taken as a result of the complaint. This will be the final stage.

4 I have a complaint about a member of the clergy or lay minister.

We expect a high standard of integrity and service from all our ministers. Mostly that standard is met, but occasionally individuals fall short of what is expected of them. This section provides guidance on how to make a complaint about a member of clergy and how your complaint will be handled.

Complaints regarding licensed lay ministers should be raised with the Bishop of Sherborne.

Complaints regarding Archdeacons should be raised with the Bishop of Salisbury.

4.1 Informal Stage

When an incident occurs, you are encouraged to share your disappointment with the clergy person concerned and do your best to resolve the problem together. If, however, the situation remains unresolved, please contact your Archdeacon or Rural Dean. The relevant Area Office can advise on this. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for their contact details.

The Archdeacon or Rural Dean will speak to the member of clergy so that the matter can be dealt with and sorted out informally. This can be done in a variety of ways, including the possibility of having a facilitated discussion with the assistance of a trained mediator. *[The process for addressing informal complaints is being developed as part of the review of CDM and this will be updated in light of any changes we may decide to adopt.]*

The role of mediation

Mediation is a completely voluntary and confidential form of alternative dispute resolution. It involves an independent, impartial person helping two or more individuals or groups reach a solution that is acceptable to everyone. It can be helpful in order to resolve a situation quickly and without the need for it to go through the complaints procedure.

Mediation is distinct from a facilitated meeting:

- it is a voluntary process and there has to be will on both sides to reach a solution;
- the disputants (not the mediator) decide on the terms of resolution; and
- the mediator does not offer advice or solutions.

It can be effective because it does not apportion blame and seeks to build a good working relationship going forward.

It is not appropriate where pressure is being applied from other sources or where parties are distressed and not conciliatory on either side.

Further information on the mediation services available can be obtained by speaking to your Archdeacon or contacting the Director of Mission and Ministry). Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details.

The outcome of the informal stage

At the end of this process, the Archdeacon or Rural Dean will ask you whether your complaint has been resolved.

Informal resolution is where it has been decided (normally between the targeted person and the Archdeacon) that it may be sufficient to explain clearly to the person concerned that their behaviour is not welcome, is offensive or intimidating, or that it interferes with the person's ability to work effectively.

The informal route prevents the matter from becoming public or escalating and making the situation more difficult.

4.2 Formal Stage – Clergy Discipline Measure

If the complaint has not been resolved through the informal stage, then the complainant may wish to make a formal complaint in line with the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM). Please note that this stage will begin a legal process which this policy therefore signposts and does not determine. All admitted to Holy Orders in the Church of England are covered by the Measure, whether or not in active ministry.

Further information about the Clergy Discipline Measure can be found on the [Church of England's website](#). This contains information about the CDM process, including:

- grounds for a formal complaint under CDM;
- who can complain?
- how to make a formal complaint using forms and information available;
- the time limits for the procedure;
- what happens next?

The website provides details of how to make a formal complaint which will be made to the Bishop of Salisbury. Please see [Section 6.1](#) for the relevant contact details. The guidance also provides the process available if the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision. The [Clergy Discipline Appeals Rules](#) has further information on the appeals process.

The [Church of England Website Code of Practice](#) has guidance for clergy where a complaint has been made against them. Clergy are asked to note declarations under Section 8 by the House of Bishops under the [Clergy Discipline Measure](#).

5 Monitoring complaints and lessons learned

The DBF takes complaints seriously. To this end we will:

- maintain a log of all formal complaints received and their resolution;
- ensure that information relating to complaints is treated sensitively, confidentially and only shared with those involved in resolving the complaint;
- ensure that personal data relating to complaints is stored securely and processed in line with our data protection policy and procedures;
- undertake reviews in order to ensure that complaints are resolved satisfactorily; and
- use anonymised information from complaints to make sure we learn and improve our services.

6 Useful contacts and links

The Diocesan website contains a helpful [Who's Who](#) guide.

6.1 Useful contacts

Area Offices

Ramsbury Office – email ramsbury.off@salisbury.anglican.org – the office covers the archdeaonries of Sarum and Wilts

Telephone number: 07917 912185

Please address your correspondence to either:

The Venerable Alan Jeans – Archdeacon of Sarum

The Venerable Sue Groom – Archdeacon of Wilts

Sherborne Office - email Sherborne.office@salisbury.anglican.org – the office covers the archdeaonries of Dorset and Sherborne.

Telephone number: 01258 444521

Please address your correspondence to:

The Venerable Penny Sayer – Archdeacon of Sherborne and Acting Archdeacon of Dorset

Bishop of Salisbury

The Right Reverend Stephen Lake - email bishop.salisbury@salisbury.anglican.org

Telephone number: 01722 334031

Bishop of Sherborne

The Right Reverend Karen Gorham – email bishop.sherborne@salisbury.anglican.org

DBF Contacts

Please use telephone number: 01722 411922

Diocesan Secretary

Mr. David Pain - email david.pain@salisbury.anglican.org

DBF Chair

Mrs. Jane McCormick - email jane.mccormick@salisbury.anglican.org

Director of Mission and Ministry and Deputy Diocesan Secretary

The Reverend Canon Jonathan Triffitt – email jonathan.triffitt@salisbury.anglican.org

Director of Parish Support, Governance & Administration

Mrs. Elizabeth Harvey - email elizabeth.harvey@salisbury.anglican.org

HR Support Officer

Mrs. Natalie Morton - email hradmin@salisbury.anglican.org

Safeguarding Advisers

Mr. Jem Carter - email jem.carter@salisbury.anglican.org

Mrs. Suzy Futcher - email suzy.futcher@salisbury.anglican.org

For further information on contacts within the Diocese of Salisbury, please refer to the [Who's who page](#) on the Diocesan website.

6.2 Useful links

The [Parish Resources](#) website provides helpful information and examples for parish policies.

The [Church Urban Fund](#) has resources and policies for Working with Volunteers.

The Church of England's website provides further information on the [Clergy Discipline Measure](#), including the appeals process.

The [Diocesan Registry](#) can provide legal advice on areas such as Churchwardens and PCC Officers.

The [Church of England](#) example of a problem solving procedure for parishes.

Approve and Review

Policy applicable to:	Complaints against DBF and SDBFBC employees, DBF contracted volunteers including trustees, and members of the clergy.
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