



PREVENTING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER

This policy is based upon the model policy contained within the Archbishops' Council publication Dignity at Work (2008)

Statement of commitment

The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Abusive behaviour, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated in the Diocese. All complaints of abusive behaviour, harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated and the appropriate action taken.

What is bullying and harassment?

Any behaviour that could potentially undermine someone's dignity and respect should be regarded as unacceptable. If it is not challenged it is likely to escalate and lead to significant difficulties for all concerned.

In establishing the links between 'unacceptable behaviour', 'bullying' and 'harassment' as well as drawing together the common themes and issues the following broader definition may be helpful:

“Any behaviour, always involving a misuse of power, which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group should be regarded as unacceptable in the workplace. ‘Unacceptable behaviour’ changes its label to bullying’ or ‘harassing behaviour’ when it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time. Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused. The degree of intent is only relevant in terms of how the behaviour should be challenged and the issues subsequently resolved.”

Fergus Roseburgh, Senior Staff Representative, Unite the Union, The Children's Society. March 2007

Bullying is most easily identified when it is continuous, frequent, repetitive and part of an overall pattern. However, some abuse is serious enough to be recognised even if the behaviour occurred only once and is therefore not defined as bullying. It should of course be acknowledged that firm constructive criticism is not the same as bullying.

How can bullying and harassment be recognised?

Bullying may manifest itself in a variety of different ways. It is usually persistent, and often unpredictable, and can amount to severe psychological intimidation. It is insidious, and undermines the ability and confidence of the person suffering from it. It can lead to fear, isolation, demotivation and reduced output, poor concentration, symptoms of stress, a noticeable level of sickness absence or stubborn attendance when obviously unwell, psychological, emotional and physical harm.

Examples of bullying behaviour

This list of behaviours is not exhaustive but gives a clear indication of the sorts of actions that constitute bullying or harassment:

- removing areas of responsibility without discussion or notice
- isolating someone or deliberately ignoring or excluding them from activities
- consistently attacking someone's professional or personal standing
- setting out to make someone appear incompetent
- persistently picking on someone in front of others
- deliberate sabotage of work or actions
- deliberately withholding information or providing incorrect information.
- overloading with work/reducing deadlines without paying attention to any protest
- displays of offensive material
- use of e-mails to reprimand, insult or otherwise inform someone of their apparent failing, either to the individual or to third parties
- repeatedly shouting or swearing in public or in private
- spreading malicious rumours to third parties
- public humiliation by constant innuendo, belittling and 'putting down'
- personal insults and name-calling
- aggressive gestures, verbal threats and intimidation
- persistent threats about security
- making false accusations
- aggressive bodily posture or physical contact
- talking/shouting directly into someone's face
- direct physical intimidation, violence or assault

The most serious incidents might result in:

- creating an unsafe working environment
- ignoring signs of overwork and extreme stress
- putting someone's health physically, emotionally or psychologically at risk by making them upset, frightened and/or ridiculed

On the other hand it is important to distinguish between bullying, and behaviour that is reasonable in a particular context. For example, there may be occasions where shortcomings in performance are being addressed and more incisive behaviour is interpreted as bullying simply because the recipient is unused to being challenged or asked to account for their actions.

Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief (and this includes theology or churchmanship), sex or sexual orientation and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The important point is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

On the whole it is safest to take the view that if a person complains that they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance, which should be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition.

The Human Resources Consultant in collaboration with expert advice and with the agreement of the Bishop's Council will be responsible for encouraging and monitoring the implementation of the policy and reporting on its effectiveness.

Standards of behaviour

The Diocese of Chichester expects the highest standards of behaviour from all those who participate in any way in its activities, whether in a salaried, stipendiary or voluntary position. In particular, it expects that all will avoid behaviour that could lead to allegations of bullying or harassment.

Those with pastoral responsibility for the clergy in this diocese (rural deans, archdeacons, suffragan bishops and the diocesan bishop) recognise the importance of setting a good example and that what is intended as strong leadership can sometimes tip over into bullying behaviour and acknowledge that a culture where clergy are consulted and problems discussed is less likely to encourage bullying and harassment than one where there is an authoritarian leadership style. They undertake to participate in any training provided in support of this policy.

The laity of this diocese recognise the importance of setting a good example. They undertake to participate in any training offered in support of this policy.

The clergy of this diocese recognise the importance of setting a good example. They undertake to participate in any training provided in support of this policy, particularly that provided as a part of CMD.

Communication & training

The Human Resources Consultant is responsible for encouraging and monitoring the implementation of the policy.

The Human Resources Consultant will arrange for communication and consultation on this policy and to support future review and development. It will be publicised in the diocesan e-bulletin, the diocesan magazine and the diocesan website. The policy will be reviewed after two years and the next review is due in July 2018.

The Human Resources Consultant in collaboration with the Department for Apostolic Life will source and facilitate suitable training for clergy, laity and those with pastoral responsibility for the clergy where appropriate.

Counselling and dispute resolution

Professional counsellors, trades unions, and professional associations are other useful sources of support for individuals. See appendix for further details.

