



# DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 2023

# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Safeguarding Policy Statement                               | 4  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | 6  |
| Aims and Purpose  | 6  |
| Scope   | 6  |
| Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities                     | 6  |
| <b>2 Management of those who may pose a known risk</b>      | 10 |
| Introduction  | 10 |
| Responding to Information                                   | 10 |
| <b>3 Safer Recruitment</b>                                  | 12 |
| Procedure for the Recruitment of Volunteer and Paid Workers | 12 |
| <b>4 Social Media and Mobile Communication</b>              | 13 |
| Introduction  | 13 |
| The Risks   | 13 |
| Consent   | 13 |
| Guidelines  | 13 |
| Social Networking Sites                                     | 14 |
| Other Resources   | 14 |
| <b>5 Photography</b>  | 15 |
| Consent for Photographs and Filming                         | 15 |
| Best Practice with Photography                              | 15 |
| Sexting   | 15 |
| <b>6 Types of Abuse</b>                                     | 16 |
| Introduction  | 16 |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>7 Responding to Safeguarding Concerns</b>              | <b>17</b> |
| Introduction  | 17        |
| Responding to Safeguarding Situations Flow Chart          | 18        |
| Recording a Safeguarding Concern                          | 19        |
| Support for Victims/Survivors                             | 20        |
| Safeguarding and the Seal of the Confessional             | 21        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>8 Lone Working</b>                                     | <b>23</b> |
| Introduction  | 23        |
| Pastoral Care/Visits                                      | 23        |
| Being Alone in Church Buildings                           | 24        |
| Dealing with Requests for Help                            | 24        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>9 Running Safe Events and Activities for Groups</b>    | <b>25</b> |
| DBS Clearance and Safeguarding Training for Adult Leaders | 25        |
| Recommended Staffing Levels and Adult to Child Ratios     | 25        |
| Registers and Consent Forms                               | 26        |
| Sleeping Arrangements at Residential Activities           | 26        |
| Good Behaviour for Children and Young People              | 26        |
| Health and Safety and Risk Assessments                    | 26        |
| Insurance   | 27        |
| Transport   | 27        |
| Home Groups and Mentoring                                 | 27        |
| Alcohol and Smoking Policies                              | 28        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>10 The Code of Safer Working Practice</b>              | <b>29</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>11 List of Useful Contacts</b>                         | <b>31</b> |

# Safeguarding Policy Statement

## Introduction

- The Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Diocese of Durham is based on the policy statement of the Church of England *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017). It forms the basis of our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and our Diocesan Strategic Safeguarding Plan.
- The Diocese of Durham is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and service of the Diocese.
- **Please note that all new and additional material is in RED.**

## Safeguarding Statement Areas

The Diocese Safeguarding Statement falls into six main areas:

### Statement Area 1: Promoting a safer environment and culture

1. The Diocese will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions for children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is the responsibility of all who work and volunteer in the Diocese, and particularly those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
2. In *Promoting a Safer Church* a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as 'a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired'.
3. The Diocese will strive to support all those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power.

### Statement Area 2: Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to, children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Diocese

1. The Diocese will recruit those with any diocesan responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Diocese, in accordance with the **House of Bishop's Guidance on Safer Recruitment and People Management (2021)**. It is expected that parishes will follow the same practice guidance in their recruitment of volunteers and paid staff with responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
2. The Diocese will equip and train all those who have responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done through the roll-out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training.

### Statement Area 3: Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

1. Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Diocese will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the relevant policy and practice guidance from the Church of England.
2. All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and will be recorded in line with the relevant safeguarding practice guidance.

3. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the DSA, or other designated safeguarding adviser, to the appropriate statutory authorities.
4. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed, in line with diocesan policy.
5. Notwithstanding the policy statement outlined above, anyone should feel able, if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk, to contact either the police or local social services. Where possible consent should be given by the child's or young person's parents or the vulnerable adult, unless it is considered that seeking consent will increase the risk of harm.
6. A 'Whistleblowing and Complaints Procedure' is available for anyone who is unhappy with the way their concern has been addressed by the Diocese.

#### **Statement Area 4: Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons**

1. The Diocese will offer care and support to all those in their care who have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
2. The Diocese is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have experienced abuse.
3. Those who have experienced abuse connected to the Diocese of Durham will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Diocese will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with the policy and the practice guidance of the Diocese and the Church of England. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support.

#### **Statement Area 5: Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons**

1. The Diocese, in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, will respect the rights under criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law of any accused. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and (where appropriate) Church inquiry process. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.
2. The Diocese will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when there are known persons accessing church services and activities who are considered to be a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement.
3. The Diocese will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families as well as the parishes affected by the concerns or allegations of abuse.

#### **Statement Area 6: Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others**

1. The Diocese will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Aims and Purpose

This document sets out the Diocese of Durham's Safeguarding Policy. It includes guidance and good practice to help the diocese, parishes and individuals work towards a safer church for everyone. **This is a policy update and replaces Version 2021:1. Please note that all new and additional material is in RED.**

## 1.2 Scope

The policy applies to all parishes within the Diocese of Durham.

