‘I was handed over to the dogs’: lived experience, clerical trauma and the handling of complaints against clergy in the Church of England

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Abstract

In 2019/20 the Sheldon Community sponsored a very large online survey of Church of England Clergy in collaboration with Aston University. It arose from concerns about accounts emerging from clergy with personal experience of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 (CDM). As well as formal CDM, the survey captured experiences across a wide spectrum of processes including stage one 'informal' CDM, safeguarding assessments, other named procedures, and discipline exercised outside any recognised process or accountability. The responses from those who experienced formal CDM (after the letter from the Registrar) are examined elsewhere.[1] This report focusses on all the other categories. The impact of these processes on the cleric's ministry and on their emotional well-being is assessed using methods of thematic content analysis. The use and misuse of formal and informal processes may result in significant losses to the affected individuals and their families, long term damage to relationships within the parish, and losses to the wider church. The practical, emotional and spiritual impact may be traumatic and abiding. The CDM is slated for replacement. This research demonstrates the necessity of doing so with a deep understanding of the risks that may accumulate in the penumbra of a flawed Measure.

Keywords: Church of England Clergy Discipline Measure, diocesan bishops, senior clergy and diocesan staff, informal grievance procedures, safeguarding, trauma, anxiety and depression, pastoral care.

Introduction

In the course of Sheldon's 40 years supporting people in ministry at times of stress or crisis, patterns occasionally appear. In the early 2010s there was a small number of Anglican clergy whose accounts of the CDM appeared fantastical. The scale of the disconnect between the alleged misdemeanours and the experiences of the respondents on the receiving end of the complaints was barely credible. Surely there was no smoke without fire? However, as more and more people entrusted Sheldon with their stories the pattern appeared to have some basis in reality. It suggested a process that had dangerous conflicts of interest at its heart, lacked vital safeguards of justice, and had no proper system of oversight. However, the combination of confidentiality, shame and fear made it almost impossible for individual clergy to speak out.

Surprisingly little data was being routinely collected or published on the workings of the CDM with the Annual Reports of the Clergy Discipline Commission (CDC) providing only limited insights. Anecdotal accounts were not sufficient – attempts to discuss these with senior clergy and lawyers suggested that the subject was considered untouchable – and it was concluded that a large scale systematic investigation was needed in order to test the observations empirically. Sheldon was uniquely positioned to initiate this and so in 2018 commissioned Aston University to conduct independent academic research into the lived experience of the CDM.

[1] Sarah Horsman, Carl Senior and Alena Nash, Emerging Findings from Independent academic research commissioned by Sheldon and conducted by Aston University in collaboration with Sheldon. (July 2020). https://www.sheldon.uk.com/UserContent/doc/1588/emerging%20research%20findings%20on%20cdm.pdf

A very large, detailed survey was designed to capture quantitative data on the workings of the CDM. During the process of designing the survey, further concerns began to emerge about institutional behaviour around the periphery of the CDM. There were indications that the risks to home and livelihood made even the 'early/informal' stages of CDM disproportionately stressful; that CDM was sometimes being used as a coercive threat; that 'irregular discipline', including pressure to resign with Non-Disclosure Agreements, was taking place without even the limited process accountability of the CDM; that other processes were being used in a quasi-disciplinary way; and that the new (2018) policy on Permission to Officiate (PTO) was capable of simply overriding the CDM in depriving clergy of opportunity to minister without rights to explanation or appeal. All this was in the context of the church facing shocking revelations from IICSA [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse] on its institutional failures to deal with sexual abuse by clergy. It was easy to see why there would be a temptation to be seen to be tough on clergy discipline but this carried the risk of making the position of clergy even more vulnerable.

At a late stage in the survey design it was therefore decided to include an additional set of questions, in parallel to the CDM ones, to capture data on these as yet ill-defined areas beyond the original scope of the research. It is the survey respondents from this 'Mixed' cohort whose testimonies are analysed in this research paper, which is an extension of an initial article published in *Theology* in May 2021.[2]

In 2020 Sheldon published the initial emerging findings from the quantitative research as it related directly to the CDM itself.[3] Soon afterwards the House of Bishops agreed unanimously that the CDM needed to be replaced. In the year since, only very modest progress has been made towards this end. As with the CDM itself, the process for replacement has appeared opaque and lacking in accountability. Of greatest concern is the absence of any guidance as to the scope and purpose of the replacement Measure against which any specific proposals may be assessed. Into this vacuum Sheldon has published its own draft working 'scope and purpose' document which should be read in conjunction with this paper. It arises from deep engagement with the research material and ongoing pastoral care and personal correspondence with many dozens of clergy profoundly affected by these issues.[4]

The case for the replacement of CDM has already been made persuasively, and there now appears to be a reasonably widespread consensus that it is not fit for purpose. However, an ill-judged replacement has the potential to leave clergy, complainants and the church in an even worse position. These testimonies draw attention to some of the reasons that support this concern.

Fiona Gardner finds the church to have been 'inept, thoughtless and mean' in its responses to survivors of clerical abuse, and any discussion of the handling of complaints and allegations of

[2] Sarah Horsman, Alena Nash, Maureen Wright, Lynda Barley and Carl Senior, 'In the shadow of the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM): clergy experiences of 'informal' and safeguarding complaints', *Theology*, (May 2021), forthcoming.

[3] See fn. 1 for details.

[4] Purpose and scope of proposed replacement of CDM, (February 2021). https://www.sheldonhub.org/usercontent/sitecontentuploads/3/8F4C3469D5F75B5BC2722498886CEC09/purpose%20and%20scope%20published.pdf

misconduct against clergy must be held in the context of the church's failures of safeguarding.[5] Sheldon's research found that clergy overwhelmingly expect to be accountable for upholding professional standards of conduct - 99% of the 5,628 clergy respondents agreed. The Church institution is giving considerable attention to the development of appropriate professional standards and appropriate systems for investigating complaints and allegations of misconduct are needed, as is the sanction of prohibition against those who are found to have fallen below the minimum standards of safe practice of ministry.[6]

However, a troubling and complex picture emerges of the handling of complaints against clergy, in many ways mirroring the institutional callousness towards survivors of clerical abuse. Too often clergy can feel, as one respondent to the survey noted, as if they 'have been handed over to the dogs'.[7] Respondents may be ill-informed and isolated, they may have inadequate resources to defend themselves, and may be left with long term traumatic losses to reputation, home, livelihood, health and relationships even (perhaps especially) when found innocent of the charges laid against them. It was not the purpose of the research to analyse the actual complaints so no such details were collected. The flow of the survey first channelled all those subject to CDM into a separate set of questions, so it is reasonable to assume that those in the 'Mixed' channel were considered less serious. Only a small minority of the complaints captured in the survey involved safeguarding in any form, and an even smaller proportion included any allegation of current or historic sexual misconduct. Analysis of the data on respondents subject to the formal CDM showed a two thirds majority were eventually found innocent.[8] There was no equivalent end point that could be measured in the 'Mixed' cohort but it is reasonable to assume it is at least as high.

This paper analyses the 93 narrative contributions provided by survey respondents among the 650 who identified has having been through a process other than the formal stages of the CDM. In unpublished analysis the quantitative impacts on mental health were found to be of a similar magnitude to CDM respondents and the themes and qualitative nature of respondents' distress were observed to be very similar.[9]

These testimonies make essential reading for those tasked with replacing the CDM because they shine a light on what is happening around the periphery of a badly designed Measure. They help to demonstrate how important it is that the scope and purpose of the replacement of the CDM be properly defined. In reading the accounts it bears remembering that these are overwhelmingly the voices of ordinary, faithful, front-line clergy caught up in processes that can be dangerous and destructive. It must be part of the institution's duty of care to structure its processes in accordance with the principles of justice and to support its clergy through and beyond any complaint process.

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[5] Fiona Gardener, Sex, Power, Control: Responding to Abuse in the Institutional Church, (Lutterworth Press, 2021) https://www.amazon.co.uk/Sex-Power-Control-Responding-Institutional/dp/0718895622/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Gardner+sex+power&qid=1612355816&sr=8-1

[6] Horsman *et al*. 'In the Shadow', forthcoming.

[7] Survey data on the effect of the Clergy Discipline Measure, Mixed Data Set, Sheldon and Aston University, UK (2020), Participant 1

[8] Horsman *et al*., Emerging findings.

[9] HADS depression 6.43 (CDM), 6.25 (Mixed), 4.92 (Control – neither CDM nor Mixed). HADS anxiety 6.08 (CDM), 5.92 (Mixed), 4.58 (Control).

After a brief appraisal of the methodology applied by Sheldon and Aston in the collection and collation of the data, this paper now moves to describe and contextualise the lived experience of being a clergy respondent in the church's procedures other than CDM for handling complaints. We find, much as Gardner has asserted above, there is much that is ethically wanting in the culture of the church and the way such procedures are designed and implemented.

Methodology

An online survey with three main sections was designed using Qualtrics. All survey respondents were invited to spend about 20 minutes completing some basic demographic questions, standardised psychological assessments the Hospital Anxiety and Depression (HADS) questionnaire, the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and gathered general opinions about the CDM. A handful of 'gateway' questions then selected respondents to enter more detailed channels containing structured factual questions about their personal experiences. In line with the original brief for the research, the first channel selected clergy who had experience of the formal stages of the CDM, from receipt of the Registrar's letter onwards. During the preparation of the survey the researchers came to believe that it was necessary to ask similar questions to begin to understand the less-defined area around the periphery of the CDM. The following 'catch-all' question was therefore included:

> *In the past 15 years have you been (or are you currently) the subject of any one or more of these other procedures?*
>
> - *CDM in the informal/preliminary stage (no letter received from Registrar)*
> - *Safeguarding investigation or assessment*
> - *Capability Procedure*
> - *Incumbents (vacation of benefices) measure*
> - *Visitation, Conciliation or Mediation (ONLY include if you effectively had no option but to take part)*
> - *Any process that resulted in you being forced/encouraged to leave your role*
> - *Experience where you were implicitly or explicitly threatened with CDM*
> - *A disciplinary or complaints procedure related to your chaplaincy role with a non-church employer (e.g. hospital, prison, school)*
> - *Any church disciplinary or complaints process not included above*

Answering yes to any of these channelled the participant through a detailed set of questions mirroring as closely as possible those asked about formal CDM. It is these responses which generated the quantitative 'Mixed' dataset. At the end of the quantitative survey all participants were given the option to submit a separate free text narrative. They had control over whether or not the researchers could link their qualitative response with their quantitative one.

The survey was distributed widely to serving and retired clergy, and as many as could be located no longer in ministry, during the autumn of 2019. This was done by all English dioceses and through direct mailing by Sheldon and other clergy charities.

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A total of 5,628 clergy completed quantitative responses were received, of which 291 people reported 351 CDMs in the CDM channels and 658 in the 'Mixed' channel. 306 qualitative responses divided roughly equally between CDM, 'Mixed' or Other.[10] This paper analyses the 97 narrative responses of the 'Mixed' set, of which 93 could be matched with the main survey data. A thematic approach has been taken towards manually assigning the major areas of comment in these responses into group headings which, in turn, form the structure of the detailed findings summarised in this paper. The size of the original corpus is just over 90,000 words. All statistics relate to this group unless otherwise stated.[11]

The handling of procedures

The Sheldon survey provided a neutral platform to hear the voices of those who have experienced a variety of formal and informal processes in which clergy may find themselves. This section analyses the major themes they describe. Their accounts reveal the considerable ambiguity that has developed in the workings of these processes which leave the clergy disadvantaged and vulnerable to abuse. They offer a unique perspective on the indirect impact of the CDM itself. Sharing the key perspectives of the 'Mixed' research cohort of clergy shines a light on the blurred edges and dark corners of the CDM and reveal its interface with capability, grievance and safeguarding complaint procedures. The ELS Working Party cautions against the risk of replacing the CDM with 'just a different way of continuing to inflict on many clergy the same degree of uncertainty and distress as now'.[12]

1) Investigative procedures

1i) Length of time

i) The personal and working impact of complaint investigations against a public figure in a local community should not be underestimated. Respondents testify that the harmful effects may be long lasting. Clergy may be caught up in a lengthy process of investigation that is unnecessarily damaging to them, their households, their colleagues and the wider congregation and community. Participant 73 was not unusual in reporting that 'a*n actual complaint has not been made yet. I have been waiting over a year to hear if the allegation is going to be considered under CDM.'* In a similar vein, Participant 72 wrote:

> *'I have a friend who has been suspended since March [8 months] and there seems to be no action happening to resolve this. Justice should be speedy, proportionate and allow a defence, with a person being assumed to be innocent until proven guilty. His ministry has been wrecked!'*

[10] The 'Other' category comprises clergy who contributed narrative responses but without having had personal experience of CDM or any of the 'Mixed' group processes

[11] For a table of participants to this survey see p.44 ff.

[12] *Final Report of Working Party Reviewing the Clergy Discipline Measure*, 2003, Ecclesiastical Law Society, (2021), p.60.

