



# **Diocese of Nottingham**

## **Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Policy Statement**

The Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust ("the Diocese") is committed to providing a positive working environment founded on respect, fairness and dignity.

The Diocese encourages open communication so that concerns can be raised and resolved informally, quickly and constructively.

This Policy provides a clear, fair and transparent process for addressing grievances in line with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

It also reflects the ethos of the Catholic Church, recognising that each person has inherent dignity and should be treated with integrity and compassion.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time

### **2. Policy Ownership and Governance**

This policy is owned by the Diocesan Board of Trustees, who are the charity's legal entity and hold ultimate accountability for operations across the Diocese of Nottingham.

The Diocesan Trustees recognise that no policy can anticipate every possible scenario. For documented and justified reasons, the Diocesan Board of Trustees may authorise a variation from the procedures set out in this document where is considered appropriate.

### **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to all employees of the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust ("the Diocese"), including permanent, fixed-term, part-time and casual employees.

At the sole discretion of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the principles of this procedure may also be applied, where considered appropriate, in relation to formal concerns raised by:

- diocesan clergy who are office-holders,
- diocesan trustees,
- diocesan volunteers.

where the grievance relates to the conduct or decisions of an employee, clergy line-manager or trustee, and where no other procedure is more appropriate.

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### **3.1. Matters Covered by this Procedure**

This procedure is available for resolving grievances relating to an employee's work within the Diocese and the conduct or decisions of an employee, clergy line-manager or trustee, where no other procedure is more appropriate, including: -

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Work relationships, management actions or workplace environment
- Bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination
- Organisational change or working practices
- Breaches of Diocesan policy or unfair treatment

This Procedure is intended to address and resolve current work-related concerns. Historical matters may be considered where they are necessary to understand or resolve a current grievance.

### **3.2. Matters Not Covered by this Procedure**

This procedure will not ordinarily apply to complaints or appeals concerning:

#### **3.2.1. Other procedures while they are ongoing**

Complaints about the use of another procedure (such as disciplinary, capability, restructuring or performance management).

#### **3.2.2. Appeals**

- Appeals against disciplinary sanctions
- Appeals against decisions to terminate employment for any reason
- Appeals concerning redundancy selection
- Appeals concerning pay or grading (covered by the Pay Policy)

#### **3.2.3. Safeguarding matters**

Any allegation or concern relating to safeguarding children or adults at risk must be managed under the Diocese's Safeguarding Policies and statutory safeguarding requirements.

The grievance procedure may be suspended where safeguarding procedures take precedence.

#### **3.2.4. Whistleblowing disclosures**

Whistleblowing disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act are more appropriately covered by the Diocesan Whistleblowing Policy.

#### **3.2.5. Pension matters**

Disputes relating to pension administration or decisions.

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### **3.2.6. Complaints about people who are not employees, clergy office-holders or trustees of the Diocese**

Complaints against clergy (other than office-holders), volunteers, parishioners or members of the public should normally be raised under the Diocesan Complaints Policy, unless they concern the actions of an employee, clergy office-holder or trustee of the Diocese.

### **3.2.7. Collective grievances**

Collective grievances raised by more than one employee or by trade union representatives will be handled in accordance with Appendix A – Collective Grievances.

### **3.2.8. Matters more than 3 months old**

A grievance regarding events more than three months old will not normally be considered unless it:

- relates to a current problem or ongoing behaviour, or
- forms part of a pattern relevant to a current grievance.

### **3.2.9. Statutory consultation processes**

Complaints about matters that are part of a statutory consultation process (except where the grievance concerns the fair implementation of that process).

## **4. Guiding Principles**

- Fairness & Natural Justice: All relevant parties will have the opportunity to state their case/version of events, and no one will judge their own case.
- Independence: Grievances will be investigated by an appropriate independent person.
- Confidentiality and Transparency: All information will be handled sensitively and as confidentially as possible. However, in some cases, investigations will need to be carried out that may involve other people who may need to be notified of the nature of the allegations. In addition, as set out above, anyone who is the subject of allegations is entitled to know the nature of any allegations made against them. All those involved will be told to keep discussions confidential. If any employees breach this requirement, then the Diocese may take disciplinary action against them.
- Representation: Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at any formal grievance hearing, but not at investigation meetings.
- Written Reasons: Decisions will be set out in writing, giving clear reasons.
- Timeliness: Matters will be addressed as promptly and proportionately as reasonably possible.
- Faith Ethos: All conduct and decisions should reflect the Church's values of respect, truth, and reconciliation.