Under Section 5 of the 'Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure' (2016) all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs must have '**due regard**' to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops. A duty to have 'due regard' to guidance means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so ('cogent' for this purpose means clear, logical and convincing). Failure by clergy to comply with the duty imposed by the 2016 Measure may result in disciplinary action.

This is a Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and is not applicable to the Cathedral. Those who work or volunteer in the Cathedral must adhere to Cathedral specific safeguarding policies and procedures.

For Local Ecumenical Partnerships this document should be used in conjunction with 'Safeguarding Joint Practice Guidance for single congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership' (2015) and a decision taken within the partnership with regard to which safeguarding policy will be followed.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group has made it clear that their insurance cover is only valid where national safeguarding policy and practice guidance is being followed.

## 1.3 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

### In the Diocese

The Bishop of Durham is ultimately responsible for ensuring good safeguarding arrangements and practice in the Diocese in line with the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy and guidance.

The National Safeguarding Policy sets out details of the following appointments, which are made by the bishop in consultation with the National Safeguarding Team:

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel**

*This group oversees the safeguarding arrangements in the Diocese, providing advice and scrutiny, and offering external expertise and challenge. It is chaired by an independent (lay) person with extensive professional safeguarding expertise, appointed by the bishop, and includes members from external bodies and diocesan personnel.*

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser**

*This person is a suitably qualified and experienced safeguarding practitioner, whose main responsibilities are to:*

- Advise the Diocese on all safeguarding matters when there are concerns about harm to children or adults who may be vulnerable, or when allegations or observations of abuse have been made.
- Develop diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures, good practice and training.
- Ensure diocesan safeguarding training is delivered.
- Work with parishes to support and manage those who pose risk e.g. setting up safeguarding agreements.

- Take the key role when allegations are made or concerns expressed about church officers.
- Liaise with statutory agencies – police, public protection and social care teams.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate advice and support to survivors and victims of abuse.
- Advise where clergy or church officers are made vulnerable through their role and adults at risk are involved (e.g. bullying, harassment).

Contact and other details are set out in the contacts list, and are also available on the diocesan website and in training materials. The DSA will always make arrangements for cover in the event of holidays or other absences, and where necessary these details will be available through email notifications, on voicemail messages and through the Diocesan Office.

### **In the Parish**

#### **The Incumbent and PCC**

*The Incumbent and PCC have a duty of care to ensure the well-being of the vulnerable in the church community.* [All clergy must have due regard, but in this document the term incumbent refers to the person with delegated authority from the Bishop for the parish who has responsibility to ensure safeguarding is carried out properly in that parish even though carrying that out may be shared in practice among others.]

*Their specific responsibilities are to:*

- Adopt and implement the House of Bishops' 'Policy on Safeguarding Children' or the 'Joint Safeguarding Principles' and a Parish Policy and Procedure on safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable. A dated copy must be sent by email to the DSA. Multi-parish benefices may adopt one policy and procedure for the benefice. (Legal responsibility continues to rest with the individual parish).
- Appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (the 'Designated Person') with special responsibility for safeguarding children and adults, to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. In multi-parish benefices a Safeguarding officer may act for more than one parish. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be a lay person (and cannot be the incumbent) with appropriate experience. It is recommended that the Parish Safeguarding Officer should also be the Designated Person for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. Details of the specific responsibilities are set out below.
- Ensure that the Parish Safeguarding Officer and anyone having regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appointed according to Diocesan Safer Recruitment Guidelines, is trained and supported, provided with a copy of the parish safeguarding policy and code of practice for church workers.
- Deal promptly with allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the Disclosures and Allegations Policy in consultation with the DSA.
- Display the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, the contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer named person on church premises and, when a church website exists, a safeguarding tab/link must be visible on the front page of the website.
- Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSA.
- During a vacancy, to ensure that information about all safeguarding matters is securely stored before passing on to the new incumbent; the departing incumbent should give the information to the Parish Safeguarding Officer who will inform the new incumbent when they take up the post.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish.

- Review the implementation of the safeguarding children, young people and adults policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually, and that a safeguarding report is presented to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

### **Parish Safeguarding Officer**

*To work with Incumbent and PCC to:*

- Implement and monitor the recommended parish policy and procedure on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, encouraging good practice and working closely with the Incumbent on all safeguarding matters.
- Contribute to the appointment of all volunteers and PCC employees in regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults (in accordance with Diocesan Safer Recruitment Guidelines); to obtain necessary criminal records and renew these appropriately (The Parish Safeguarding Officer may also be the DBS Administrator, but where this is not the case, the PCC should appoint another individual).
- Compile and update annually a list of names of paid and voluntary workers and ensure that full recruitment procedures have been followed for each of them.
- Act (usually) as the “Lead Recruiter” as defined by Churches Child Protection Advisory service.
- Actively encourage volunteers and PCC employees to undertake safeguarding training, and keep a record of training taken.
- Receive, but not to investigate, any suspicions or allegations of abuse which may arise in the church(es) they represent, including allegations against clergy, or licensed commissioned ministers and to inform immediately and subsequently liaise with the DSA.
- Keep a log of incidents, allegations or concerns which arise, storing records safely and securely in a locked cabinet, with access restricted to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the incumbent.
- Send and update by email their contact details to the Diocesan Office.
- Report annually on safeguarding matters to the PCC and send annually by email a copy of the parish policy and procedure on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to the DSA.
- Attend Diocesan Safeguarding Training and undertake other safeguarding training as opportunity arises.