The state of limbo thus generated may fuel suspicion on all sides and cause views to be hardened allowing the process to become unnecessarily adversarial with little opportunity, as Participant 66 remarked, to address the issues *'in a more conciliatory way'*.

ii) The length of time taken handling investigations may be experienced by respondents as detrimental to their position, as one sided and as adding to their stress levels. This perceived lack of fair play is heightened for those clergy whose households depend not just on the job but on the house and the community where they live. Participant 73 summarised the frustration felt by many: *'Surely time limits need to be in place for both… I have been left in limbo for 13 months to know whether I will lose my job, ministry and home. This seems highly unfair and incredibly stressful.*' As time drags on clergy feel increasingly exposed and concerned at the implications for their defence. Participant 36 observed that *'anyone can accuse you of anything, however ridiculous, and it has to be 'investigated' - and there is always a hidden feeling of 'no smoke without fire'… End the evil iniquity of clergy having to use their own financial resources to defend themselves against baseless complaint.'* Clergy may have limited access to independent professional 'employment' resources whether because of cost, lack of suitable contacts or being offered diocesan legal resources which are perceived not to be independent. Participant 62 was able to comment from a legal background that *'some consideration also needs to be given to assessing the qualifications and experience of registrars to handle these matters. Someone who has spent their legal career dealing in probate, property and faculty matters does not have the appropriate legal background to deal with [these matters].'*

1ii) Communications

i) Considerable confusion was exposed on the distinction between informal and formal procedures for handling complaints. Over half (58%) of those in the cohort being analysed were not told the name of the procedure they were undergoing, although 1 in 3 (33%) said that the possibility of a CDM was mentioned by their bishop or archdeacon, and 1 in 10 (11%) were cautioned about the possibility of a capability procedure by their bishop or archdeacon. This generates a significant grey area of enquiry where 'informal' procedures can be undertaken in the context of the threat of more formal ones. For Participant 9 the confusion remained*: 'I'm not clear if this was known to be under CDM or not … clergy need to be reasonably informed about complaints procedures.'* Participant 69 was not alone in experiencing this lack of clarity as a management tool*: 'There should be some oversight of those who are in a position to threaten a disciplinary procedure. They should not be allowed to use this threat as a management technique.'* When processes are ambiguous clergy may resort to their own explorations and for Participant 79 this brought further anxiety as he explained:

> *'This was explicitly and misleadingly described as not being a formal procedure; I have since discovered that, it was very definitely the preliminary stage of a very serious process ... The Archdeacon ... would not tell me what the 'Concerns' were; … The 'Informal Process' was not shown or explained: my wife found it on a Church of England website, intended for Archdeacons. To describe the first meeting as, 'not part of any formal process,' is like saying, 'Put out onto this calm water,' without mentioning that it narrows into a cataract, just around the corner.'*

ii) Communications could not only be ambiguous but also lack personal care. Fewer than half (41%) the respondents were first told of the complaint against them in person while 2 in 10 (19%) were told by email, over 1 in 10 (14%) by letter and approaching 3 in 10 (26%) by telephone. Over half (58%) felt

they were not provided 'with reasonable details about the substance of the complaint within a reasonable timescale'. Participant 62 went on to comment that, *'the archdeacon said that the complainants had been offered the route of a CDM but decided not to pursue that course. As I was never told what the complaints were I could neither refute them if unfounded nor learn from mistakes if there was any justification in them. To this day - nearly a decade later - I don't actually know what was said'.* Participant 39, in turn, called into question the confidentiality around informal complaints by observing that, *'saying 'lots of people have made complaints but I can't tell you who made them or what they were' is very damaging. It destroys trust with the congregation.'*

Evidence may be being collected from those whom the clergy live near, worship with, or have pastoral responsibility for, in ways which may undermine confidentiality and ongoing ministry. Participant 97 found himself in just such a situation when, '*something that was meant to be confidential was now all over the community, and it appeared very much that I was on trial, although this was supposed to be informal. … (There was a) lack of and deliberate misleading as to why a meeting was being held.'* In turn, levels of trust between the respondents and those in authority may be undercut and, as Jonathan Shay observes, 'what fills the vacuum when trust is destroyed: expectancy of harm, exploitation and humiliation.'[13] The experiences below of respondents are testament to the anguish that can be caused.

> *Participant 47: 'Have a clear, easily understandable step by step guide… I was told to read the canon law to find out what was involved and what could happen - I could barely manage to read a text message let alone legislation! '*
>
> *Participant 38: 'What I am convinced of is that someone knows the answers to my queries but is not making me aware of any complaint. How long this will all this will take [sic], and the likely outcome, I have no idea but after 7/8 weeks it's about time I was told… If accusations are made folk should be made aware ... as early as possible prevarication will not do.'*

1iii) Senior clergy oversight/accountability

i) The real or perceived threat of the CDM hangs over all these investigations, and confidence among clergy in the way they are handled by senior clergy is low. They express concern that minor complaints can too easily be escalated into more serious ones and they do not perceive adequate accountability within the system. Participant 29 expressed concern at the workload generated for senior clergy: *'As someone working closely alongside an Archdeacon, I have to say I have been deeply concerned about the wellbeing of my colleague as s/he has been dealing with a significant number of [complaints] at the same time.'* There can be a lack of accounting for the stresses of change, or recognition of the normal tensions inherent in ministry life in individual ministerial contexts. Several clergy expressed the view that the complaint arose from implementing the mandate given to them by the parish or diocese. Senior clergy may be commissioning clergy as 'agents of change' and then find themselves handling complaints related to carrying out this mandate. Participant 22 referred to these tensions in writing:

> *'The C of E urgently needs to re-build trust between bishops and parish clergy…. I believe this has been largely caused by the CDM and threat of CDM. This lack of trust is stifling mission and ministry. Priests are aware that if they preach the gospel boldly or do anything to upset key*

[13] Jonathan Shay, 'Moral Injury', *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Vol.31, No.2, (2014), pp.182-191, p188.

parishioners, they could be the subject of unjust complaints and their bishop will not support them.'

ii) The conflicts in roles for bishops and senior clergy in handling complaints are well recognised and for Participant 36 was sufficient alone to warrant external perspectives: *'Appoint external experts and arbitrators to deal with cases- NOT [respondent's emphasis] the same bishops who are meant to be giving clergy pastoral support.'* Participant 59 went further to point to the additional objectivity, consistency and accountability that would come with independent review*:*

'The system is too haphazard, some are treated very badly and others seem to get off very lightly, but the system needs to be more robust and having an outside body would help because there is no comeback when people may have been treated unfairly.'

The experience of these respondents is that the introduction of an independent assessment in considering complaints would benefit not only clergy and those who oversee them, but also the wider congregation and the complainants. To this Participant 97 further reflected on the expertise such an approach could beneficially offer to the complaint process:

'The process, informal and formal, needs to be handled outside the Church - completely independently, not just outside the Diocese, It needs to be carried out by people who are trained in the process and know about employment law, clergy, the church, and volunteers. There need to be boundaries, and a proper framework for people to use to make complaints.'

1iv) Confidence in procedures

i) The procedures currently used for handling complaints were felt by clergy not to be appropriate for many of the situations in which they are implemented. Respondents often expressed surprise to find that CDM processes were being utilized by senior clergy from an early stage of receiving any informal complaint against a parish priest. Participant 93, for example, noted that *'the archdeacon had a problem in that he was in receipt of complaints and didn't know what to do. Not understanding it, he tried the preliminary stages of C[DM].'* Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) of this cohort stated that they were not confident that the process would deliver a fair outcome. Participant 62 even commented that, *'there was no real process to defend myself within and the whole thing still leaves unanswered questions. I think I would have preferred a CDM as then there would have been a process and a conclusion.'*

For Participant 22 this brought into question the task senior clergy find themselves undertaking:

'I believe senior clergy are now handling CDM complaints in a way that was never intended. Most do not have the skills to handle serious complaints. What is sad is that they seem also to be lacking gifts of wisdom and discernment to weed out malicious complaints and are failing to trust and support their own clergy who are in difficult frontline situations.'

40% of respondents described the nature of the complaint against them as 'trivial or vexatious charges without foundation' but the clergy often feel a presumption of guilt. Among them Participant 96 reflected on the ramifications of this to suggest*:*

'some sort of serious complaint process with a sifting of minor complaints so that people don't waste the AD [archdeacon] and Bishop's time. And those with an axe to grind don't get to punish the clergy by just going to see the AD or threatening to make [a] complaint just to be vindictive. …Should we start with the assumption of innocence? Yes, as right now it makes you feel like you have done something wrong.'

The ELS report has acknowledged that a normal grievance procedure was inexplicably omitted from the CDM legislation.[14] Such a separate grievance procedure could also, as Participant 4 suggested, support not just the clergy but also the complainant*: 'Devise a process that weeded out vexatious and trivial complaints; that was swift and impartial; that provided support for clergy complained against as well as complainants.'* Among the clergy, Participant 41 felt that the die was loaded against them when, *'one of the key issues in my own case was the absence of a means of holding to account those making false allegations, even wardens could not be chastised.'*

ii) Some clergy experienced lasting and irreparable damage to their ministry, even when the complaint was subsequently not proven. Participant 97 observed that *'the danger is always that even if you are found innocent, people think no smoke without fire. Someone can destroy your reputation in seconds, rebuilding it is harder.'* Yet only 22% were offered a debrief, a review or appropriate support by the diocese or a national church body after the conclusion of the complaint process. As Participant 79 explained, clergy feel vulnerable and unsupported by a system that *'allows nominally-elected, untrained and unaccountable lay people to destroy a priest's ministry and reputation with impunity, and dioceses to jettison them without consequence; whereas any equivalent response, such as bringing civil suits, Grievance Procedures or Disciplinary Measures, comes at the risk of very high financial and professional cost to the accused.'*

Poor handling of a complaint can exacerbate an already tense situation in the parish and 58% of the respondents felt that 'the process has negatively affected my ability to do ministry'. Participant 29 summed up the view often expressed that *'at the end of the day, the [complaint] often does not succeed (in my experience), so the distress caused has been fruitless and the difficult situation continues.'* Some clergy felt that the threat of a disciplinary or capability procedure was used as a tool to 'move them on' and even pressure them to resign - 12% as 'apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from post' while 15% described it as 'part of a campaign of bullying or harassment'. Participant 22, for example, felt that *'it was used as a weapon against me, to traumatize me and bully me into resigning my incumbency.'* In fact, 1 in 8 (16%) of the respondents reported that they were asked at some point in the process to resign without any determination of guilt. Approaching a third (31%) of the respondents had 'already notified the diocese about the situation or pressures that later related to the complaint being brought' but of these clergy only just over a quarter (28%) were offered any training or support as a result of that notification.

[14] *Final Report of Working Party Reviewing the Clergy Discipline Measure* 2003, Ecclesiastical Law Society, 2021, p.20.

2) Practical Impact on Ministry

2i) Current ministry

i) Clergy may find their ministry is damaged despite a complaint not being upheld and, as reported above, the majority are not given support to pick up the pieces and continue to develop their ministry. Their relationship with the institution that is the C of E does not easily recover and their experience results in some being keen to move away from ministry. Among them was Participant 39 who reflected*:*

> *'This process has made me feel that the church cannot be trusted. I became increasingly uneasy about encouraging people to explore a vocation within the church and resigned my job … I have come to the realization that I will not be returning to a ministerial role in the next few years if ever.'*

42% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement: 'I lost trust in the ability of the institution to have my back at difficult times'. Over half (57%) felt they had to 'find a way of continuing a working relationship with the people involved in the complaint against [them]', a view exemplified by Participant 42 that *'the fall-out in the parish was left entirely for me to deal with'.* For 10% this proved too difficult and resulted in these clergy leaving their post while an additional 8% also moved on feeling that their 'reputation was too compromised to continue'.

ii) A quarter of this survey cohort (25%) were women, the average age of the respondents at the time of the complaint was 55 years, and their average length of time in formal church ministry was 19.5 years. Consequently, any decision to 'move on' is not a decision taken lightly by the majority, as Participant 83 testified:

> *'My grief at my vocation being ripped away from me is unimaginably painful, and sometimes expresses itself physically … It was appalling. I cannot say how utterly bad this was. But I have to point out that this did not get to official CDM level. It was an 'informal' process.'*

Those clergy that remain in post following an informal complaint may find their position uncertain and the effect of the informal complaint process undermining. Participant 23 was among them: 'I *was left uncertain regarding my position with no offer of support. That uncertainty persists to this day.'* For others the situation behind the complaint continues to inflict damage which, as Participant 36 found, can have significant implications for continuing ministry in that place:

> *'The whole process has had a serious effect on my ministry (I remain in the parish in which these things happened) - whilst the perpetrator of the anonymous abuse never owned up, the underlying issues have not gone away. My energy and enthusiasm for ministering in this place have been much eroded.'*

Over time even unproven complaints can result in longer term damage without appropriate support from the diocese. Participant 97 was one particular example:

'Although it was informal, there were actual threats that I could lose my job and home from the start - which did in the end happen as I was 'bullied' out of post, despite nothing coming of the informal CDM…. even though the informal never went to formal, I was treated as if I were guilty, and incapable, and was forced to leave my post by both the surrogate [sic] and senior bishop pressuring me to move.'

ii) The majority of clergy (70%) in the survey cohort held stipendiary parochial posts at the time of the complaint but, in addition, there were significant numbers of self-supporting clergy (16%), retired clergy (10%) and clergy holding other posts (4%). Parochial clergy ministering in assistant positions, such as self-supporting ministry (SSM), curates and retired priests felt they were less of a priority for senior clergy. One SSM, Participant 68, described her experience as continuing '*to feel of lesser value than incumbents because of the way the processes are handled. Several of my clergy friends have had the same issues during their curacies and feel similarly about support for SSM being much lower than for incumbents.'* Assistant clergy feel more vulnerable to being moved or their training disrupted even to the extent of disregarding the wider picture as Participant 62 experienced*:*

'I was the 3rd curate to be moved from that parish I think I was just another casualty of a bullying culture in the parish and the fact that the matter was not formally dealt with meant that could not be called out nor challenged but was brushed under the carpet.'

Participant 74, in turn, found that *'the vicar, however, refused to allow me to continue any form of ministry in the church. I became an Honorary Curate in a parish some miles away, which I regard as very sad.'* Such an approach may be particularly disempowering for experienced clergy who may need diocesan support for reconciliation in a time of change.

2ii) Future ministry

i) Whatever the outcome of the process, there is likely to be a time of personal re-evaluation in the aftermath. A number seek retirement rather than 'a fresh start' in another post but as Participant 46 found senior clergy have the opportunity to make rather than break the outcome of this period of reflection*: 'Because of that conversation with my new bishop I have gone on ... to exercise a fruitful ministry.'* For Participant 71 the decision '*to seek retirement has proved exactly right. I now enjoy ministry on PTO in a large rural deanery, and I offer spiritual direction through the diocese. To my astonishment, the diocesan bishop has appointed me his disability adviser. Life is different, but healthily so. I also find that other clergy are learning what I've been through and seeking counsel of me.'*

Over 1 in 4 (24%) respondents admitted to still feeling anxious for their future and while there were a few stories of rehabilitation, there were instances of serious personal and ministerial long-term loss through lack of appropriate support. Participant 39 was particularly desolate as she wrote*:*

'I feel that I have lost my husband, my sense of calling, my home, my church community, my sense of identity, my faith that God loves me and that all will be well. It's hard to imagine a future. I am currently unemployed, living in a rented house and trying to restart my life. It's very hard.'

