

ANNEX B

I have been accused of bullying or harassment, what can I do?

1. Bullying and harassment are matters that must be taken seriously. An accusation does not signify a judgement that you are guilty, and there will need to be a discussion with you in order to establish the true nature of the situation. It is possible that there might be a problem that has arisen because you have not realised the effect of your actions and you may not have intended the effects complained of.

2. The perception of the person complaining of bullying or harassment is, however, an important factor in determining whether or not harassment has taken place - simply to deny there is a problem, or that the problem lies with the person complaining won't normally be sufficient.

3. You are encouraged to contact your Archdeacon, or Suffragan Bishop if you are accused of harassment. The aim of the person you contact will be to facilitate discussion with a view to resolving the problem at source if possible.

The Diocesan Human Resource Team can find you someone who can support you, who will meet with you in private to talk through your position. They will advise you on procedures for dealing with claims or bullying and harassment, and help to clarify your behaviour may be having, so that you can decide what you want to do about it. Anyone who is being accused of bullying or harassment are encouraged to ask for support. Please contact the Head of HR at the Diocesan Office, Old Alresford Place.

4. In many cases the problem will be resolved informally through discussion. You will be asked to reflect on your behaviour and the possibility that you might be at fault, whether consciously or not.

5. The diocese will ensure that any formal procedures are fairly and properly followed. Details relating to the circumstances that gave rise to the complaint, the evidence of witnesses and the nature of the professional relationship between the person complaining and yourself will all be taken into account.

6. If you are clergy or a licensed lay minister accused of bullying another minister, a formal complaint may be made under the Grievance Procedure for Licensed Ministers. If you are a clergy person accused of bullying other clergy or laity, there will be consideration of whether the matter constitutes misconduct under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

7. If you are a lay person accused of bullying a minister or another member of the laity this may be dealt with in various ways depending on your position.

8. Throughout any informal or formal procedures the principal objective is that of identifying the underlying issues and eliminating the cause of offence as quickly as possible and with minimal recrimination.

9. As a result of informal or formal action you may be offered help to recognise, understand and modify your behaviour; you are strongly advised to accept this help. Under certain circumstances refusal to accept help could be a disciplinary issue.

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