



Policy and procedure for the handling of DBS-Related Complaints – October 2022

Disputes relating to information disclosed on the DBS Disclosure

In the event that information is presented on the Disclosure Certificate which the applicant believes is inaccurate or wrongly appropriated to their identity, the applicant should raise this initially with the relevant Counter-signatory, Diocese of Shrewsbury Safeguarding Office (“the Counter-signatory”).

The applicant can either directly dispute the accuracy of the Disclosure information with the DBS, or the relevant Diocesan Safeguarding Office can liaise with the DBS on behalf of the applicant, at the applicant’s request.

Further information concerning the DBS Disputes process can be found on the [DBS website](#).

Complaints about the processing of DBS Disclosure applications

If an applicant has a complaint about any aspect of the processing of a Disclosure Application, they should state their complaint in writing, by email or letter to the Counter-signatory, within 28 working days of the situation leading to the complaint.

The email or letter of complaint should include the following information:

- Full details of what has caused the person to make a complaint.
- How the person would like the complaint to be resolved.
- The complainant’s full name, address, email and telephone contact details.

The Counter-signatory will initiate enquiries and seek to satisfactorily resolve the complaint within 28 working days of receipt of the letter or email. The Counter-signatory is expected to:

- Pass a copy of the written complaint to the CEO of Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (“CSSA”) no later than 10 working days after receipt of the letter or email.
- Speak to the complainant in person if appropriate to help clarify any details.
- Deal with the complainant’s information confidentially and treat the complainant with courtesy and respect.
- Investigate the complaint, acknowledge where things went wrong and put any mistakes right as soon as practically possible.
- Aim to provide the complainant with a satisfactory response within 28 working days of their letter or email detailing the complaint.

If these targets cannot be met, the complainant should be contacted to agree a revised timescale. The CEO of CSSA must also be informed of changes to the timescale.

The complainant should be advised that some issues may be outside of the control of the Counter-signatory or CSSA, and as a result their complaint might not be resolved to their complete satisfaction. In these cases, the complainant should be given an explanation as to

why some aspects of their complaint cannot be addressed or resolved by the Counter-signatory or the CSSA.

The complainant should be given a written report detailing the outcome of the enquiries, and subject to individual confidentiality, any actions taken to remedy the situation should be summarised. A copy of the written report of the outcome of the enquiries must also be copied to the CEO of CSSA.

Dissatisfaction with the response of the Counter-signatory

If there are any matters that have not been addressed by the enquiries made by the Counter-signatory or the complaint is unresolved, the complainant can request that the response be reviewed by the CEO of CSSA. The request must be made in writing to the CEO of CSSA within 28 working days of the report being received from the counter-signatory. The CEO of CSSA will review the circumstances of the original complaint and the response and make a written response to the complainant within 28 working days.

Making a complaint about a Counter-signatory

If the complaint relates to the Counter-signatory, it should be made in the first instance in writing to the CEO of CSSA, who will make enquiries and respond to the complainant in writing within 28 working days.

Dissatisfaction with the response from the CEO of CSSA

If matters remain unaddressed or unresolved by CSSA, the complainant can refer to the matter to the Chair of the CSSA within 28 working days of the CEO of CSSA's written response.

The Chair of the CSSA will make a final response on the matter within 28 working days of receipt of written notification of the matters that have not been addressed or remain unresolved, from the complainant.

Complaints about appointment decisions based on DBS Disclosure information

CSSA does not provide any appeals process for appointment decisions.

Appointment decisions are the responsibility of the appointing body e.g., the diocese, religious congregation or employing/appointing organisation which has an umbrella body agreement with CSSA.

Where appeals procedures exist within:

- the policies of employing organisations; or
- the processes for selecting office-holders,

these should be used where an applicant wishes to appeal against a selection decision which has been influenced by DBS Disclosure information.

The decision in relation to clergy, religious and employees rests with the person ultimately responsible for the appointment e.g., the Bishop, Religious Leader or Human Resources (HR).

The decision to appoint volunteers generally rests with the parish priest. The Safeguarding Coordinator may recommend whether or not an appointment should go ahead or whether an appointment should go ahead but with certain provisions or restrictions. There is no appeal against the decision to appoint a volunteer but if the applicant is unhappy with the DBS application process, they should follow the procedures above.