Confidentiality

It is diocesan policy that these matters are to be treated with absolute confidentiality in order to protect all parties and that no action will be taken without the willing consent of the person who feels he or she has been a target unless someone is at risk or performing an action which is unlawful.

Fair procedures

When both the perpetrator and the target is a clergy person or a licensed lay minister, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the target's consent, be brought under the Grievance Procedure and Clergy Discipline Measure for Licensed Ministers under Common Tenure. It has been developed by the church to deal with grievances of various kinds between ministers. When the perpetrator is a clergy person, it may be more appropriate for the target, or an archdeacon with the target's consent, to make a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

When the perpetrator is a lay person, and the target is either ordained or lay, complaints of bullying or harassment may, with the target's consent be dealt with in one of a number of ways according to the circumstances. It is important to notify the Archdeacon at the earliest possible opportunity.

False accusation

False accusations are a serious matter. The behaviour of anyone who is found to have made an unfounded, malicious complaint or allegation will be regarded with the utmost seriousness and formal disciplinary action may be taken. In the case of a clergy person this may be a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. A member of either the clergy or laity could be subject to an action for defamation if they have made false accusations against someone else.

I think I have been the target of bullying or harassment, what can I do?

If you are experiencing bullying or harassment you should not suffer in silence or feel that you are to blame in some way for inviting bullying behaviour.

Actions you can take yourself

Keep a factual log of all incidents of bullying – dates, times, nature of incident, details of accusations, criticisms, emails and other correspondence. This may be needed as evidence should harassment, victimisation or bullying continue or subsequently recur.

Try to get witnesses to bullying incidents and avoid situations where you are alone with the bully. Find out if you are the only person being bullied or whether other people are also affected now, or have been in the past. Talk to colleagues and see if they will support you.

If possible, clarify your role description is so that you can check whether the responsibilities you are given match it.

Research all the available informal and formal options open to you and what support and advice is available including from qualified counsellors, professional associations, trades unions and the police. Your diocese may have appointed Fair Treatment Advisers, who have been specially trained to be available to support and accompany you; if so you are strongly advised to use this support. Fair Treatment Advisers are volunteers who are fully trained, guarantee appropriate confidentiality and will meet with you in private to talk through your complaint. They will advise you on procedures for dealing with claims of bullying and harassment, and help you to clarify the impact of the behaviour you are experiencing so that you can decide what you want to do about it.

Informal action

It may be possible for the complaint to be resolved quickly by explaining directly to the harasser or bully the effect their behaviour is having, and that you want it to stop. By trying the informal route you may be able to get the harasser or bully to stop their behaviour and so prevent the matter becoming public, or escalating and making your situation more difficult.

But it has been shown that it is rarely advisable for a target to confront a bully alone, without professional support. Consult a Fair Treatment Adviser or professional mediator and discuss with them whether to confront the alleged harasser, alone or with their support or whether you would like them to talk to the alleged harasser on your behalf.

Every effort should be made to use informal means, including considering alternative dispute resolution such as mediation or restorative justice, to stop the offensive behaviour before formal procedures are invoked. But it should also be made clear that if the behaviour continues you will make a formal complaint. This may be enough to sort things out, particularly if the person(s) involved was/were unaware that their behaviour was causing offence.

Whenever possible, any complaint of bullying or harassment should be notified, in confidence, to your rural dean or archdeacon. Once an outcome has been agreed between the parties, the rural dean or archdeacon will monitor the situation as appropriate.

If the rural dean or archdeacon decides the matter is sufficiently serious or constitutes gross misconduct, they will make a file note of action taken and, with your permission, institute an investigation under the formal procedures.

Formal action

Formal procedures are not dependent on you having to take personal action to ask the bully to stop their behaviour. It is recognised that by its very nature bullying is something that happens over a prolonged period of time and the longer it goes on the more difficult it is to take personal action to confront the behaviour.

If the perpetrator is a clergy person or licensed lay worker, and if an informal approach fails or you are unable to make an informal approach, it may be appropriate to use the Grievance Procedure for Licensed Ministers or, in the case of a clergy person, the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.

If the perpetrator is a lay person you should find out what formal procedures have been agreed in your diocese for dealing with such complaints. The Earlier Action is taken the Better.

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

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.

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.

You are encouraged to contact your rural dean, archdeacon, suffragan or diocesan 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.

Your diocese may have appointed Fair Treatment Advisers, who have been specially trained to be available to support those involved in cases of bullying and harassment, if so you are strongly advised to use this support. Fair Treatment Advisers are volunteers who are fully trained, guarantee appropriate confidentiality and will meet with you in private to talk through your position. They will advise you on procedures for dealing with claims of bullying and harassment, and help you to clarify the impact your behaviour may be having, so that you can decide what you want to do about it.

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.

The diocese must 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.

If you are a clergy person 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.

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. Find out what formal procedures your diocese has in place for dealing with such complaints.

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.

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 a refusal to accept help could be a disciplinary issue.