Even when clergy move on their ministry may continue to be affected as Participant 64 found when *'the job I landed in subsequently wasn't ideal nor played to my strengths and eventually broke me.'*
ii) There were accounts too from conscientious clergy who had been aspiring to posts of greater responsibility but who felt their ministerial careers were permanently blighted. They experienced feelings of bitterness and a loss of purpose in grappling with an increasingly uncertain future. Participant 23, for example, expressed uncertainty as to whether '*the fallout from this will have an impact on my ability to move to a new role. I feel that decisions have been taken about an aspect of my vocation that I have not been consulted about that may impact my future employability.'* Others find the process of moving becomes more challenging, like Participant 16 who *'Eventually … found a parish in a different diocese with different churchmanship to my own. It is not ideal and is a 'downsizing' from my previous post - feeling my 'career' is now blighted and coasting to retirement though only 55.'*

Some felt the complaint process resulted in their voice being lost in diocesan discussions and planning. Participant 1 observed that*: 'The moment you fight the diocese you have automatically lost your future ministry… the NDA [Non-disclosure agreement] was binding on me but not on the diocese.'* Honest conversations between bishops and clergy reviewing their ministry (MDRs) are felt to be largely inadequate. Participant 46 was well placed to take a wider perspective on this inconsistent experience of clergy:

> *'In my work as a coach and work consultant I constantly meet clergy who are being damaged or misled by good people - often bishops and archdeacons - who are either not competent for the personnel management tasks they have to perform or are simply not paying sufficient attention…. I would at least start with seeking to address some of the huge weaknesses of MDR and seek to deepen the really positive kind of accountability.'*

iii) A number of clergy came to question their vocation after feeling unsupported by the Church institution where they had felt called to minister. Participant 61 expressed disillusionment in finding that *'I had to take sick leave ... This situation may yet end my ministry, if the plans for my future don't work out. It has had a deep impact on my life … I am mourning the loss of the incredible feeling that comes from being a part of that kind of ministry. I now doubt I will have that kind of feeling (or ministry) again.'* The feeling of isolation and being deserted by former colleagues is not easily forgotten and the personal cost of the complaint process can be far in excess of the seriousness of the complaint itself. Fiona Gardner writes in a similar vein of victims of abuse who have sought justice from the Church and found in the struggle that 'the dynamics of the original trauma of abuse are repeated at a time when, following disclosure, support and compassion is needed'.[15]

Even when complaints were not upheld, clergy respondents felt that their ministry was undermined and some were unable either to return to the same ministry or to move on with honour and grace. Their personal and spiritual confidence is wounded and they cannot foresee a return to their former calling. Participant 32 was among them in writing*: 'What I do now is valuable, I know that, but it is not the vocation that I have given my life to. Whether that chapter is forever closed to me I will have to wait to find out.'* The effects of the complaint process on their families and friends weighs heavily on them and plays no small part in their future plans. For Participant 50 this has been a deciding factor*:*

[15] Fiona Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control: Responding to Abuse in the Institutional Church*, (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2021), pp.60.

'When this is over, I shall not seek a role in the Church again … I shall not return to ministry. I feel unheard and unsupported by the Church institution. I would not put my family in such a situation again.'

2iii) Impact on the parish

The effects of informal complaint processes on the clergy under investigation have been referred to above but they are also not without their impact on the parish and the worshipping life of the local church. When people live in close proximity rumours and assumptions can gather steam at an alarming rate. Misunderstandings too can develop and have a divisive effect on the life of the parish as Participant 20 found when *'for a time the non-CDM (but as far as the parishioners were concerned it was a CDM) had a very divisive effect on the parishes.*' The majority of survey respondents (72%) were in parish ministry at the time of the complaint against them and communications with congregations can leave clergy and people in uncertain situations. Participant 29 witnessed to *'widespread confusion, disbelief, despair that nothing seems to be happening. Often a significant drop-off in congregant numbers as people vote with their feet. Sometimes resignations o[r] issues of ill-health from associate clergy as they try to cope with the impact on themselves and the church. This has resulted in some associate clergy moving or resigning their posts.'*

Lengthy processes are damaging to all concerned and whereas clergy may in time move on to other locations, parishioners are left to cope with unanswered questions and resulting issues. Long-term relationships within the community may be placed under strain. Participant 68 noted that the complaint process *'hugely affected the congregation and left many unanswered questions. I left the week after the announcement was made. Many contacted me wanting to know why …It left many feeling insecure and unsure. In the time I had been there v[ery] strong connections had been made that overnight were severed.'* Participant 79 referred to the use of varying pieces of clergy appointment legislation in his frustration at the impact of uncertain procedures on the parish context:

> *'While Common Tenure and CDM have been used damagingly against me, as the new, outward-looking incumbent, they have also been harmful to my wife and family, to the mission and ministry of the benefice churches, and had highly divisive effects on the congregations, and even the communities... this protracted demolition has left the churches confused, parishioners alienated, and lay leaders feeling severely compromised; whereas clear and proper procedures and prompt, unbiased action could have led to much less pain and anguish.'*

3) Relationship with Authority

3i) Bishops

i) The confusion for clergy in the role of bishops in handling complaints can be detrimental to the ongoing relationship of clergy and bishop, and consequently on the continuing ministry of the cleric under investigation. Clergy find that their channels of pastoral support dry up just when they need them most. Participant 35 sheds further light on one reason for this in describing how *'in great distress, I phoned the (interim) Diocesan Bishop who said he could not and would not speak to me as if it became a Disciplinary Measure he would have to exercise the discipline.'* Another respondent, Participant 27, was also disappointed and wrote that *'instead of nurture and pastoral care I was dealt*

with as an administrative matter … administrative, not pastoral. Impersonal and, in the bishop's case, disconnected'. Respondents expressed concern that, as Nicholas Papadopulos foresaw, the pastoral support of the bishop is being undermined. [16] This disconnect is a huge surprise and source of pain for clergy, and may cause considerable damage such as Participant 83 experienced:

> 'I *didn't know when I went to this meeting that the bishop concerned was going to use it as a disciplinary meeting. I thought I was going for a pastoral chat. The bishop concerned …. just read these complaints to me as if they were gospel truth, tackling them one by one, like twisting a knife into an open wound. I collapsed into floods of tears and was then ordered to leave my post (effectively sacked).'*

Experiences such as these result in a loss of trust that is damaging to the continuing ministry of the cleric and to their mental well-being. However, among this cohort there were instances reported where some, like Participant 13, came in time to be more fortunate*: 'I was never granted a one to one with my Bishop and ultimately shepherd of the flock. My current bishop … could not be more different and a refreshing cathartic change.'* Participant 84 too was grateful for the intervention of his bishop which succeeded in getting the investigation moving forward*:*

> *'I am still in within the process not having had the opportunity to genuinely put my case across. However, in the last month my suffragan Bishop has stepped in … I am now for the first time feeling that I might be able to move forward with the process.'*

It is no exaggeration to also observe that bishops also have the potential to safeguard future ministries through honest and constructive conversations with clergy as demonstrated by the account given by Participant 88 of just such an exchange:

> *'In my case …. I was given every assistance to find another job in another diocese. To be fair the Diocesan Bishop asked if he could place me elsewhere as he did not want to lose me, I asked if my name and reputation had been damaged by his senior staff in the diocese and the reply was it had.'*

Such stories reveal a more positive role for the bishop that may be further developed in response to the requests that emerged above (in section 1iii) for the integration of more independent procedures.

3ii) Other senior clergy

i) For the most part complaints are initially investigated by archdeacons but on occasions this task can be taken on by others in the senior clergy team, for example, the cathedral dean. Archdeacons, in particular, who extend an active listening ear to clergy in their archdeaconry may find this role compromised when dealing with complaints. They and other senior staff who mentor clergy and provide 'professional' support as they settle into post or effect change in their parishes, can find that relationship undermined. Clergy who regard senior clergy and staff as collaborative colleagues can feel

[16] Nicholas Papadopulos, 'Shepherd and Judge: A Theological Response to the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003', Theology, Vol.110, No.858, (2007), pp. 403-410, p.407. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0040571X0711000602 Accessed 27 January 2021.

a sense of betrayal when complainants appear to be given uncritical attention by them. The impact of this experience is described by Participant 47*:*

> *'It has shaken my relationships with senior clergy …. It was also very difficult to have my archdeacon, who had been my main source of support since starting in the parishes, become the person who had to investigate this claim against me.'*

Clergy who are not accustomed to seeing their senior clergy as exercising a strong disciplinary role towards them find that the confusion generated cuts deep as Participant 6 explained:

> *'The then dean exercised what he saw was his responsibility for disciplining me in a very officious manner …. People are innocent until proven guilty and no matter what they may personally feel it is their job/responsibility to offer pastoral care and support but not to do so grudgingly. A little more sensitivity from those in positions of power.'*

Participant 15, in turn, expressed a longer-term loss:

> *'(It) destroyed my trust in the church's interest in my welfare or ability... I was deemed guilty and supportive correspondence was deemed solicited therefore [as being] disciplinary and disregarded …. The chief contradiction is the archdeacons are both judge and jury, being responsible for prosecuting and welfare.'*

At the least, clergy experience senior staff withdrawing from them in their efforts to be fair to all involved in the complaint, and the gap created noticeably adds to the anxiety generated by the complaint itself. Participant 11 gave voice to the hurt caused*: 'I noticed how senior staff withdrew from me during the process. That was very hurtful.'* Participant 33 concluded that *'the whole experience was highly traumatic, and whilst the diocese were involved I felt they were so even-handed that I suffered as a result, when they should actually have been protecting me and standing up for me.'*

ii) Many clergy found being actively investigated by senior clergy was detrimental to their ongoing working relationships and over half (54%) agreed with the statement that 'the process undermined my trust in senior clergy colleagues'. This may be viewed as an example of what Jonathan Shay terms 'moral injury' having 'long-lasting outcomes in which trust in others is destroyed and encoded' in their physical and mental health, and discussion of which is included in section 5 onwards of this report.[17] Although senior clergy may seek to be supportive of clergy undergoing informal complaint investigations, the clergy themselves express concern at the apparent lack of familiarity in handling 'professional' complaint procedures. Participant 93 was among them and reported*: 'My archdeacon didn't understand that a complaint about a professional person needs to be about something significant, not be at the 'walking on the cracks in the pavement' level. He did not understand the system.'*

Several respondents experienced a lack of clarity which resulted in a loss of confidence in the process. Participant 68 felt that issues unnecessarily grew in magnitude and consequently remarked: *'I have lost a lot of faith in the diocese and in the hierarchy of the church…. Bishops and archdeacons [are needed] who are well trained both in conflict resolution and in CDM as I feel sure that better handling earlier on*

[17] Jonathan Shay, 'Moral injury', *Psychoanalytic Psychology,* Vol. 31, no. 2 (2014), pp. 182–91, here p.190.

could prevent some issues from growing.' Participant 58 would agree following a particularly unsettling experience*: 'The problem for me was when she recommended thinking about moving on because it would be better than a CDM and having that on my CV. I found this quite shocking because there had been no mention of this at any point before. I asked her if there was a CDM against me and she said not at the moment.'* Of the 'Mixed' respondents nearly 3 in 5 (58%) did not think 'the senior staff understood what they were going through' during the complaint process and only a third (33%) were offered any pastoral support. It is interesting that the first of these results compares similarly with results reported among CDM respondents of 55% while 34% of CDM respondents were reported as not being offered pastoral care. [18]

3iii) Diocesan officers

Complaints against clergy often develop to involve a range of diocesan officers alongside the senior clergy. In this cohort there was often appreciation when, for example, Diocesan Registrars and the diocesan-appointed pastoral support are brought into meetings and procedures. Their support and clarity beneficially influenced the investigation as Participant 11 observed*: 'A retired archdeacon kept me sane through the process of the investigation.'* However, clergy generally feel less confident when other senior diocesan officers and local clergy colleagues become involved. For Participant 18, *'the initial support from the diocese was good. But I now feel a bit left out of things as there has been no further news of any outcomes.'* Uncertain communications were also the cause of concern for Participant 43 who noted*: 'The only notice I had of any potential action was a letter inviting me to meet the bishop, which gave no warning of the purpose of the meeting. With no prior notification, the Registrar was present at the meeting.'* In a similar vein, Participant 80 sheds further light on the consequences for clergy when uncertain communications develop with the wider involvement of diocesan officers*:*

> *'I had a phone call from the [diocesan officer] telling me it was urgent that I attend for a chat the next day. I asked why and was not told. I rang later asking the same question, but no answer given. I presumed it was about a third party but it turned out at the meeting that it was about me and that I could have had a representative with me, but that was not conveyed to me, which I feel would have made a big difference to the outcome.'*

Lines of communication may be blurred and information that is shared among diocesan officers and those involved in the process can lack consistency and confidentiality. This can be frustrating for clergy who, like Participant 12, find '*that significant amounts of information were not being shared.'* This further serves to increase the sense of isolation and vulnerability felt by clergy and strains working relationships that may not easily recover. Communication procedures among dioceses and the national Church appear to lack rigour which can be to the detriment of clergy involved in the complaint. Participant 87, for example, was surprised when *'I subsequently discovered, via my Lambeth file, that although I had been told there was no appeal against the decision of the disciplinary committee … that the decision was open to appeal, but no one told me.'*

[18] CDM Emerging Findings from Independent academic research commissioned by Sheldon and conducted by Aston University in collaboration with Sheldon, July 2020, p.4.

4) Human Resources

4i) Senior clergy oversight

Clergy in this cohort expressed concern at the lack of training and awareness of HR procedures among senior clergy that becomes evident as the informal investigation proceeds. Participant 31, for example, testified to this experience noting that, *'when I met with the archdeacon, he opened the meeting with "I don't know how to deal with this"'.* The apparently conflicting requirements of their roles emerges once again as a complicating factor for senior clergy and for Participant 5 highlighted further a lack of training*: 'Archdeacons are appointed to fulfil a number of roles. They appear to be given little training in how to handle complaints.'* The result is an inconsistent and unreliable response from senior staff which clergy find difficult to reconcile. Participant 61, for example, observed:

> *'How variable clergy experience seems to be … when bullying situations arise that … don't fall under any kind of formal process … I am aware of two other clergy in the diocese who are in the same position … I would advocate for some kind of regularization of how situations like this can be addressed, which includes pastoral support.'*

4ii) HR processes

i) The lack of standard process for handling complaints that were not a formal CDM was frequently cited as a cause of ambiguity, uncertainty, and unfairness. In the words of Participant 23*: 'The ambiguity within the church regarding clergy discipline makes it very difficult for clergy to negotiate systems and follow procedures.'* Confused HR systems create additional stresses as noted, for example, by Participant 47 in referring to the inadequate communications highlighted above in section 1ii:

> *'One of the biggest causes of stress for me was the fact that I could not hear what charges were being brought against me. How can anybody be accused of anything and not know what the accuser is saying? I had no idea whether, what I was talking about in my defence, was actually hitting the subject!'*

A particular aspect to which respondents drew further attention to was that complaints are not sufficiently investigated prior to the instigation of disciplinary procedures against them. Participant 37 noted: '*Complaints must always be taken seriously, but there needs to be some rigour in examining the complaint itself (if not the complainant).'* Uncertain procedures can leave clergy feeling under attack and for Participant 15 caused unexpected and particular pain that left his ministry damaged and caused him to demand increased rigour:

> *'[The archdeacon] also divulged my 'confidential' so called failings at a meeting of Church Wardens. It made our otherwise qui[te] agreeable relationship heated…. Ensure fairness. Take account of context. Hear from accused and accusers. Recognise that one is professional (trained, qualified experienced) the other(s) may simply have had their nose put out of joint!'*

