



## FACT SHEET: The Role of a Support Person

Upon receipt of a Safeguarding Complaint, individual meetings with the Complainant and Respondent will be arranged. You have the right to have a Support Person of your choice to attend meetings with you. Outlined below is an overview of the role of a Support Person.

### What is a Support Person?

A Support Person is someone chosen by the person being interviewed to attend the meeting with them.

### What is the role of the Support Person?

The role of the Support Person is to:

- Support the person being interviewed from a welfare perspective, ensuring that the person takes a break if they appear to need one;
- Observe the response of the person in order to give appropriate emotional support if the person being interviewed becomes distressed during the meeting;
- Ensure that the person being interviewed has the appropriate opportunity to be heard and respected;
- Ensure that the interviewer allows for the dignity of the person being interviewed;
- Consult privately with the person being interviewed if necessary during the course of the meeting;
- Take notes if necessary and ask to adjourn any meeting which becomes untenable for the person being interviewed; and
- Provide support and comfort after the meeting has concluded.

### Suitability of a Support Person

The Safeguarding Office will not reasonably refuse the presence of a Support Person during meetings. However, there may be occasions where the Support Person selected by the person being interviewed is inappropriate, such as when the Support Person is:

- In a more senior role than the interviewer;
- Is involved in the issues being addressed in the meeting; or
- Is someone who may be disruptive to the process, such as an ex-employee.

If the selected Support Person is inappropriate for the purposes of the meeting, the Safeguarding Office will advise the person being interviewed that they are able to select a

more appropriate Support Person in accordance with our obligations under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

### What is not the role of a Support Person?

It is not the role of a Support Person to:

- Answer questions on behalf of the person being interviewed;
- Act as the counsellor of the person being interviewed; or
- Represent them in a legal capacity, advocating on their behalf.

### Further Information

Located on the Archdiocese's Safeguarding website are the following documents:

- **Protocol:** Managing Safeguarding Complaints
- **Fact Sheet:** What to expect if you are the Subject of a Safeguarding Complaint
- **Fact Sheet:** What to expect if you are bringing forward a Safeguarding Complaint