

Chapter 7: The management of safeguarding concerns, complaints and comments

Aim of the chapter

- i. To describe the arrangements for the management of safeguarding concerns, safeguarding complaints and safeguarding comments

It is critical to note that general concerns, complaints and comments about a church, its ministries, activities, leadership and public worship are **not the remit** of the support provided by the PCI Safeguarding Department.

It is not the responsibility of the PCI Safeguarding Team to manage general complaints.

General complaints about congregational life must be directed to Joymount Kirk Session, usually in writing.

Safeguarding specific concerns

A concern is an issue that is causing worry to someone

Any specific concerns related to safeguarding must be brought to the attention of the local Designated Safeguarding Person/s, to be managed as a safeguarding issue.

If the concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Person/s, then it must be raised with the Minister or Clerk of Session of the congregation. They must manage this as a safeguarding issue.

The Designated Person/s or the Minister/Clerk of Session must proceed to address the concerns and ensure that they respond to the individual raising the concerns. Advice can be taken from the central PCI Safeguarding Team by those managing the concerns locally.

If the safeguarding concern is about the immediate risk of harm or need for protection of an individual, please ensure that the procedures are followed as stated in Chapter 5 without delay.

Concerns must be treated with confidence and only on a need-to-know basis.

Safeguarding specific complaints

A complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable

It is not appropriate to use a complaints system to raise safeguarding concerns.

It is important that urgent or immediate safeguarding risks are not clouded by a complaints system.

Steps

1. With regard to the management of any safeguarding issue, if there is a complaint that the process has been unsatisfactory, please make the complaint in writing and send this to Joymount Kirk Session.

It is the responsibility of Joymount Kirk Session to describe their processes for the management of complaints.

2. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily for all parties, the individual can escalate to Carrickfergus Presbytery.

It is the responsibility of Carrickfergus Presbytery to describe its processes for the management of complaints.

3. Advice can be taken from the central PCI Safeguarding Team by those managing the concerns locally.
4. If the complaint is about Joymount Kirk Session or Carrickfergus Presbytery management of safeguarding then this can be made in writing to the Safeguarding Lead or to the General Secretary's department.

Complaints must be treated with confidence and only on a need-to-know basis.

Safeguarding specific comments

A comment is a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction

All safeguarding personnel, including Joymount Kirk Session and PCI's central Safeguarding Team welcome comments from anyone with regard to safeguarding practices and procedures.

Feedback is important for learning and developing.

Comments must not be viewed as negative.

Anyone wishing to make a comment must do so in writing when possible.

Comments generally must not contain any confidential information so they can be shared and considered in general safeguarding practices.

Comments on safeguarding can be taken by safeguarding person/s locally, Joymount Kirk Session or the Safeguarding Team in PCI.

CHAPTER END