Expectations and processes that are not communicated clearly are likely to compound any feelings of vulnerability that the clergy already feel. Participant 17 was put at considerable disadvantage by a lack of HR support:

> *'I found myself two months at home with no official accusation, the CDM process was not followed nor was the grievance process - which was not easy to locate even when approaching HR for it…. HR also needs to sort access to the correct documentation and the process and give clergy support. No links worked, it had to go to my Bishop who eventually was able to send it to me. He was helpful in this…. HR systems need to be better and the people need to be trained or we should outsource it.'*

Among respondents there was felt to be too much secrecy while they were subject to investigative processes, and procedures (such as NDAs) designed to ensure confidentiality later were less than effective. Their experience of HR processes add to the presumption of guilt and the lasting damage to clergy ministry previously noted. Participant 58 observed, *'firstly we need to know what we are talking about and get rid of all the cloak and dagger. There is far too much secrecy and the hiding of identities, it feels like a presumption of guilt. If someone has an everyday complaint, they need to own it.'* Participant 83 went further to express concern at the wider implications for ongoing ministry from her experience, *'I would like it to be impossible for bishops to sign anyone off in the kind of way I was signed off without an independent person coming in and reviewing the whole situation. I am also deeply concerned about the non-disclosure aspect of these kinds of things.'*

ii) The almost unique 'employment' position in which most clergy find themselves is not always understood by diocesan HR staff who are more accustomed to dealing with secular employment frameworks. This can make interactions between clergy and diocesan HR professionals less than satisfactory. The fundamental interconnection between their home and their work renders clergy and their family to be in a more vulnerable position than most other diocesan employees. Participant 1 wrote of the added anxiety this brought, *'I still do not know the nature of the complaint made against me…. I was diocesan staff but living in tied accommodation and the threat of losing everything overnight was terrifying…. the diocesan HR staff who spoke soft words … had no experience of dealing with clergy in tied accommodation.'*

Many clergy have worked in other more secular contexts prior to ordination and inevitably make comparisons that leave them feeling frustrated at the wider lack of professional HR support for clergy. Participant 46 commented from his experience over the years, *'I have worked in public sector organizations and run effective third sector organizations and I find the church's extreme lack of professionalism in personnel issues genuinely gob smacking ... My own experience has been seriously damaging.'* The uncertain responses of senior staff (noted above in section 4i) also serve to focus attention on the HR processes for clergy compared to other diocesan staff. Participant 44 highlighted, for example, disparities in the speed of implementation of HR processes from his own experience as he reflected, *'the abiding memory of it is that it seemed to go from 0 to 90 miles per hour in severity, but at the same time have little urgency as a process, dragging on for an unnecessarily long time….This impacts not only in matters relating to CDM but all aspects of being responsible for the clergy it engages … The situation of a cleric not receiving the report of an appraisal until after the next appraisal is overdue should not exist.*' It is relevant to this background exploration to note that the October 2020 IISCA report into the Church of England concluded that, 'ordained clergy lack a system of assistance,

support and performance management.'[19] Participant 64 drew attention to this enquiry and called for increased accountability and representation to draw attention to the paucity of background HR provision for clergy:

> *"I would like to see something like an IICSA grade interrogation of those responsible for HR in the Church of England to provide proper accountability. The delusions of adequacy that have attended their handling of clergy ministries, appointments and careers, which I have witnessed at first hand over many years, would make me deeply distrustful of their capacity to function fairly and effectively. I would want to see proper staff representation with power, resource and authority to act***".**

4iii) Moving on and resignation

Among the 'Mixed' survey responses were stories where senior clergy dealing with their case encouraged them during the investigation to move on and resign from their post. Clergy may also be keen for a clean break and a fresh start but without due process these stories are moving into the realm of what might be considered 'unfair dismissal' by an Employment Appeal Tribunal.[20] 1 in 8 (16%) of 'Mixed' respondents to the Sheldon survey reported that they were asked at some point in the informal investigative process to resign and a number felt they had no choice with some citing similarities to 'unfair dismissal'. Participant 16 expressed surprise that the archdeacon '*showed no pastoral concern but urged me to find a new post asap - putting additional pressure upon me.'* Participant 8 told of a similar experience that damaged his confidence when, *'I had a meeting with the Bishop, who was supportive, but he and the archdeacon who was designated as my pastoral support, suggested I might consider moving to another post … (that) had the effect of undermining my confidence to some degree.'* The unexpected turn of events in these meetings and the pressure to respond without proper consideration was further highlighted in the story Participant 22 told*:*

> *'I was summoned to a meeting with the archdeacon, HR director and my churchwarden. I thought the meeting was about something else but was ambushed with 'your position has become untenable, you must resign or face a disciplinary review. If you resign, we can offer you a 'package' including 5 months' stipend and a loan to buy a house'.'*

There is evidence too that such pressures from senior staff makes any process of rehabilitation or 'moving on' more challenging particularly when clergy are given little support to re-establish an appropriate ministry. Participant 62 found himself negotiating this change alone when *'on more than one occasion I asked for job particulars and was not given them. There was a resounding sense of having doors slammed in my face.'* Then Participant 51 found himself in an impossible situation recalling *that 'I was effectively told my common tenure position was ending without any formal procedures and what was offered in return was impossible for me to accept. I resigned and moved to another diocese.'* Such unsatisfactory resolutions adds to the stresses of clergy seeking to find their way going forward, particularly when this involves moving the family to a new location. Even if the parish can cope with the sudden loss of their priest, clergy find that this personal life and 'career'

[19] *The Anglican Church Investigative Report*, Independent Enquiry Child Sexual Abuse, October 2020, p.113.
[20] https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2007/12-january/news/uk/unfair-dismissal-ruling-means-be-aware-says-lawyer

changing moment suddenly forced on them and their families with little warning can shatter their confidence.

4iv) The Blue File

Across the Church there is considerable ignorance and confusion around the personnel HR files that follow clergy as their ministry develops and they move between posts in different dioceses. Participant 4 expressed concern at the ignorance around these 'blue files' as they have come to be called after his experience:

> *'They had left a note on my file noting that they had seen the allegations made against me, but no record of the outcome of the process ... At the time, I had no idea what a 'blue file' was, nor did I know anything about the existence of such a file. The 'personnel management' system of the C of E was never made clear to me. There is a worryingly high level of ignorance amongst C of E clergy of all generations that I know, about blue files.'*

These personal 'blue files' are managed by and between bishops on a confidential basis but the management and lack of transparency around them engenders widespread distrust and accusations of bias. Participant 47 expressed the confusion of many clergy in noting that, *'the 'circumstances' for the claim being dropped were never clear and I still do not know whether anything has been entered on my blue file…. Have a proper debrief after the charges have been dropped so everyone is clear on what the investigation will mean for the future. Make it clear what, if anything, is going on the blue file.'*

Clergy who are aware of the existence of these files complain that they have no insights into the details kept there and this hinders their ability to 'move on' even from unproven complaints. The concern expressed by Participant 62 is not unique:

> *'I have often wondered whether there was something on my blue file or just networks getting in the way because the number of obstacles to getting a parish post seemed disproportionate and wholly unjustified if you look at my CV and also my capacity to do the job now that I am in a parish.'*

Over a quarter (28%) of 'Mixed' respondents to the Sheldon survey were aware that a letter had been placed on their personal ministry files and only a minority had seen it. A few had gained access and discovered the record of complaint and investigation to be incomplete omitting, for example, any indication of a conclusion. Among them Participant 77 wrote that, *'Later I was told that the letter of complaint was kept 'on file' which I took to be a black mark against my ministry. I paid to access my records at Bishop's house and only found the letter of complaint on my file. I immediately wrote my version of the situation and sent it in to add to my file.'* For Participant 48 access to his 'blue file' brought a surprise that was particularly concerning in that, *'I was given undertakings that after an initial inquiry the matter was closed and no record would be kept. The bishop who said this lied because it went into my blue file.'* Records remaining on their blue file do not appear to be properly reviewed according to the policy approved by the House of Bishops and this lack of rigour makes clergy fearful for their future ministry.[21]

[21] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Personal%20Files%20Relating%20to%20Clergy%202018%20Edition.pdf

4v) Safeguarding teams

Initial research findings from the Sheldon survey noted that CDM cases tend to be seen through the lens of safeguarding whereas only 25% (1 in 4) of CDM cases involved allegations of either current or historic sexual misconduct.[22] Clergy experiencing informal complaint procedures can also find themselves caught up in safeguarding aspects that raise the temperature of the investigations and increase their risk. They observe that clergy are particularly vulnerable in their pastoral ministry to allegations involving aspects of safeguarding, and that the processes give them little voice. Participant 24 reflected on the ramifications for a clergy colleague concluding that, '*the issue should have been and could have been far better managed at a Diocesan level. I think there have been mistakes all along the way that allowed the situation to get out of hand. Things could have been done a LOT [respondent's emphasis] earlier which may have meant that a safeguarding submission did not need to be made; but also I cannot be sure that the safeguarding submission was then dealt with appropriately.'*

Several respondents offered reflections on their experiences of an informal investigation requiring the specific involvement of Diocesan Safeguarding Officers. These mirror their contacts with senior clergy and other diocesan officers referred to in section 3 above. The experience of Participant 3 underlines further a lack of due process for informal complaint procedures already noted in section 1iv which undermines the clergy and their ability to defend themselves:

> *'At the meeting with the external safeguarding officer she began to talk about things of which I had no knowledge. When I asked where this was coming from she replied that it was taken from the testimony of my accuser which she assumed I had read. I didn't even know that the document existed nor that I might have read it in preparation. It just hadn't been mentioned.'*

In particular, clergy expressed considerable concern at the apparent lack of accountability for safeguarding officers which becomes evident to them as the time taken by the informal investigation wears on and investigations take unexpected turns. Aware of the current climate of safeguarding across the Church, bishops are experienced as keen to defer to their safeguarding officer(s) resulting in less and more distant contact for the clergy with few opportunities of response. For Participant 50, for example, this resulted in a presumption of guilt:

> *'I have been off work (voluntary stepped aside) for over six months to date, though no formal charges have yet been brought against me … I was promised a review after 4 weeks, though after 6 and a half months am still waiting for this. Throughout, I have been dealt with as guilty until proved innocent … Safeguarding seem to be a law unto themselves, and senior staff seem afraid and unwilling to question their behaviour.'*

Accountability is an issue that the IISCA report drew to the attention of the Church and the lack of voice for clergy when safeguarding issues are involved extends to having no right of appeal to any assessment. [23] The need felt by clergy for a more independent perspective has been highlighted above

[22] CDM Emerging Findings from Independent academic research commissioned by Sheldon and conducted by Aston University in collaboration with Sheldon, July 2020, p.2.
[23] *The Anglican Church Investigative Report*, Independent Enquiry Child Sexual Abuse, October 2020, p.109.

in section 1iii, and is borne out by the experience of Participant 80 who briefly sought legal advice but found himself isolated in informal complaint processes involving safeguarding concerns:

> *'The Safeguarding Officer said an Assessment would be carried out and I understood from their procedure this would be within 6 weeks … It was 14 weeks later that I had a letter stating that … had all been upheld ... After seeking advice from a solicitor (a free 30-minute session, I could not afford to pay otherwise) … I was told by Safeguarding there was no appeal against their Assessment. I appealed to the Bishop but he stated that he took the Safeguarding Officers decision. He did not give me the opportunity to meet with him to discuss it … there should be better processes for those falsely accused to appeal.'*

The health and welfare impacts

5) Impact on ministry

5i) Impact on vocation and ministry

The heterogeneous processes of disciplinary practices in the Church of England has led to a severe distrust of the ability of senior personnel to minister to clergy – especially where charges of misdemeanour have subsequently been proved false. Fiona Gardner, in her recent work into child sex-abuse within the Church, argues that we must 'strip away the veneer' which has allowed abusive activities to sometimes be glossed over by the 'institutional church', allowing victims/survivors no voice or space to find redemption or a way forward.[24] Although only 21% of respondents to the Sheldon survey were in any way connected with safeguarding issues, there is nonetheless, significant evidence to highlight that clergy under investigation for other matters experienced a similar 'silencing'. While the exact nature of many complaints was not recorded in the survey responses (for understandable reasons), it was made clear by 40% of respondents that many were trivial or indeed vexatious. A letter in the *Church Times* of 12 March 2021 (which references evidence from the Sheldon data), argues that '[s]afeguarding is about protecting the well-being of *people* – all God's people. Anything else, like the discipline of reputation management, is secondary.'[25] In the same letter, Philip Goggin points out that the effect on one 'targeted in a complaint may well exceed the pain suffered by the complainant,' and that considerable evidence exists to illustrate that 'those caught up' in disciplinary processes were confronted by senior clergy who 'seemed to wish the[m]… guilty.'[26] It is these physical, mental and spiritual traumas that this section of the report addresses.

In *Sex, Power, Control* Gardner considers the 'phenomenon of abuse' in which 'secrecy comes to the fore…[within] a closed hierarchical grouping which, by its explicit and implicit structures, nurtures a culture of almost unchallengeable authority.'[27] The survivors' testimonies at the heart of Gardener's work are, she claims, 'central and deserve to be heard' and that their bravery in speaking out must be acknowledged, particularly in the light of the 'fear, shame, guilt and uncertainty' experienced as they suffer the after-effects of severe and traumatic events.[28] Such testimonies are also central to this report, as is an acknowledgement that clergy also suffer from the culture of secrecy and narcissism inherent within the 'institutional church,' and may find themselves thrust into a place where 'fear, shame, guilt and uncertainty' cast long shadows over their continuing ministry, vocation, mental health and family lives. It is telling to note that 63% of survey respondents answered in the negative to the statement "I felt supported by the diocese through the process".

[24] Fiona Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control: Responding to Abuse in the Institutional Church*, (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2021), pp. 6-7. The 'institutional church' is defined as 'the national and diocesan organisation of the Church of England, where hierarchy, structure, systems and factions take precedence over relationship.'
[25] Revd. Dr. Philip Goggin to the Editor, *Church Times*, 12 March 2021, p.14.
[26] Goggin to the Editor, Ibid.
[27] Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control.,* p.11.
[28] Gardner, Ibid., p.9.

