



2.1H GUIDANCE ON COMMUNICATION WHEN A RESPONDENT IS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED FROM MINISTRY

When an allegation has been received and a member of church personnel is being temporarily suspended, the Bishop is responsible for what is communicated about this change, to whom, and how this is communicated.

The preferred approach is for any public communication to be agreed with the respondent, where the presumption of innocence should be emphasised. Great care needs to be taken not to prejudice the outcome of any civil, criminal or Church investigation, and consultation with relevant statutory authorities may assist in this regard. Consultation with a legal advisor may also assist, to enable the correct form of words to be generated if a public communication is to be made. Consideration may also be given to the inclusion in any public communication, if one is to be made, of information regarding how people affected can access pastoral support.

The Bishop must consider whether relevant public references to the respondent are removed or amended on an interim basis. This may include, for example, details or photographs, videos or recordings on parish websites or communications (newsletters, etc.), membership of parish/diocesan/church panels or other relevant groups, Service Level Agreements as an Authorised Signatory for Vetting/AccessNI, parish or diocesan group chats/messaging apps or social media groups.