

Introduction to the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service

The Discrimination and Abuse Response Service will encourage and enable the reporting of incidents of discrimination or abuse, including those which have an element of exclusion, bullying or harassment. It is a recommendation agreed in the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity [Inclusive Methodist Church](#)

The service is victim-focused in approach to ensure needs and concerns are identified and responded to.

What is this service?

This service is to help people who are experiencing discrimination or harm, and feel they need support in dealing with it.

This is not an emergency response.

If you need emergency support, please contact 999.

Why does this service exist?

Sometimes people experience harm or discrimination but do not know who to talk with about this. Sometimes the harm or discrimination involves people known locally. With this service you can talk to somebody outside the local setting.

What does this service do?

- We will provide a phone number and email address so that you can contact somebody outside of your local situation and get support as you look for a resolution or make a complaint.
- We will offer you a 'Pastoral Supporter' to listen to you and offer prayer, if you would like this. This 'Pastoral Supporter' will be there for you, by agreement, at times that suit you both. They will help you to decide whether or not you want to take this matter any further.
- We will offer you an 'Accompanist' who will explain your options, keep you up-to-date and be available to support you in understanding the processes of 'mediation', 'reconciliation', 'training' or 'complaints and discipline'.
This service does not change the usual processes but it will help you work out what is most appropriate for your situation, and support you until there is an outcome which is recognised.

What options do you have?

A. Safeguarding

Where there has been harm or abuse, we will help you make the appropriate reports. The police will be informed if appropriate.

B. Mediation and Reconciliation

Where there could have been misunderstandings or conflicts due to different perspectives, theologies or cultures, then you could ask for mediation or reconciliation support until there is a good outcome. This could include some training opportunities for one or more of the people involved.

C. Complaints

Where there has been discrimination or exclusion due to prejudice, and there is no response to offers of mediation and reconciliation, then you are able to make a complaint through the Methodist processes.

D. External Services

Where necessary, your case could be referred to external services (e.g. the Local Council or the Police).

Please note:

- Our Pastoral Supporter and Accompanist will support you (if you want this) through the processes that you encounter
- In conversation with your Accompanist your case may move from one of the above to another, depending on your circumstances.
- We hope that there will be learning, for individuals, churches, circuits, districts and the whole Methodist Connexion, through all of the processes outlined above.
- We commit to learning as the whole Methodist Church so that we can eradicate discrimination.

Confidentiality

What you tell your Responder, your Pastoral Supporter, or your Accompanist will remain confidential to the DARS Team, unless there is a safeguarding responsibility (for potential harm to yourself or others) because of what you tell us.

We will talk with you at each stage if information needs to be shared with relevant local staff to agree how this will be done and why, if it is necessary.

Our privacy notice can be found at: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/privacy-notice/>

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Responders

Your Responder will be the first person you speak to after you have phoned or emailed. They will ask for some basic information and then allocate you a Pastoral Supporter if you want to use the service.

They will later allocate you an Accompanist if you ask for this support.

Pastoral Supporters

Your Pastoral Supporter will contact you to arrange for phone or Zoom conversations at a time that suits you both. The person will be a 'listening ear' (and prayer support, if you choose this) through the process.

The Pastoral Supporter will not share what you say with anybody else unless somebody's safety is at risk, but they will help you decide what you want to say or do about things.

The first conversation you have with your Pastoral Supporter will help you to decide whether or not you want to ask for an Accompanist. If you do, then the Pastoral Supporter will get your permission to pass on your details to an Accompanist so that they can be in touch.

Accompanists

If you choose to ask for an Accompanist that person will contact you to arrange for phone or Zoom conversations at a time that suits you both.

The Accompanist will listen to the problem that you are facing, explain to you what the various options are and help to decide what should happen next. They will stay in touch through the process, be available to be with you during any future conversations that you might need to have, will chase up responses if necessary and will make sure that you have understood the systems. They will support you until the outcome is agreed.

Further help

If you decide not to accept an Accompanist at the beginning of the process, you can still ask for one later. If you want to be in touch, our contact details are below:

The DARS contact number is: 02074 675131

The DARS contact email address is: DARS@methodistchurch.org.uk

(1.3.23.)

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