Years before the advent of psychology wove a seismic change through the field of writing the history of emotions, theologians were the ones who spoke with authority on the subject.[29] In Classical Greece too it was the interpretation of philosophers such as Aristotle which came to define the 'emotions' as 'reactions, reactions not to events but to actions or situations that resulted from actions, the consequences of which result affect one's relative status, or the relative status of others.'[30] Though neuroscientific approaches to the study of emotions have, by the 21st Century, largely overtaken the approaches of the past, this classical definition is very appropriate for our purposes here, as we seek to understand the 'lived experience' of those placed under various disciplinary measures in the Church of England. While the practical impact on those in ministry of the sanctions imposed (or threatened) against them are discussed elsewhere in this report, this section highlights the weight of emotional reactions including the grief, fear and pain suffered as a consequence of the process itself. William Reddy states that 'when we speak of our emotions, they come into a peculiar, dynamic relationship with what we say about them' – and this is surely the case here.[31] The fear, bewilderment and pain that is evident in the quotations that follow highlight not only the dynamics of grief, but a profound impact on how clergy 'feel' regarding their vocation and ministry as it comes under scrutiny from those in authority. Participant 52, for example, states, that *'[t]he integrity of my entire life feels abidingly blighted. My priesthood has entailed many personal costs. This has felt like the ultimate vitiation.'*

Of the participants who completed the 'Mixed' section of the Sheldon survey 63% answered that, as the complaint proceeded, they did not feel supported by either their colleagues and superiors at diocesan level, and only 9% believed that the disciplinary procedures against them were implemented because of errors they had knowingly made.[32] In addition, as Christopher Lewis *et al* claim, '[i]t is of concern that the popular image of the clergy is that they are one of the last professionals in the community to suffer from work-related poor psychological health [or] stress,' something which can work on the psyche of respondents to prompt feelings of failure, an undermining of their vocation and a lack of personal agency.[33] A survey response from Participant 84 expresses these precise feelings, '*As I am still within the process it is difficult to say how this will impact my ministry long term. However, I would say that my ability to have long term confidence in my ministerial future has been severely damaged. This is a great sadness to me and feels like a bereavement.'* Such feelings of low self-esteem, when combined with an often demonstrable and overt distancing from clergy who are their institutional superiors, can often create a perfect traumatic storm. As Participant 1 notes, *'I was handed over to the dogs - that is the diocesan HR staff who spoke soft words…but served their masters' desires.'*

It appears that many bishops are, for whatever reason, reluctant to offer meetings, advice or empathetic support to those who share their 'cure of souls' but are subject to complaints or investigation. The impact of the public suspension from duties is especially problematic when operated without reliable safeguards. Participant 83 claims that the '*grief at my vocation being ripped away from me is unimaginably painful, and sometimes expresses itself physically. It was appalling. I cannot*

[29] Jan Plamper and Keith Tribe, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2015), p.10.
[30] Ibid, p.13.
[31] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.64.
[32] This section of the report is concerned only with these 93 individuals.
[33] Christopher A. Lewis, Douglas W, Turton and Leslie J. Francis, 'Clergy work-related psychological health, stress, and burnout: An Introduction to this special issue of *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*', *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, January 2007, Vol.10, No.1, pp.1-8, p.5.

say how utterly bad this was. But I have to point out that this did not get to official CDM level. It was an "informal" process.' In addition, Participant 48 notes that *'[i]t began to feel as if I was disposable…It felt like [the] diocese was having its cake and eating it.'*

Where meetings with senior clerics (or, as Gardner terms it, those at the 'core' of the institutional church) did take place, they often did so in an atmosphere that felt threatening to the clergyperson – rather than empathetic, calmly inquiring and supportive.[34] Participant 58, for example, notes that *'[t]his experience has left me feeling I'm being watched and my authority swept away.'* Participant 9 was even more direct: *'[T]he meeting felt like a direct attack on my ministerial judgement…I felt I was in the dock.'* So fraught did Participant 55 feel after their engagement with diocesan authorities, they commented afterwards that *'[i]t took me 6 months to appreciate that Capability was not disciplinary, yet it felt like it all the time.'* Participant 73 highlights how they *'feel I am being treated as guilty despite not having a voice'* – that voice being something which some respondents to the survey feel has been returned to them by this research.[35] For others, however, the dynamics of power as they operate within the Church of England today, in which the subtleties of class, race and gender still function to create constructions of 'them' and 'us', work to put some clergy outside the pale for those at its 'core'.[36] Clerics who have not entered the formal stages of CDM, or perhaps are seeking care and advice where they have knowingly erred, can find themselves isolated and their ability to hold office under question. It is little wonder, perhaps, that for Participant 46 *'[t]he threat of CDM…really felt like the end of everything.'*

5ii) Impact on parishes:

The emotional impact of the 'Mixed' group of procedures on Sheldon survey respondents' ministry and vocation shown above, informs us of the way in which the Church, as an institution, appears to have been 'unable to honour the personal distress' of those affected.[37] And the very institution that should exemplify the teachings of Christ is seemingly falling short of applying even the basic tenets of those teachings to the care of its own clergy. As Participant 83 comments, *'[m]y life has been RUINED and my ministry has been WRECKED and it is utterly utterly unfair. Some simple support and encouragement would have made all the difference.'*[38] This respondent went on to note that they had lost their 'joy in life' and that their depressive symptoms had affected their ability to minister effectively. Participant 36 also noted that *'My energy and enthusiasm for ministering in this place have been much eroded, and my already frail mental health has been made significantly worse.'* Wider literature, such as that of Lewis *et al*, highlights the 'special and unique dynamic…related to spiritual and religious leadership in the community' which has caused 'serious problems' for denominations struggling to grapple with increased psychological ill-health among their staff.[39] When the issues causing clergy stress stem from accusations among the congregation or senior staff themselves, these problems must only be exacerbated. Participant 22 comments that *'Knowing that your 'boss' trusts you and is on your side*

[34] Gardner, *Sex, Power and Control*, p.84.
[35] On the impact of the survey Part. 88 notes: *'As I write this down for the first time, I can hardly believe what I write, it is so far-fetched… I am however still outraged at the treatment I received from [my] previous Diocese and felt that until this survey I had no voice.'*
[36] Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control,* pp.83-99.
[37] Gardner, Ibid, p.153.
[38] Emphasis in original.
[39] Lewis *et al*, 'Clergy work-related psychological health', p.2.

enables you to be confident in your role. Without this you are living in fear and under constant threat, which is damaging to mental health and well-being.' It was found that 42% of respondents answered 'agree or strongly agree' to the question of had 'their experience made them think negatively about their future'. For those in active ministry this, of course, included thoughts regarding the impact that organisational censure would have on the lives of their congregations and parish residents, in addition to themselves. Participant 97, for instance, writes that *'the time and energy needed to try to defend oneself, watch ones back, and try to protect family and friends and those who want to help, for fear of the repercussions is exhausting and takes hours of literal time, and head/thinking time, which is not then given to the parish, so one's ability to do the job is lessened.'* Thus, we can argue that the impact of these informal investigations can actively lead to ministerial de-skilling, as well as emotional stress and burnout.

Becky Omdahl argues that '[f]or most people, the greatest intensity of emotive responsiveness occurs in personal relationships', but for those in 'the helping professions' the process of seeking empathy with others with whom one is trying to work can actively function to destroy mental equilibrium further.[40] For some respondents it is people within their churches who have helped to cause their distress by making the complaint, which thus helps to undermine their vocation to a particular ministry (as well as their vocation overall). Participant 92, for instance, comments, *'I am so much happier when I am out seeing people in the community than being part of the church. I dread going into the church as I just wait for the snide digs.*' And Participant 47 informs us how *'[t]he period of sick leave…shook the parish's confidence in me. It feels like the work, the visioning, the hope and the plans all went on hold for six months or more... [and there have been] tensions ever since.'* For over half of the survey respondents it was trivial issues or a longer term 'bullying campaign' which they believed had been the cause of the accusations they were facing. Participant 44 noted that *'[i]t did not at the time affect my health or faith but did give me serious pause for thought as to vocation…[leaving] an unrecognised and unchallenged legacy of bad feeling in the parish.'* Participant 15 also noted the strain of a bullying campaign, when writing that senior figures did not listen *'to my plea that this was a bullying fabrication fashioned into a mountain from a molehill'* and detrimentally affecting their wellbeing. Christopher Cook writes of the 'guilt experienced by the person who is clinically depressed' and the critical part this plays in questioning vocation. He argues further that such guilt 'is also a part of the mental apparatus that the person concerned will necessarily bring to bear upon their own theological self-reflection' – which can sometimes lead to a further spiralling downwards of the emotions to cause an even greater undermining of self-confidence.[41] The respondents' quotations below illustrate such views within the literature, albeit with diverse stresses on particular issues.

6) Impact on mental health

6i) Relating to the Respondent

The Sheldon survey, of course, deals with the *self-reporting* of the circumstances of complaints and disciplinary procedures, which brings with it the charges of bias and subjectivity that surround the use of autobiographical evidence in research. While such evidence can lead to a charge of partiality being made against researchers, modern social scientists are very aware of the objectivity that must define

[40] Becky L. Omdahl, *Cognitive Appraisal, Emotion and Empathy*, (Hove: Psychology Press, 2014), pp.4-5.
[41] Christopher Cook, *Spirituality, Theology and Mental Health*, (London: SCM Press, 2013), p.xiii.

the conduct of studies such as this – and work to apply it at all times.[42] On a methodological note which brings into focus the differing ways in which the measurement of depression, suicidal ideation and psychiatric disability have been applied over the years (that is by using an increasingly quantitative approach), Keith Oatley reminds us of the value of the qualitative. The 'most usual occurrences [of depression]', he writes, 'are not independent of life circumstances, plans or relationships.' '[I]n psychology's terms, life events or stressors are as important now as they were found to be 30 years ago,' and biographical accounts of everyday experience are still very much a valid way of determining the process of human understanding of trauma – as the quotes below illustrate.[43] Survey respondents note that 62% experienced an increase in the level of depression suffered and 55% noted detrimental changes in their physical health too. The testimonies provided are sometimes harrowing, often brutal in their honesty (as the respondent perceives it) and highlight much dissatisfaction with the assorted approaches taken by dioceses towards the investigation of alleged wrongdoing. The personal pressures under which respondents usually continue outward ministry place psychological burdens upon them which manifest most often as the symptoms of anxiety, depression and, in some cases, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Erica Goldblatt Hyatt, (writing of those who experienced trauma following arrest on safeguarding issues,) has recently shown that even where 'charges were recanted or unsubstantiated the accused [could be] followed by a cloak of suspicion', under-mining their wellbeing and, in some, creating a siege mentality where interaction with others becomes increasingly difficult.[44] Participant 22 writes concerning precisely these issues: *'The PTSD has also, very sadly, made me less trusting of other people. I find it difficult to meet new people and no longer feel able to go door knocking e.g. during missions.*' Participant 15 confirms Hyatt's arguments with the simple statement that the experience had *'[g]enerated huge self-doubt [and] anxiety about being in public.'* And, for Participant 33 the experience '*was how I imagine agoraphobia to be - we were frightened to step outside the front door in case we bumped into someone who hated us.*' One of the starkest responses came from Participant 47, who wrote that the process *'triggered PTSD…I was taking anti-depressants for 9 months and in this darkness, I lost sight of God. He totally disappeared.'*

Hyatt also writes of those accused suffering from 'external and internal stigma' for, as details of their lives often inevitably leak into the public sphere, 'they experience…[feelings of] panic, fear, anxiety and an inability to trust others.'[45] Many respondents believed their 'resiliency had been extinguished by the allegations', their ability to cope, even among the day to day interactions with friends and family, much reduced.[46] The longevity of the clerics' suffering can be summed up by Participant 97: *'I lost confidence, and my voice almost completely, and still shake if someone raises their voice even reasonably. The process has been over about 14 months now, and I left 9 months ago. I still wake up trembling some nights.'* Others, such as Participant 48 wrote of feeling isolated and unable to reach out – *'I excluded myself from many social gatherings as I didn't want to be seen breaking down crying as I did occasionally at home.'* For Participant 55, the key issue was one of trust in the Church. *'It knocks your faith in people, your self-confidence, and challenges virtually everything you thought to be*

[42] The methodology followed by Sheldon bears close resemblance to key studies in the field including that of the first epidemiological study of depression in 1978 by Brown and Harris. G.W. Brown and T.O. Harris, *Social Origins of depression: a study of psychiatric disorder in women*, (London: Tavistock, 1978), cited in Keith Oatley, 'Slings and arrows: Depression and life events', *The Psychologist*, Vol.20, No.4, (2007), pp.228-230.

[43] Oatley, 'Slings and arrows', p.228.

[44] Erica Goldblatt Hyatt, 'Falsely Accused Clergy in Therapy: A Case Study', *Social Work & Christianity*, Vol.46, No.4, (2019), pp. 87-103, p.89. Hyatt's work focuses on those falsely accused of safeguarding issues, but her conclusions can be placed in a wider context with a great deal of validity.

[45] Hyatt, Ibid.

[46] Hyatt, Ibid, p.90.

true about something you thought you knew so well and trusted.' While for Participant 62, the chief concern was one of feelings of perceived inadequacy, commenting that *'I have felt that I have to prove myself to get over that experience'*, something which has led to anxiety and a perception of being monitored. Participant 8 was more direct - *'It was as if I was a nobody and they didn't want to know.'* Neither are these feelings short-lived, for, as Gardner asserts '[i]n one sense the after-effects of any trauma always remain in the psyche,' and in order to 'recover' the aim should be 'to manage and master [them] so the person is no longer overwhelmed in the present.'[47] If this cannot be accomplished, as is so often evidenced in the participant's autobiographies, the results can be, as Participant 56 informs us, enduring: *'as I've been typing, the tears have welled up again.'*

6ii) The mental health of others

For some clergy, (as Burnett *et al* note when writing of the 'caring professions' more widely,) seeing all-to-clearly the threat to their livelihoods and familial relationships should complaints be upheld, the stresses can became almost unbearable and a poisonous miasma sweeps through their lives, leading to intense trauma.[48] Section 6.i has offered examples of quotations that align directly with such arguments in the literature, in particular the type of stress suffered and, in some cases, the longevity of the symptoms. Section 6.ii considers respondents views regarding the effect of living in a period of trauma while continuing to encounter those who are 'vulnerable' and who might, in fact, have taken out the complaint against them. This is exemplified by Participant 95 who writes, *'the parishioner took the opportunity of finding me on my own to threaten me - words to the effect that at the end of all of this I would be forced to apologise to him.'* Pastoral work is clearly required to help clergy deal with the often caustic environment resulting from such circumstances, but too often this is not forthcoming from dioceses – something which, as Gardner points out, shows a lack of spiritual and moral responsibility on the part of the institutional Church.[49] Participant 70, for example, notes that *'[a]s a result,* (of the charges levelled at them) *we all felt rejected by the church, my family have had issues with depression, anxiety and my children have especially felt they have no place at church. This has been devastating to our family.'* Participant 89 noted that they *'have chosen all along not to speak out against the person making the allegation, as they were and probably remain in poor mental health…'* This cleric continued, noting that they found the events surrounding the process '*immensely stressful. We survived, but it was undoubtedly the most difficult period of my life.'*

Mullen and Lester have expanded on such concepts to write of the role of 'vexatious litigants and unusually persistent complainants', noting that the role of such people in legal actions can lead directly to 'threatening and violent behaviour' towards the people they accuse.[50] Participant 95 confirms this view, stating *'I have been under significant stress, threat of physical and legal action by someone who is vulnerable but a clear safeguarding threat to others.'* Participant 79 found support from a colleague but noted that when they *'spoke to the Area Bishop about the benefice and the [complainants] behaviour…it was a conversation "with a mind very much made-up".'* Mullen and Lester consider that

[47] Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control*, p.28.
[48] Ros Burnett, Carolyn Hoyle and Naomi-Ellen Speechley, 'The Context and Impact of Being Wrongly Accused of Abuse in Occupations of Trust', *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, Vol.56, No.2, (June 2017), pp.176-197.
[49] Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control*, p.28.
[50] Paul. E. Mullen and Grant Lester, 'Vexatious Litigants and Unusually Persistent Complainants and Petitioners: From Querulous Paranoia to Querulous Behaviour', *Behavioural Sciences and the Law*, Vol.24, (2006), pp.333-49, p.333.