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### **5. Informal Resolution**

- 5.1. The Diocese encourages employees to resolve grievances informally and without recourse to the formal grievance procedure wherever possible.
- 5.2. Before invoking the formal procedure, an employee should try to resolve grievances informally through open discussion with their line manager or another appropriate senior manager or, where possible, with the other party.
- 5.3. Mediation may be offered at this stage where both parties agree.
- 5.4. Where a grievance is raised informally, in order to reach a resolution, the employee raising the grievance will need to be able to explain what outcome is being sought.
- 5.5. To invoke the Formal Procedure, it will be necessary to detail the steps taken to achieve resolution informally and why these have been unsuccessful or, if informal resolution has not been attempted, why informal resolution cannot be undertaken.
- 5.6. If the grievance has been raised without attempts to resolve it informally, and unless there are very good reasons for not attempting informal resolution, the Diocese will usually take steps to explore and encourage informal resolution initially.
- 5.7. If the grievance concerns the line manager, it may be raised with the COO or another senior officer who will attempt to assist in reaching an informal resolution. If the grievance concerns the COO, it may be raised with the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration.

### **6. Formal Procedure**

#### **Stage 1 - Written Grievance Submission**

Submit a written statement (Form GR1 – see Appendix B) to the COO, outlining:

- The nature of the grievance, relevant dates, facts, and persons involved
- The outcome sought
- Steps taken to achieve informal resolution and why these have failed, or the reasons why informal resolution cannot be attempted.

#### **Stage 2 – Preliminary Review**

The COO (or delegate) will carry out a preliminary review to determine:

- Whether the matter could be resolved through mediation or informal action
- Who should conduct any investigation (see Stage 3)

Where the grievance concerns the COO, the grievance should be submitted to the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration who will appoint an appropriate individual to undertake the preliminary review.

Normally, the aim will be to complete Stage 2 issue a written acceptance of the Grievance Statement Form GR1, within 10 working days.

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### **Stage 3 – Investigation**

- 1) An independent investigator will be appointed on behalf of the Trustees by the COO (or if the COO is the subject, by the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration or an uninvolved trustee). Under this policy, trustees will not ordinarily investigate grievances brought by or against another trustee, and clergy will not ordinarily investigate grievances brought by or against another member of diocesan clergy.
- 2) We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases, we may hold a grievance meeting to understand additional information in relation to a grievance and to identify what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases, we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision.
- 3) The investigator will:
  - Obtain relevant witness statements
  - Collate and examine all relevant documents and correspondence
  - If necessary, meet with the complainant
  - Meet with the respondent(s) separately
  - Offer each the opportunity to be heard and respond to evidence
  - Provide each with a copy of the notes from their investigation meetings and request confirmation or correction as appropriate.
- 4) Submission of Investigator's Report and Recommendations
  - i. When the investigation is completed, the investigator will prepare a written report setting out:
    - the findings of fact
    - the evidence relied upon
    - any relevant context
    - and any recommendations the investigator considers appropriate
  - ii. The investigator's report and recommendations will be submitted only to the Grievance Decision Maker (normally the COO, or where appropriate the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration, or an appointed Trustee panel).
  - iii. The investigator will not provide findings or recommendations, formally or informally, directly to the complainant, the respondent, or any other party involved in the grievance.
  - iv. The role of the investigator is advisory and fact-finding only. The investigator does not determine the grievance outcome and has no authority to implement any recommendations.

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#### **5) Consideration and Determination by the Grievance Decision Maker**

- i. The Grievance Decision Maker will:
  - review the investigator's findings
  - consider each recommendation on its merits
  - determine whether to accept, modify or reject each recommendation
  - ensure that the decision is reasonable, evidence-based and consistent with diocesan policy, employment law and good practice
- ii. Where required, the Grievance Decision Maker will:
  - seek HR or legal advice
  - request clarification from the investigator or further investigation
  - consult with senior managers where implementation has organisational implications

#### **Stage 4 – Resolution Meeting**

The Grievance Decision Maker may convene a formal meeting with the complainant (and separately, where relevant, the respondent) to discuss the findings and proposed outcome.

Employees may be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague.

#### **Stage 5 - Notification of Outcome**

- 1) Following the Resolution Meeting, the Grievance Decision Maker will then issue a written outcome letter to the complainant, which:
  - states whether the grievance is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld
  - provides a clear explanation of the findings and the reasons for the outcome
  - sets out what actions (if any) will be taken to resolve the grievance
  - specifies who is responsible for implementation and timescales where appropriate
- 2) The written outcome will include only those recommendations that the Grievance Decision Maker has accepted or adapted; recommendations rejected for sound reasons will not be adopted into the decision.
- 3) Where necessary, the Grievance Decision Maker will write to the respondent to confirm:
  - whether the grievance is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld
  - to set out what actions (if any) will be taken in respect of the grievance
- 4) Normally, the aim will be to issue written outcomes within 3 months of written acceptance of a Formal Grievance Statement Form GR1.