Further resources

Related national policies

Promoting a Safe Church – A policy for safeguarding vulnerable adults issued by the House of Bishops in 2006 (GS Misc 837)

The Mistreatment of Adults by those Authorised by Bishop's Licence to Leadership Positions in the Church – A paper approved by the House of Bishops in July 2002 for circulation to all diocesan bishops and theological colleges and courses.

A Grievance procedure Code of Practice and supporting advice

<https://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/common-tenure.aspx>

The Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/about-general-synod/convocations/guidelines-for-the-professional-conduct-of-the-clergy/guidelines-contents.aspx>

Further reading

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Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) (2005) *Bullying and harassment at work: a guide for managers and employers*. London. www.acas.org.uk

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Australia (2003 – 2005) *Harassment and Abuse in the Church*: Statement from the Archbishop, “Power and Trust in the Church” and Standard Operation Procedures, Professional Standards.
www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/episcopate/harassment.html

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Archbishops' Council (2003) *Clergy Discipline Measure*. Church House Publishing
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Promoting a Safe Church: Policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England. Church House Publishing

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- Coloroso, Barbara (2005) *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*. London: Piccadilly Press
- Cooper, Cary and Ivan Robertson (eds) (2001) *Well-Being in Organisations: A Reader for Students and Practitioners*. Wiley.
- Dudley, Martin and Virginia Rounding (2004) *The Parish Survival Guide*. London: SPCK
- Eggleton, Martin and David Trafford (2000) *At Cross Purposes: Handling Conflict in the Church*. Peterborough: Foundery Press
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- Erickson-Pearson, Jan (1997/2005) *Healing in Congregations after Clergy Sexual Abuse*. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Field, T. (1996) *Bully in sight: how to predict, resist, challenge and combat workplace bullying. Overcoming the silence and denial by which abuse thrives*. Wantage: Success Unlimited
- Health Policy and Economic Research Unit (2006) *Bullying and harassment of doctors in the workplace*. British Medical Association.
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- Lee, Carl and Sarah Horsman (2002) *Affirmation and Accountability*. Sheldon: Society of Mary and Martha
- Litchfield, Kate (2006) *Tend my Flock: Sustaining Good Pastoral Care*. Norwich: The Canterbury Press
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- Randall, Peter (1997) *Adult Bullying: Perpetrators and Victims*. Routledge
- Randall, Peter (2001) *Bullying in Adulthood: assessing bullies and their victims*. Hove: Brunner-Routledge

Rayner, Charlotte, Helge Hoel, Cary Cooper (2002) *Workplace Bullying - what we know, who is to blame and what can we do?* London and New York: Taylor and Francis

Rediger, G Lloyd. American researcher and writer on clergy welfare issues
<http://home.comcast.net/~glrediger/columns/clergyedu.html>

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Savage, Sara (2006) Ch 2 Psychological Perspectives on congregations and clergy. *In The Future of the Parish System: Shaping the Church of England for the 21st Century*. Steven Croft (ed) Church House Publishing

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Still, Jane (2006) *Understanding the pastor's power* April 2006 The Melbourne Anglican www.media.anglican.com.au/tma/2006/04/bullying3.html

Still, Jane (2006): *Challenging a culture of bullying in the Church* March 2006 The Melbourne Anglican www.media.anglican.com.au/tma/2006/03/bullying2.html

Tehrani, Noreen (2001) *Building a Culture of Respect: Managing Bullying at Work*. London & New York: Taylor and Francis

Sources of advice

ACAS. www.acas.org.uk

Andrea Adams Trust <http://www.andreaadamstrust.org>
This is a good site, part funded by the DTI. They produce a very good factsheet - <http://www.andreaadamstrust.org/factsheet.pdf>

Bullied and Abused Lives in Ministry www.balmnet.co.uk

Bully OnLine www.bullyonline.org

Dignity at Work Partnership www.dignityatwork.org

Unite the Union. www.unitetheunion.com

Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich (2003) Maltreatment and Abuse of Adults by Adults. Policy, Definition and Code of Practice. www.stedmundsbury.anglican.org/pages/admin/policy

After Pastors. Resources for Church and Religious Communities. www.aeppp.org/churchresources.htm

Training providers

Training for harassment advisers - The Andrea Adams Trust

Hova House, 1 Hova Villas, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 3DH

T: 01273 704 900 F: 01273 704 900

<http://www.andreaadamstrust.org/employers/consultancy/harassment.htm>

Pastoral care, healthy church dynamics - The Beta-Course, Faculty of Divinity,

University of Cambridge, West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9BS

www.beta-course.org

Conflict resolution - The London Mennonite Centre, 14 Shepherds Hill, Highgate,

London, N6 5AQ www.menno.org.uk

International Institute of Restorative Practices <http://iirp.org/uk/>

The Restorative Justice Training Foundation, high quality training for facilitators of restorative interventions at low cost. <http://www.restorativejusticetraining.co.uk/>

Other resources for clergy

The Society of Mary and Martha, (Caring for people in ministry) Sheldon, Dunsford, Exeter, Devon EX6 7LE. www.sheldon.uk.com