'querulousness is a disorder of behaviour' first and 'abnormality of mental function' second, but consider that '[t]hose caught up in a querulous pursuit of their notion of justice are amenable to treatment…to reduce the disruption they cause to others'.[51] Perhaps we might look, then, at the 'personality traits and social situations' of those who make vexatious or malicious complaints – their peevishness and negativity – and why this leaves those working in the 'caring professions' so vulnerable, particularly in relation to those who appear initially plausible, such as regular church members.[52] For instance, Participant 22 writes that *'I was told that the churchwarden was there to "support me through the transition". She also drove me to future meetings with the archdeacon and HR Director. I only discovered much later, after I had been coerced into signing deeds of resignation, that the churchwarden was the complainant and had been lying about me.'* Among other recollections that highlight a concern here are those by Participants 95 and 97. Participant 97 notes that *'one of the main people concerned still sends bizarre emails and texts occasionally'*, though for Participant 95 the situation is more serious - *'I have had all the locks changed, security lights on the house and now use the burglar alarm on the house. I do not know how far this man's anger will take him as he has no capacity to make reasoned decisions and see the potential consequences of his reckless behaviour.'* Perhaps the words of Participant 81 sum up this situation best, and highlight the need for greater sympathy and empathy by the institutional church for its priests: *'Initially it knocked my confidence when it came to managing potentially difficult situations and less confident of being on my own with parishioners. Being with the vulnerable people in our society in itself makes you vulnerable.'* Targeted behavioural training too may be valuable, for many querulous complainants 'never acknowledge they were in error… [and are] likely to remain dissatisfied' however diligently their complaint is investigated.[53]. Participant 24 highlights this, commenting that '*the impact for the Parish continues at this time - which, again, I don't think the Diocese is adequately picking up. A decision not to advertise for a new Incumbent for some time I don't think is a solution to a problem that may only continue to fester.'* This cleric sums up their experience by writing that *'[t]hese things 'kill' people in terms confidence, ministry, health and well-being etc.*' Tragically, in some cases, clerics thoughts become so dark that they consider taking their own lives.

6iii) Matters of suicide:

It was the American clinical psychologist Edwin S. Shneidman who claimed in 1993 that 'the author of suicide is pain'. He posed the notion that 'those engaging in suicidal behaviour' were, in fact, suffering *psychache*, or an 'active psychological pain that can take over the mind.'[54] Participant 55 comments on their feelings, noting that '*I feel cheated, demoralised and left wondering if I'll ever have another parochial ministry. I have contemplated taking my life many times.'* In fact, 37% of the 93 respondents in the 'Mixed' cohort stated that they had had thoughts of taking their own life and 6% of the total had acted on their thoughts. Stephen Cherry, writing on responses to 'being hurt', notes that pain is not

[51] Mullen and Lester, 'Vexatious Litigants', p.348.
[52] Mullen and Lester, Ibid.
[53] Mullen and Lester, p.347.
[54] Edwin S. Shneidman, *Suicide as Psychache: A Clinical Approach to Self-Destructive Behavior*, (North Vale NJ: Jason Aronson, (1993)), cited in Derrik A. Paladino, 'Suicide: Prevention and Intervention' in Thelma Duffy and Shane Haberstroh, *Introduction to Crisis and Trauma Counselling*, (Alexandria VA: American Counselling Association, 2020), pp.137-166, p.138. Louise Brådvik, 'Suicide Risk and Mental Disorders', International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Vol.15, (2018). doi:10.3390/ijerph15092028 222.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph

only 'inflicted' on us but, if severe enough, 'somehow gets *into* us, [beginning] to infiltrate our sense of identity and undermine who we think we are…taking us into the wilderness, a place of…desolation.'[55] For some respondents, their narratives not only explore the range of symptoms that come with mental illness but also something deeper, a spiritual anguish exacerbated by a challenge to, or the undercutting of, their long-held views on the Church, their faith or their vocation. Participant 52's testimony exemplifies such feelings: *'18 months later I had a major breakdown and was diagnosed with burnout…[t]he summary revocation [of PTO] was a severe emotional & psycho-spiritual setback from which I have never recovered… I felt recurrently suicidal.'*

Cherry considers that '[p]eople are ashamed when they are bullied or violated by someone who holds power over them' – and how much more awkward to process these feelings it must be when we hope that those 'people in power' in Christian circles are also bound by good ethical governance.[56] Participant 43 underlines this by commenting that only *'[a]fter a number of years was there a partial reconciliation with [my Bishop,] but only after I confronted him with the fact [that] I nearly committed suicide.'* Participant 73, after their ordeal, wrote *'I have researched the most successful ways of how to commit suicide and have even written a suicide note. These have not been acted upon and as soon as I completed them, I sought support and am not [now] suicidal.'* Such claims as those of Cherry and Shneidman also lie at the core of Gardner's *Sex, Power, Control*, where she argues that to find hopes of institutional empathy dashed adds another deep layer of discomfort to the *psychache* experienced by victims/survivors of abusive Church of England institutional practices. The Church has, she argues, both a moral and 'spiritual responsibility' to 'pay for professional, good and long-term therapeutic work when it is asked to do so by survivors' – suggesting that it is, of itself, 'not a therapeutic community and does not have the capability or the empathy needed' to carry out the work in-house.[57] Some respondents to this survey do note, with gratitude, the help they received from these counsellors (see 'Support' analysis below), but for many more such offers were not made, or were unsuitable (for whatever reason) leaving them feeling isolated and despairing. Participant 80 concludes their testimony with the words *'whatever the decision, my wife and I have gone through over two and a half years of considerable stress and sleeplessness. It has affected our health and made us feel suicidal.'* And for those for whom suicide was not a temptation, there was still deep *psychache*, as Participant 83 informs us: *'Although I am not suicidal, I have gone through an enormous grief process and I feel a lot of anger about the unfairness of the persecution against me*…'.

7) Impact on physical health

Throughout the responses to the Sheldon survey the correlation between the distressing psychological symptoms suffered by clergy and their physical health can be observed. Alexander McFarlane notes that it is common, among those suffering traumas, to experience 'multiple physical symptoms which [are] indicative of a general reflection of distress'.[58] Participant 41 noted this by commenting, *'[the experience] took a huge toll on my mental and physical health…I lost weight, couldn't sleep…and suffered a depressing loss of libido*.' McFarlane also highlights the 'progressive evolution' of such symptoms which can occur over extended periods of time so that even those who appear to function

[55] Stephen Cherry, *Healing Agony: Re-imagining Forgiveness*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2012), p.13.
[56] Cherry, Ibid, p.13.
[57] Gardner, *Sex, Power, Control*, p.28.
[58] Alexander C. McFarlane, 'The long-term costs of traumatic stress: intertwined physical and psychological consequences', *World Psychiatry*, Vol.9, No.3, (2010), pp.3-10, p.5.

at high levels initially will, later, experience either physical or psychological consequences relating to the trauma they experienced.[59] This is something noted by Participant 97, who wrote that *'Initially I lost weight, then put a load on, as my physical health went to pot …. I didn't dare take time off until I went flop, which has also meant I have an ongoing issue…*'. For Participant 20, the situation also prompted long-term health consequences: *'I suffered from severe IBS and intestinal haemorrhage during that time and have never fully recovered since. In stressful times even years later, this rears up.'* Participant 92 linked their decline in physical health directly to the treatment they had received from the diocese, noting *'I feel completely undermined. I have developed an eating disorder and I feel that no senior staff give any thought at all to me or what has happened'* – the very antithesis of a loving church.

Recent works such as Gardner's *Sex, Power, Control* and Janet Fife and Gilo's *Letters to a Broken Church* have highlighted something of the extent to which out-dated attitudes based on cultures of entitlement and privilege still pervade the institutional church, leading to distance and division between parish clergy and the hierarchy. Yet the revelations of the IICSA, for example, are beginning to force a change. Bishop Alan Wilson, writing in *Letters*, for instance, argues that the episcopate needs to 'transform a culture of secrecy, effortless superiority and neurotic *folie de grandeur* into one of openness, service and accountability.'[60] Only by so doing, Wilson argues, will the working environment for clerics be one in which Bishops undertake the role not of a 'panicky elitist prelacy…[but rather]…a genuine form of servant oversight.'[61] This would go some way to mitigate experiences such as that of Participant 97, who recalled that *'[c]onfidentiality didn't exist…the Archdeacon, Bishop and HR and mentor seemed like sieves, and mine and a family members personal health details were scattered like confetti along with everything else, about the Diocese.'* To openly gossip about a disciplinary situation in such a way might well prompt those affected by it to question the ethics and moral compass of any organisation they work for – let alone a faith-based one. In a very recent study investigating the idea of 'decent work' and its impact on employee's health Ryan Duffy *et al* argue that the Psychology of Working Theory states that,

> 'working in environments not considered "decent" will have subsequent effects on the ability to meet needs for survival, social contribution, and self-determination, which in turn impacts work-specific and general mental and physical well-being.'[62]

When adding the challenges of a complaint to the already stressful working conditions experienced by many of today's clergy, it is highly possible that the changes this prompts in 'employment relations and work conditions' will have a detrimental effect on physical as well as psychological symptoms – something that the World Health Organisation acknowledged as long ago as 2007.[63]

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[59] Ibid., p.5.
[60] Alan Wilson, 'The Crisis of the Hierarchy', in Janet Fife and Gilo (eds.) *Letters to a Broken Church*, (London: Ekklesia, 2019), pp. 167-172, p.172.
[61] Wilson, 'The Crisis of the Hierarchy', p.171.
[62] Ryan D. Duffy, Haram J. Kim, Nicholas P. Gensmer, Trisha L. Paque-Bodgan, Richard P. Douglass, Jessica W. England, Aysenur Buyukgoze-Kavas, 'Linking decent work with physical and mental health: A psychology of working perspective', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, Vol.112, (2019), pp.384-395, p.384.
[63] Ibid, p.385.

8) Impact on family and relationships

8i) Impact on spouse and partner relationships

For many of Sheldon's 'Mixed' survey participants, responses to the questions regarding close personal relationships during the time of the accusations against them provide the greatest insight into their lived experience. When asked how they 'would rate the impact of the experience' on their lives the negativity of the results is evident. On average, a score of 17.5 out of 20 (with 20 as the most negative) was recorded and, for 40 out of 93 participants, the results were graded at 19 or 20. Burnett *et al* write of the 'multiple harms' that arise from such allegations (especially when proved false), including loss of vocation, being forced (or feeling obliged) to abandon a profession, loss of home and status, being subject to stigma in social circles and financial hardship.[64] All of these issues are evident in the Sheldon responses and affect the way in which respondents' lives changed as a result of the accusations made against them. Participant 41, for example, notes, *'[m]y husband needed clergy spousal support…[T]he experience has scarred and wounded us both… and…without deep personal '[f]aith…I could have left, my ministry broken and my husband with me.'* Participant 88 writes that *'[m]y wife and I suffered as much from the treatment by the Archdeacon, as well as the social media campaign brought into my home by members of my Church.'* For Participant 1 the case was stark: *'The threat of losing everything overnight was terrifying.'* And Participant 11 noted with equal candour, *'[t]he fact that one's home is potentially involved…adds so much stress. We thought we might have to be moved out…'* For some clerics, an already bad situation can be exacerbated by concerns for family well-being. Participant 38 went as far as to suffer alone, writing that '*I decided that until something official happened I would not involve my wife/family. I was already concerned and worried about the situation I saw developing, I did not want to have the additional worry of 'worrying' about my wife's worry for me!'* Participant 44 likewise noted, *'My partner is completely oblivious as to my recent Grievance experience and although it rankles with me not to have discussed it, family circumstances and personal health is of greater concern at the moment and made not sharing a conscious and considered choice.'* A clear majority of clerics living with family did, however, elect to share their concerns, but acknowledged the pressure that came with that sharing. Participant 28 writes that *'[w]hile I have had the fulsome support of my wife, (adult) children and friends, this itself has been a pressure as I have had to manage their anger and frustration as well as my own.'* Most of those living under the Vicarage roof, therefore, do not remain immune to or unaffected by events.