#### **Stage 6 - Implementation of Agreed Actions**

- 1) Responsibility for implementing the agreed actions rests with the manager or senior officer who has:
  - line-management responsibility for the area or staff involved; or
  - operational authority over the system, process or environment requiring change.

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2) The Grievance Decision Maker will:

- notify the relevant manager(s) of the actions required
- ensure the manager understands what must be done and by when
- provide direction where actions require authority beyond the local manager's remit

3) HR will support and monitor the implementation of actions, ensuring:

- procedural compliance
- timescales are met wherever practicable
- any legal or policy considerations are properly addressed

4) Where the recommended actions relate to:

- the behaviour or conduct of a particular manager, or
- the handling of procedures by a particular senior officer,

implementation must be overseen by an uninvolved senior manager, the COO, or, where appropriate, the Episcopal Vicar or Trustees, to avoid any conflict of interest.

5) Where recommended actions identify weaknesses in policy, culture, processes or systems, the COO will ensure the matter is escalated to the appropriate senior body (e.g., Trustees, HR Committee, Safeguarding Committee) for organisational learning and improvement.

#### **7. Appeal**

1) If the complainant is dissatisfied with the grievance outcome, they may appeal using Form GR2 (see Appendix C) in writing to the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration within 10 working days of receiving the written outcome.

2) Grounds for appeal are a reasonable belief that:-

- the outcome of the original grievance was wrong or unfair.
- the procedure was not followed correctly or fairly.
- there is new evidence to present.

3) An appeal meeting will be held. The appeal hearing will be conducted by an Appeal Manager appointed by the Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration. Where practicable this will be a senior manager or a trustee or an Episcopal Vicar who has not been previously involved in the case and is senior to the individual who conducted the previous meeting. Alternatively, an Appeals Panel may be appointed at the discretion of the Trustees.

4) The decision of the Appeal Manager or Appeal Panel is final and, where reasonably practicable, will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days. The Appeal Manager or Panel will endeavour to keep the complainant informed of any delay in providing written confirmation of their decision. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right of appeal.

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### 8. Safeguards and Good Practice

- False or Malicious Grievances: Knowingly false or vexatious complaints may result in disciplinary action.
- Protection from Victimisation: No employee will suffer detriment for raising a genuine grievance.
- Overlap with Other Procedures: Where a grievance arises during disciplinary or safeguarding processes, HR will determine whether to suspend or continue either process, ensuring fairness and compliance with safeguarding requirements.
- Record-Keeping: Confidential records will be securely retained for a minimum of six years in accordance with data protection law.

### 9. Forms

- Form GR1 – Grievance Statement (Appendix B)
- Form GR2 – Appeal Form (Appendix C)

### 10. Related Policies

- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding Policies
- Dignity at Work / Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection Policy

### 11. Monitoring and Learning

An annual report of grievances will be provided to Trustees. Annual monitoring will inform Trustees and senior leadership of any systemic issues, patterns, or training needs.

Learning points will be incorporated into workforce planning, training initiatives and management development.

### 12. Approval and Review

This Policy has been approved by the Diocesan Board of Trustees and will be reviewed after three years or earlier if required by changes in law, ACAS guidance, or charity governance.

Responsible officer	<b>David Lawes (COO NRC DT)</b>
Date first approved by Trustees	<b>11 December 2025</b>
Last Reviewed by Trustees	
Next review date	<b>December 2026</b>
Author	<b>David Lawes</b>



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## **Appendix A: Collective Grievances**

### **1. Definition**

A collective grievance arises where two or more employees raise the same or substantially similar concern, relating to or arising out of the same facts, issues, or management action, and seeking the same or similar outcome.

Each individual employee involved in the collective grievance must be able to show how they have been individually and directly impacted by the specific concern or concerns raised.

Where collective grievances concern different issues, they will usually be handled individually unless the COO (or delegate) decides that grouping them is fair, appropriate, and administratively efficient.

### **2. Representation**

For efficiency and clarity, employees raising a collective grievance must:

- submit a joint written statement, signed by all employees involved
- nominate one or more representatives to act on behalf of the group in meetings and correspondence
- confirm whether a trade union representative is leading or supporting the grievance

Representatives act as a central point of communication.

Employees retain the right, if they wish, to raise matters privately where they involve personal data or individual circumstances, subject to HR advice.

### **3. Informal Resolution**

Before the formal procedure is triggered, the group's nominated representative(s) should:

- attempt informal resolution with the relevant manager, or
- request facilitated discussion or mediation, if appropriate

Where informal methods are not suitable or do not resolve the matter, the group may proceed to a formal collective grievance.

