



## Diocese Of Derry

# Guidance on Complaints Procedure for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse

### Introduction

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of behaviour. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints, and should always be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedures. This complaints procedure is not for use by Church personnel who would use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise their complaint.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parents/guardians, children/young people, volunteers/members of staff and clergy, as appropriate.

Parents/guardians, young people/children, volunteers, members of staff and clergy will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure.

If a parent/guardian, young person or child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity, the following steps should be taken:

### First step

All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the Church personnel involved. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.

### Second step

1. The Church authority should be contacted by completing a complaints form. The Church authority has eight weeks to consider the complaint.
2. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
3. All complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
4. The Church authority may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. They will do this within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.
5. Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the Church authority will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
6. If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Church authority will issue a detailed



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written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty- one calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.

7. If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Church authority again.

At the conclusion of this step, the Church authority may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, the Church authority decides not to take further action, the process is completed.



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## **Complaints Form**

All complaints arising during a Church-related activity (with the exception of complaints about child abuse) should attempt to be resolved by discussion between the parties involved. If this is not possible, this form should be completed and sent to the Church authority.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of complaint (*continue on separate sheet if necessary*):**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_