For clergy spouses/partners, and other close family members who share the trauma with the accused, the stress involved can be experienced in two ways. Exploring this 'bidirectional nature' Don Catherall notes that '[f]amily support can moderate the impact of trauma on a family member, even as the impact of a traumatised member can traumatise a family.'[65] Both concepts come through strongly in the respondents' narratives but, for many, the effects of investigation or censure (even if it lacked the nature of a formal CDM process) on their personal and home lives were deeply traumatising – adding to existing high levels of stress. Participant 50, for example, notes that *'My wife had a breakdown, lost over a stone and a half in weight, [had] suicidal counselling and trauma therapy…'*. Participant 79 writes *'[w]e have both felt excluded, isolated, un-peopled and unable to tell anyone what is really going on. We have felt angry and frustrated at the implacability, unreasonableness and injustice of this*

[64] Burnet *et al*, 'Being Wrongly Accused', pp.184 and 188.
[65] Don R. Catherall (ed.), 'Introduction', in *Handbook of Stress, Trauma, and the Family*, (New York and Hove: Brunner and Routledge, 2004), p.4.

careless juggernaut of a process, that the senior clergy haven't even followed correctly.' Partners can, in addition, find themselves becoming the emotional and economic mainstay of their families, while all the while feeling threatened that their homes will be taken from them, or that they will be obliged to move on - should matters deteriorate to that extent. Participant 33 writes that *'[t]he decision to quit came when my family, as well as I, came under very personal attack. It resulted in our teenage daughter moving out and going to live in another city because she couldn't stand it anymore, but at the same time feeling very guilty because she could escape and we couldn't.'*

Francis *et al* have argued that 'religious leaders may be among those with more refined abilities to regulate emotions in others', often possessing high levels of emotional intelligence and skills in interpersonal relationships – particularly among 'older clergy'.[66] As such, a heightened awareness of the emotional state leaves them personally vulnerable when they themselves are under strain. It is partners, though, who bear a particular burden when the effects of psychological stress enter the home – especially when that home itself is under threat of being taken away from them by those in authority. Some spouses, however, simply wanted to walk away. Participant 47 writes that *'[m]y husband was so worried for me. He wanted us to pack our bags and leave…. It shook his faith in the Church as he felt that the bullies were holding all the cards and we were disempowered.'* Such 'secondary' stress leads, in Rory Remer's view, to the 'provoking [of] both interpersonal and intrapsychic crises…[including]…vicarious traumatisation or compassion fatigue'.[67] Remer further contends that 'the toll of traumas on primary victims is staggering [and] the total impact on secondary victims is mind-boggling,' as families struggle to cope with the 'multiple harms' facing them.[68] For some, the strain became intolerable, putting relationships on the line. Participant 95 noted a total rupture in marital communication as the time wore on before the process was settled - to the extent that their *'marriage broke down unexpectedly. My husband blamed me and the pressures of being a vicar.'* The series of quotations in this section are, it must be remembered, written by the primary victim, rather than the partner and must thus be read with that bias in mind. They provide, however, significant illumination on the extent to which even an 'informal' procedure may fracture close and enduring relationships, sometimes to the point of destruction – as both personal faith and faith in the institution of the Church is tested by the practical and psychological damage such processes bring with them.

8ii) Impact on children, parents and siblings

If, as is contended above, it is the lot of the accused's partner to bear the brunt of 'secondary' suffering, this does not exclude others in the family from feeling their own trauma. Catherall stresses that 'other family members may experience their own trauma symptoms…and, sometimes, the effects of traumatization are so powerful that they are experienced across generations.'[69] The quotations taken from the Sheldon survey certainly illustrate the truth of Catherall's assertions, as the children, parents and siblings of those accused find themselves drawn into the circle of suffering around their loved ones. The Greek meaning of the word *trauma* is wounding, and we see here examples of severe

[66] Francis *et al*, 'The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Related Psychological Health', pp.1633-36. The survey data highlights that 70 out of 93 participants were aged over 50 at the time of responding.
[67] Catherall, 'Introduction', p.4. Rory Remer, 'The Partner's Experience: Learning to Cope with Chaos', in Catherall (ed.), *Handbook of Stress Trauma and the Family*, pp.51-68, p.52.
[68] Remer, Ibid, p.52. Burnet *et al*, p.184.
[69] Catherall, 'Introduction', p.5.

wounding, not only the body and mind but of the souls of those affected, as both Christian faith and the act of churchgoing are placed under strain. Oatley aptly comments that 'the soul, or as we might now say, the psyche, is not immutable.'[70] Participant 39 highlights this situation, recalling how their *'younger daughter "froze" in response to seeing her father bullied. For about a year from the day of the archdeacon's visit she closed down emotionally. When her Dad was admitted to the hospice and subsequently died she was unable to weep or grieve. She was just frozen.'* We are all affected by experience and such tragic experiences such as that recounted above tell, as Aphrodite Matsaki informs us, that children and other close relatives can suffer from 'emotional instability' as they encounter parental figures who have 'mood swings, irritability, depression…[and] emotional numbing to those around them.'[71] It is not just partners who 'walk on eggshells' daily and children and/or parents and siblings can find themselves alienated from church support networks, subjected to trolling on social media and, if forced to move house, removed from what had been a secure, known environment.[72] Participant 50 noted *'My parents…learned of the allegation from the BBC. We learned what it was supposed to be about from friends who had read it in the Daily Telegraph.'* As respondents reflect on the factors surrounding the effects of their trauma on their families, it becomes clear that the survey highlights the anger, frustration or bewilderment expressed by relatives and the very diverse emotional experiences that result.

There is no 'set pattern' to 'secondary' stress – it depends on too many existential factors, but, for the organisational Church, notice should be taken of the depth of hurt and rejection that poor handling of unofficial grievance procedures can prompt. This can, at its worst, led to what Beverly Flanigan defines as an 'unforgivable injury'.[73]

Flanigan explains this as follows:

> 'An injury that alters a moral history and ruptures a relationship begins with an event that violates a moral rule but does not stop there. Instead, it spirals on to violate other beliefs of the injured person, destroying in its wake belief after belief until the wounded person, too, is nearly destroyed.'[74]

Rupturing relationships within families and relationships with the church are part and parcel of respondents' autobiographies. Participant 97, for example, writes that *'I was stressed to snapping point and obnoxious to live with. My family both living with me and distant including elderly parents took the brunt, when they could most have done with support themselves as several serious crisis hit the family during this time.'* Participant 22, writes of the effect on their children, noting, *'[o]ur teenage children were badly affected - they feel they lost 2 years of their childhood and this affected school results (our son effectively lost a year of schooling).'* And Participant 36, already dealing with a long-term health condition relating to a child, notes, *'It is impossible to know how my (now teenage) son with ASD has been affected. My wife has been wearied by the endless complaining and selfish attitudes of parishioners (and obviously upset by the anonymous abuse). She also has no trust in the wider church to act helpfully if similar issues were to flare up once more.'* The issue of official support for those affected

[70] Oatley, 'Slings and Arrows', p.230.
[71] Aphrodite Matsaki, 'Trauma and Its Impact on Families', in Catherall (ed.), *Handbook of Stress*, pp.15-32, p.18.
[72] Matsaki, Ibid.
[73] Beverly Flanigan, *Forgiving the Unforgivable: Overcoming the Bitter Legacy of Intimate Wounds*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), p.22, quoted in Stephen Cherry, *Healing Agony*, p.27.
[74] Flanigan, Ibid, p.26.

by these informal procedures is dealt with in the final section of this report, however, it is plain to see from the following comments that serious challenges to faith now exist among clerics' wider families. Participant 96 writes that *'It just affirmed for [my family] how awful the church is in supporting staff. None of them would ever come to church now because of my experiences.'* Participant 20 sadly noted that *'[o]ne sibling decided to disassociate with me…It was a very painful test for my husband who saw the coldness and absence of pastoral support not only for me but for him.'* Another, Participant 55, wrote that *'our oldest son who has been exploring ordination has put it on hold because of what has happened to me.'* And Participant 80 asserts frankly that *'my wife declares she will never set foot in a church building ever again. It has affected our families - and grandchildren have not been baptised.'* For Participant 55, the situation became truly intolerable: *'This whole episode has had devastating effects on us, that range from anger, frustration to absolute disillusionment with an organisation that we have given everything to.'* Often the 'kind of numbness' that can happen at the start of a period of trauma wears off, according to Cherry, to be replaced by 'quite sharp feelings' and/or a state of 'indignation' and this can also often happen to children.[75] Participant 28 highlights this particularly appropriately: *'While I have had the fulsome support of my wife, (adult) children and friends, this itself has been a pressure as I have had to manage their anger and frustration as well as my own, as well as the background anxiety that they would handle the situation better/more assertively than I was/would.'* Participant 70 also notes a degree of anger when writing that *'[a]s a result, we all felt rejected by the church, my family have had issues with depression, anxiety and my children have especially felt they have no place at church. This has been devastating to our family.'* We are left, then, with ripples of destruction running through families, not just in the initial days of shock following the announcement of a procedure, but for weeks, months and sometimes years following it.

Respondents also noted that for wider family, friends and their congregations, the fact of their involvement in disciplinary proceedings could significantly change relationships. Francis *et al* highlight that '[p]oor work-related psychological health among the clergy need[s] to be taken seriously by those who hold a duty of care towards them', particularly as it 'may have implications for not only individual clerics, but also for their families and for their congregations' and others in relationship with them.[76] As the quotation from Participant 87 notes, no *'thought [was] given to my congregation, those who received home communion the vulnerable etc.,'* as the respondent was *'forced to resign at a week's notice.'* Close friendships either fractured beyond repair or were strengthened at the expense of alienation to the Church. Participant 10 recalled that *'family and friends were 'outraged and expressed the opinion that the CofE does not have its priorities right.'* While such friends do not live in as close proximity to the respondents as their immediate family, they are nevertheless (in normal as well as adverse circumstances) are a vital part of the clerics support network. As Participant 68 noted, *'[m]y family and friends were seeing a different me and I was not able to let them in because of the nature of wanting to be confidential. One deep friendship has now ended as a direct consequence of this process. That is a huge grief, and affects the whole family as we did a lot together jointly.'* And Participant 41 expresses the view of many others, when writing that *'[f]riends have a much lower view of Christian church goers.'* Congregations too, often ignorant of the circumstances of the particular procedure to which a cleric has been subjected are sometimes stunned at the results. For Participant 25, this is expressed by the comment that the worshipping community *'were devastated that we were leaving, especially once the circumstances became known.'*

[75] Cherry, *Healing Anger*, p.23.
[76] Francis *et al*, 'The Effect of Emotional Intelligence', p.1641.

9) Support for Respondents during the processes

When discussing how clerical respondents categorise the support they received during the process, their views are necessarily subjective. Eagle *et al* understand this to represent the difference between 'perceived' and 'received' care, arguing that 'analyses revealed…greater perceived support had a significant relationship with lower depressive symptoms' and that the less perceived support clergy felt they received the greater the impact on their mental health.'[77] A number of respondents noted 'reduced engagement' in social pastimes and a withdrawal from relationships if they felt unable to confide in friends or relations. Depressive symptoms also led to 'burnout' in some cases, where normal working patterns were put on hold as they struggled to adapt and battle feelings of censure, grief, and uncertainty about the future. Milstein *et al* also point to the fact that situations such as these can lead to a 'lower spiritual well-being [which predicts] depressive symptoms, which in turn predicts occupational distress.'[78] For clergy, whose occupational role is built on their vocation, to find this undermined by the processes of discipline (and particularly when the complaints against them are unfounded,) gives rise to 'feelings of spiritual discontent and abandonment.'[79] While numerous previous studies have concluded that 'greater religiosity [is] associated with less depression', this research has shown a differing perspective, as the quotations below highlight. While the majority of Sheldon respondents highlighted the support and care they have received from family members and friends, this section moves the focus to offer reflections on the perceived support (or otherwise) clergy have received from official ministerial channels or other collegiate bodies, the Faith Branch of Unite and other local bodies or individuals.

9i) Diocesan/official support for Respondents

The role taken by senior clergy in relation to those under investigation has proved to be one of the most problematic elements of the Clergy Discipline Measure. Their position in other processes has been experienced by respondents in a similarly negative (or at best ambivalent) light, particularly in relation to the extended timeframe such procedures often take. 54% of the cohort surveyed had not even been told the type of process they were facing, leaving them with high levels of uncertainty over what was likely to be involved. Participant 37 commented *'I felt there was a profound lack of compassion for myself and my family'* and Participant 38 writes that *'[t]he most important thing when a complaint is made is for it to be referred to the priest ASAP. [The] 7/8 weeks of prevarication and obfuscation that I have experienced is unacceptable. If there's a justifiable reason for a complaint just get on with it!'* In addition, only 20% felt they were adequately supported by their dioceses and 54% felt their trust in senior clergy had been undermined by the process and the treatment they had received. Writing with a deal of foresight in 2007, Nicholas Papadopulos explored both the practical and theological consequences of 'separat[ing] out the bishop's pastoral and disciplinary roles' under CDM, which, he noted, 'undermine episcopacy as the Church has traditionally understood it…[by] 'carving [bishop's] ministry up in to slices…and…hiving pastoral care off [to] become another's

[77] David E. Eagle, Celia F. Hybels and Rae J. Proeschold-Bell, 'Perceived social support, received social support and depression among clergy', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, Vol.36. No.7, (2019), pp. 2055-73, p.2055.
[78] Glen Milstein, Celia F. Hybels and Rae J. Proeschold-Bell, 'A Prospective Study of Clergy Spiritual Well-Being, Depressive Symptoms and Occupational Distress', *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, Vol.12, No.4, (2020), pp.409-16, p.409.
[79] Milstein *et al*, Ibid.

concern.'[80] Though Christopher Hill, writing three years later, considered that the measure, by instituting this partition of care, had 'properly safeguard[ed] the requirements of natural justice all around', in order to ensure no perceived partisanship on the grounds of complainants.[81] This research has uncovered a similar 'partitioning' in processes other than CDM. In fact 56% of participants answered negatively to the survey statement "I was treated as innocent unless or until proven guilty", with only 17% replying in the definite affirmative. This is something Participant 73 addresses directly, noting *'I feel I am being treated as guilty despite not having a voice.'*

The withdrawal of a bishop's pastoral support has caused much distress and, in some cases, helped to build up a barrier between a respondent and all of those they perceive as 'official' figures in their dioceses. Jonathan Shay is credited with defining the term 'moral injury' in the context of caring for sick military veterans and the relationship they have with authority figures.[82] And parallels can be drawn with clergy under investigation by those senior figures in the diocese whose working practices (and ethical care for their staff) are found wanting. Participant 39 writes that *'[t]he aim should be to get people back into ministry. Too many clergy are so badly traumatised by this process that they walk away and never return, when, with a little care they could continue to have fruitful ministries.'* And Participant 48 commented that *'[i]t began to feel as if I was disposable…It felt like [the] diocese was having its cake and eating it.'* For Participant 79, there is a clear link expressed between their mental ill health and their treatment by those in authority: *'I have feared for the loss of my present post and home, and of all future employability. With little or no transparency from the Diocese, or pastoral support from my Area Bishop or Archdeacon, I have veered toward paranoia.'* Shay's definition of moral injury is that a person suffering from it has experienced 'a betrayal of what's right, by someone who holds legitimate authority, in a high stakes situation'.[83] Participant 79's comments surely indicate a narrative that fits this description. Clergy facing any type of complaint know that their home, reputation and livelihood are on the line – the stakes are indeed very high for them.