### **4. Formal Collective Grievance Procedure**

The formal process largely mirrors that for individual grievances, with the following specific adjustments:

#### **4.1. Submission**

The joint grievance statement (Form GR1) must:

- clearly describe the shared issue(s) and facts
- list all employees joining the grievance
- name the group representative(s)
- identify the outcome sought

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#### **4.2. Preliminary Review**

The COO (or Episcopal Vicar for Finance and Administration if the grievance concerns the COO) will undertake a preliminary review, deciding whether:

- the matter is appropriate for collective handling or matters should be dealt with individually
- mediation or informal options remain suitable
- safeguarding, whistleblowing, or another specialist procedure applies instead

#### **4.3. Investigation**

If further investigation is required:

- an appropriate independent investigator will be appointed on behalf of the Trustees
- the investigator will normally meet only with the nominated representative(s), unless individual evidence is required
- the principles of natural justice, fairness, confidentiality, and proportionality apply as in individual cases

The investigator will produce a written report summarising their findings and recommendations.

#### **4.4. Resolution Meeting**

The COO or delegate (appointed per the main policy) will:

- meet with the representative(s)
- discuss the findings and proposed outcome
- attempt to reach a constructive and workable resolution

#### **4.5. Outcome**

The outcome letter will:

- be issued to the nominated representative(s)
- set out whether the grievance is upheld (in whole or part) and the actions to be taken
- be copied individually to each employee involved

Where outcomes differ between employees for legitimate reasons (e.g., personal impact), these will be communicated individually.

### **5. Appeals**

The group may appeal the outcome within the specified timescale by submitting a joint Appeal Statement Form GR2 (Appendix C).

Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Manager or an Appeals Panel (appointed at the discretion of the Trustees) whose final decision will be confirmed in writing to the representative(s).

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#### **6. Withdrawal or Fragmentation**

If some employees withdraw from a collective grievance:

- the grievance may continue as a collective grievance if at least two employees remain, or
- it may revert to individual grievances, as appropriate

If the group splits due to differing facts or desired outcomes, the COO or delegate may separate the grievances to ensure fairness.

#### **7. Collective Disputes**

If the issue escalates into a collective dispute (e.g., widespread staff concern, union involvement, or systemic organisational issue), the matter may be referred to an agreed HR dispute resolution framework.

The COO and Trustees will determine the appropriate route.

#### **8. Confidentiality**

While the collective nature of the grievance requires some shared information, the Diocese will:

- protect each employee's personal data
- ensure that sensitive individual issues are handled separately
- provide only necessary information to representatives

Misuse or disclosure of confidential information may lead to disciplinary action.

## FORMAL GRIEVANCE STATEMENT – FORM GR1

### To be completed by the grievant

If informal attempts have failed to resolve your grievance this form should be completed and sent to your line manager with a copy sent to the Human Resources Team (email: [HR.assistant@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:HR.assistant@dioceseofnottingham.uk)). Where appropriate or necessary, additional pages may be submitted with this form. You should ensure that any supporting documentation is submitted with this form.

Personal Details	
Name:	Job Title:
Parish / Central Support Team:	Location:
Contact Number:	Name of Representative/Work Colleague (if applicable):
Name of Supervisor:	Date:
Please specify a home/work address for any correspondence related to the grievance to be sent to:	
Please provide an email address:	

Formal Grievance
Names of Witnesses (if applicable):
Have each of these people agreed to be interviewed as part of any formal grievance investigation?
<b>Details of grievance:</b> (Describe the grievance in detail. Include the names of individuals involved, and any dates, times and locations of specific incidents, as applicable.)

<b>Details of informal approach</b> taken, or reasons why informal resolution cannot be attempted:
Date raised informally and with whom:
Outcome of informal approach:
<b>Reason for raising a formal grievance:</b>
<b>Proposed grievance resolution:</b> (How would you like this matter resolved?)

Signed .....

Date .....

## STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE APPEAL FORM – GR2

Where a member of staff is unhappy with the outcome of a formal Grievance complaint this form should be completed and sent to the Episcopal Vicar of Finance and Administration

(email: [ev.financeadmin@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:ev.financeadmin@dioceseofnottingham.uk)) . Where appropriate or necessary, additional pages may be submitted with this form. You should ensure that any supporting documentation accompanies this form.

Personal Details	
Name:	Job Title:
Parish / Central Support Team:	Location:
Contact Number:	Name of Representative/Work Colleague (if applicable):
Please specify a home/work address for any correspondence related to the grievance to be sent to:	
Please provide an email address:	

Grievance Appeal
Details of grievance and attempts to resolve:
Date raised and with whom:
Outcome of attempts to resolve:
Reason for appeal:
Proposed resolution:

Signed .....

Date .....