As the quotations below demonstrate, while some individual senior staff were praised for their aid, many respondents felt they were 'on their own' when facing the multiple traumas that come with disciplinary procedures. In fact, 50% of respondents noted they felt they had received little or no compassion during the time of the procedures against them. Participant 27 noted that *'there was no pastoral input…. [n]o enquires from any clergy personnel at all.'* Participant 8 faced a similar dearth of care - *'I had no official support…[t]hat left me feeling extremely vulnerable and unsupported.'… 'It was as if I was a nobody.'* Participant 22 faced extra financial expenditure on account of their treatment: *'I received no pastoral or financial support from the Diocese for 2 years during which I was seriously unwell and also had to fund much of my own treatment (as I required more than St Luke's was able to pay for).'*[84] Sometimes too, the psychological damage to the respondent (or family) was so great, they found themselves unable to respond positively to a person who had been suggested as their pastoral support, leaving the system's safety net to fracture on that account. While Hill points out that '[t]he bishop's duty of pastoral care is for the wider church as well as for the priests', there is little doubt that

[80] Nicholas Papadopulos, 'Shepherd and Judge: A Theological Response to the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003', *Theology*, Vol.110, No.858, (2007), pp. 403-410, p.407. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0040571X0711000602 Accessed 27 January 2021.
[81] Christopher Hill, 'Clergy Discipline and Pastoral Care: Bishop's Mitre or Judge's Wig?', *Theology*, Vol.113, No.874, pp. 254-259, p.256.
[82] Jonathan Shay, 'Moral Injury', *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Vol.31, No.2, (2014), pp.182-191.
[83] Shay, Ibid, p.183.
[84] The respondent refers here to St. Luke's Hospital for the Clergy.

many clergy do feel that they have been ostracised by their Bishop at the time of their greatest need. Perhaps, and of possibly greater concern, is that only 67% of respondents were formally officially offered support of any kind.[85] For Participant 84 there was a positive outcome: *'I have received good support from both the Diocesan Councillor and the Safeguarding officers, both of whom has done what they can for me.*(sic.)*'* But, for others, including Participants 87 and 71, the situation was much more problematic. Participant 87 was left entirely unsupported, commenting that *'[t]here was a total lack of pastoral care. The Bishop said he would arrange pastoral support for me but didn't do anything about it. At diocesan level there was no support at all.'* Participant 71 also faced the situation alone and noted afterwards that *'[a]ftercare should be available, and it isn't, where in times past the bishop would have offered that as part of his episcopal ministry.'* And Participant 11 writes how they will be *'happy to leave ministry… I seriously started to plan for early retirement based on one aspect of how the allegation was handled.'* Several narratives express the hope, as Participant 68 writes, that in any future proceedings, *'[c]ounselling and independent support [will be] offered as a matter of course rather than having to ask for it… [t]he whole person and their families to be cared for practically.'*

9ii) Support from colleagues and Union

This section deals with the support respondents received from colleagues and the Faith Workers branch of the Unite Union. Experiences of these relationships varied widely, some friendships collapsing under the strain others being strengthened. Those in the 'Mixed' cohort note an apparent 'distancing' by some colleagues in their team, chapter or in deanery relationships, as if there were a fear of being tainted by association. Participant 22 noted this especially: *'Local clergy, including the Area Dean, turned their backs on me (which was very hurtful and disappointing) but my non-church friends all rallied round and many parishioners wrote to the bishop in support of me and offered to crowd fund my legal expenses.'* Participant 25 noted similar responses, writing that *'[a]t local level, there was initial moral support from the Area Dean, but, rather than being given more ministry opportunities, not one local vicar asked me for cover in the following six months, nor did any of them enquire how things were going; I think they closed ranks at incumbent level.'* Yet for others, such as Participant 41, these friendships became a core support network, which highlights the very individual nature of the respondent's experience - *'Faith [has been] strengthened by the provision of excellent counselling and support from [my] archdeacon and colleagues and my personal deep connection with God.'* Participant 70 also notes that they *'prayed a lot with friends and colleagues. I met with a mentor who was helpful in assessing my next steps and how to get through it without leaving the church entirely.'* Membership of Unite is not widespread throughout this research cohort (18%), but those respondents who are members were grateful for the assistance the Union representatives could provide, Participant 73 noting how *'Unite has kept me going'* and Participant 47 commenting that *'[m]y Union rep became my main source of support. He was truly brilliant and felt like the only person I could trust…to fight in my corner.'*

9iii) Local church, community and professional support

Clerics often recorded the support they received from their wider community or those who offered professional support, such as counselling or legal services. Participant 32, for example, wrote that *'I*

[85] Hill, 'Clergy Discipline and Pastoral Care', p.257.

was wonderfully supported in this…by my lawyers - both barristers and solicitors.' For those whose financial position was parlous as a consequence of the allegations made against them, legal professionals sometimes mitigated some of the trauma by offering their services free or heavily discounted. This was the case for Participant 50, who wrote that *'[f]inancially this is a nightmare and I can't afford to defend myself. A solicitor friend of a friend is helping, drawing on some legal funds that they can claim.'* Participant 57 noted similarly that, *'I was fortunate to have voluntary legal advice. It is expensive for those who have to pay for it.'* Some parishioners too offered aid, and in the case of Participant 22, *'offered to crowd-fund'* the legal costs. In the case of professional counselling services, which were needed by respondents after the limit at which their dioceses cut off funding, strain was again placed on family or individual resources.[86] Some noted that they still needed professional psychological care many months and even years after the events they describe. Participant 71 narrates how *'I have received counselling and continue to do so. It was all a breaking experience.'* Participant 88 also notes long term effects blighting their lives, informing us that *'[b]oth my wife and I undertook several months of counselling and ultimately I had to leave my job and move to another part of the country.'* And Participant 39 notes with thanks the support they received: *'[T]he diocese offered 6 sessions but I have needed to continue with this for 2 and a half years. The counsellor has done this free of charge because she sees my need for help. Whilst very grateful to her I feel that the diocese (being the cause of the problem) should be reimbursing her.'*

It is equally important to note that many parishes rejoiced in welcoming their priest back to ministry following the closure of an allegation. Participant 55, just one to provide such a narrative, commented that *'we were loved, appreciated and encouraged by our Church Family and our local community… we were supported throughout by them.'* In some cases, parish officials had also sought support during the process, only to be themselves side-lined by the diocese. Participant 84 writes on this that *'[m]y curate and church wardens, have tried to support me, but because neither I or they have been offered any pastoral support it is difficult for them to understand what is going on, when it might end and what the outcome might be.'* When the experiences of respondents became known to people locally, they sometimes led to deep conversations about faith and vocation. Clergy have welcomed this while, at the same time, suffering much at the hands of the process. Participant 20 gives voice to these feelings, writing that *'[t]his affected many non-Christians and non-church going Christians - causing them to consider the walk of a disciple and the words of Jesus being lived out. I was personally amazed and encouraged by their interest and openness to ask faith questions consequently.'* And Participant 90, despite all the stress and trauma endured, still *'found church folk extraordinarily gracious, compassionate, understanding, even empathetic. That has been one of the notable factors.'*

[86] The limit placed on counselling sessions by dioceses is 6 sessions.

Conclusion

In April 2021 the Draft Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure received final approval at General Synod, The Church Times quoted the Dean of Arches in the debate: [87]

> *"We know that the sin, error, and poor process revealed was not a one-off, because we now have IICSA's second report, other shocking reports, and Synod has heard directly the powerful testimonies of some of those whom the Church has harmed," she said. Anglicans had a collective responsibility to do all they could to fix the problem of safeguarding, she said. "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again you did not know."*

The authors contend that the same now applies to the experience of clergy respondents to complaints. You may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say you did not know.

Archbishop Justin Welby stated in his presidential address to General Synod in February 2020 that the CDM *'does not help reconciliation, it is weaponised, it is stressful for complainant and the person complained about. It does not aid safeguarding'.*[88] The authors contend this is also true for the current mix of formal, informal and irregular processes that surround the CDM.

Reflecting on the theology of the TV police drama 'Line of Duty', Rachel Muers calls attention to the *"space that calls for patient and impassioned efforts, individually and collectively, to bend the arc a little way further in the direction of justice'.*[89]

Anglicans now have a collective responsibility to acknowledge the failings of the church's handling of complaints and allegations of misconduct against clergy; to honour those who have been harmed; and to act with insight, compassion, clarity and wisdom to design new structures that bend the arc a little way further in the direction of justice. This is an urgent task.

Join the Sheldon Hub for confidential forums and collaboration for reform
www.sheldonhub.org
www.sheldonhub.org/cdm

[87] Church Times online accessed 2nd May 2021. Dean of Arches and Auditor Rt Worshipful Morag Ellis
[88] 'Archbishop Justin Welby's presidential address to General Synod', 10 February 2020 www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/archbishop-justin-welbys-presidential-address-general-synod (accessed 26 March 2021).
[89] Rachel Muers Church Times 5th May 2021 https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/7-may/comment/opinion/line-of-duty-if-we-want-a-better-ending-it-s-up-to-us

Table of Participants

Each of the participants whose quotes have been included in the text are numbered in the table below.
This is the wording of the questions to which they were responding.

Please select the name of the process.
(Tick all that apply if there was more than one as part of the overall process)

- Six step process
- Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM
- Mediation (but you had no real option to refuse participation)
- Capability Procedure
- Visitation
- Informal investigation by Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
- Conciliation
- Type A Safeguarding Risk Assessment with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
- Type B Safeguarding Risk Assessment with an independent assessor
- Other not listed

How would you personally describe the nature of the complaint against you?
We are interested in your personal perception, regardless of how the complaint was officially treated.
Select ALL that apply or choose 'none of the above'

- Something I know I did wrong
- Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation
- Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment
- Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese)
- Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post
- Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted
- Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself
- None of the above

Were any of the following processes related in some way to THIS complaint at any point? *Tick as many as apply OR select 'none'*

- safeguarding assessment
- capability procedure (2)
- criminal investigation/prosecution
- civil prosecution
- divorce
- none

Ref	Gender	Age	In which decade were you ordained?	Please select the name of the process. (Tick all that appy if there was more than one as part of the overall process)	How would you personally describe the nature of the complaint against you?	Did the complaint Include an allegation of current or historic sexual misconduct?	Were any of the following processes related in some way to THIS complaint at any point? Tick as many as apply OR select 'none'
1	Male	31-40	2011-2020	not told	Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
4	Male	51-60	2011-2020	Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	civil prosecution
5	Male	over 70	1991-2000	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	capability procedure
6	Male	over 70	1951–1960	Capability Procedure, Informal investigation by DSA, Type A Safeguarding Risk Assessment with the DSA	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	safeguarding assessment, capability procedure, criminal investigation/prosecution
8	Male	51-60	2001-2010	Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation	No	none
9	Male	61-70	1981-1990	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
10	Male	51-60	1991-2000	Other not listed	Something I know I did wrong	No	none
11	Male	51-60	2001-2010	Type A Safeguarding Risk Assessment with the DSA	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	Yes	safeguarding assessment
12	Male	61-70	1971-1980	Informal investigation by DSA		No	safeguarding assessment
13	Male	51-60	1991-2000	not told		No	none
15	Male	41-50	2001-2010	Capability Procedure	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	capability procedure
16	Male	51-60	2011-2020	not told	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
17	Female	51-60	2011-2020	not told	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none

18	Male	over 70	1981-1990	not told		Yes	safeguarding assessment
20	Female	41-50	2011-2020	not told	Something I know I did wrong, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post ,Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted, Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	capability procedure
22	Male	51-60	1991-2000	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted, Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	none
23	Female	51-60	1991-2000	not told	Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese)	No	none
24	Female	51-60	2011-2020	Informal investigation by DSA		No	safeguarding assessment
25	Male	61-70	2011-2020	not told	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
27	Male	over 70	1961–1970	not told	Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	none
29	Female	61-70	2001-2010	not told		No	none
31	Male	61-70	1991-2000	Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment	No	none
32	Male	61-70	1981-1990	not told		No	none
33	Male	61-70	1981-1990	not told	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
35	Male	over 70	1971-1980	Type A Safeguarding Risk Assessment with the DSA, Type B Safeguarding Risk Assessment with an independent assessor, Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	safeguarding assessment, criminal investigation/prosecution

36	Male	51-60	2001-2010	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	safeguarding assessment, capability procedure
37	Male	61-70	1991-2000	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	safeguarding assessment
38	Male	over 70	1981-1990	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
39	Female	51-60	1991-2000	Conciliation	Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese)	No	capability procedure
40	Male	over 70	2001-2010	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
41	Female	51-60	2011-2020	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
42	Male	51-60	1981-1990	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	none
43	Male	51-60	1981-1990	not told	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment	No	none
44	Male	51-60	2011-2020	Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	safeguarding assessment
46	Male	51-60	1981-1990	Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM, Visitation	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
47	Female	41-50	2011-2020	Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
48	Male	61-70	2001-2010	Type B Safeguarding Risk Assessment with an independent assessor	Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	safeguarding assessment

50	Male	51-60	1981-1990	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	criminal investigation/prosecution
52	Male	61-70	1971-1980	not told	Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	safeguarding assessment
55	Male	61-70	1991-2000	Six step process, Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM, Capability Procedure	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	capability procedure
56	Male	61-70	1981-1990	Other not listed	Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	none
57	Male	61-70	1981-1990	not told	Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
58	Male	51-60	1991-2000	not told	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	capability procedure
59	Male	over 70	2001-2010	not told	Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	none
60	Male	61-70	1971-1980	Six step process	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation	No	none
61	Male	41-50	2001-2010	not told	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
62	Female	51-60	2001-2010	not told	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
64	Male	51-60	1981-1990	not told		No	none
66	Male	51-60	1991-2000	Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation	No	none
68	Female	51-60	2011-2020	not told	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
69	Male	31-40	2011-2020	Other not listed	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted, Something I did when I was vulnerable or under significant pressure myself	No	none

70	Male	41-50	2011-2020	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation ,Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	capability procedure
71	Male	61-70	1981-1990	Six step process	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
72	Male	61-70	1971-1980	Other not listed	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment	No	none
73	Male	51-60	2001-2010	Other not listed	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	safeguarding assessment
74	Male	over 70	1961–1970	Informal investigation by the Archdeacon but not referred to the Registrar for CDM	Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	Yes	none
79	Male	51-60	1991-2000	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
80	Male	over 70	1951–1960	not told	Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	Yes	safeguarding assessment, criminal investigation/prosecution
81	Female	61-70	2001-2010	Type A Safeguarding Risk Assessment with the DSA	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	safeguarding assessment
83	Female	51-60	2001-2010	Other not listed	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
84	Female	51-60	2001-2010	Capability Procedure	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
86	Male	61-70	1981-1990	Other not listed	Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
88	Male	51-60	2001-2010	not told	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none

89	Male	61-70	1971-1980	Type B Safeguarding Risk Assessment with an independent assessor		Yes	safeguarding assessment
92	Female	61-70	1991-2000	Six step process	Trivial or vexatious charges without foundation, Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Brought by person/people I knew well and/or previously trusted	No	none
93	Female	61-70	2001-2010	Other not listed	Part of a campaign of bullying or harassment, Resulted from me carrying out a mandate I understood I had been given (by parish or diocese), Apparently motivated by a desire to remove me from my post	No	none
95	These three participants did not provide a link to the quantitative survey data						
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