### **Churchwarden**

*In co-operation with the incumbent, the PCC and the Parish Safeguarding Officer, to:*

- Ensure, in the period of an incumbency vacancy, that the incumbent’s safeguarding roles are fulfilled, in co-operation with the PCC and Parish Safeguarding Officer. Churchwardens should be supported by the Area Dean and advice and support can be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Pay attention to the specific needs of children and adults who may be vulnerable when undertaking routine Health and Safety inspections and risk assessments.
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out before new activities are undertaken (regular and one-off).
- Ensure that all parish activities are adequately insured.
- Receive complaints and grievances, and ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to them.
- Ensure that the guidelines for activities with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable are followed in all parish activities.



- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are included in all booking arrangements with organisations and individuals.
- Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the Archdeacon's Articles of Enquiry and Parish Visitations, and address specific advice which may be given.

**All Clergy (including associate priests, curates) and licensed or authorised ministers, whether paid or unpaid**  
*In co-operation with the incumbent, the PCC and the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the leaders and helpers supporting children, young people and adults, to:*

- have the overview of safeguarding in the parish, noting that churchwardens represent the PCC, which ensures compliance with the law
- communicate with the vicar, the parish safeguarding officer, the congregation, the DSA, the Archdeacon and other diocesan officers
- have pastoral responsibilities to all

**Leaders and helpers**

*In co-operation with the incumbent, the PCC and the Parish Safeguarding Officer to:*

- implement healthy working practices
- risk assess all activities
- listen to other workers
- protect yourselves
- report to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or vicar of any safeguarding concerns, however minor
- induct and train others

## 2 Management of those that may pose a known risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults within a Christian Congregation or Community

### 2.1 Introduction

The Church of England, based on the message of the Gospel, opens its doors to all. This means that there are likely to be those with criminal convictions for sexual and/or violent offences and other forms of abuse, as well as others who may pose a risk, attending a church or who are members of worshipping communities. Some of these individuals will pose an ongoing or potential risk of harm to other individuals who attend the church.

The Church has a duty to minister to all, which imposes a particular responsibility to ensure that everyone who attends the Church is safe. This includes not only victims/survivors of abuse offences but all individuals who come to church. This means that it will include those people who have **convictions or who are under investigation**. All must be considered equally to ensure everyone is safe, no matter what their background.

Where people have convictions **or are under investigation of alleged offences**, which give rise to a safeguarding concern, their position in a congregation or community may need to be carefully and sensitively considered/assessed to decide whether they pose a risk to others and to put in place arrangements to ensure that these risks are mitigated. This may include people convicted of violent or sexual offences against children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. It may also include those convicted of offences linked to domestic violence/abuse and people involved in drug or alcohol addiction. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they still might present a risk to others.

### 2.2 Responding to information that a member of your congregation may pose a risk to others in your church

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be informed immediately if you become aware that a member of the congregation or someone wishing to join the congregation has abused a child, young person, or adult, or is on the Sex Offenders' Register, or is not convicted of an offence against children or adults but nevertheless may pose a risk, for example:

- an allegation of abuse against a child or adult has been investigated, but the matter has not proceeded to court, or the person has been acquitted.
- a complaint or grievance has been received alleging inappropriate behaviour, which is not criminal.
- a person has demonstrated behaviour which is actually or potentially violent, or a risk to children or adults who may be vulnerable; this may be due to substance misuse, a mental disorder or a disability, or none of those things
- there have been concerns about the persons alleged abusive behaviour to a previous or a present partner

The DSA will assess the risk and agree a safe course of action in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies if involved. If required, an ongoing Safeguarding Agreement may be put in place. This will be drawn up in consultation with the respondent (the person about whom a concern has arisen), incumbent, churchwarden/s, parish safeguarding officer and other relevant parties (where applicable). This may also involve statutory agencies, if they have a role.

The agreement must be dated and all parties must sign the agreement to acknowledge that they agree to abide by its terms. These will include arrangements for review (**initially** normally every three months), confidentiality, and the procedures that will be followed if the agreement is breached.

The DSA must be informed immediately if the parties to the agreement become aware of any breach of the agreement by the respondent.

The Safeguarding Agreement may include the following elements:

- attend designated services or meetings only (note that it is not possible to prevent a parishioner **who lives in the parish**, from attending services that are open to the public)
- sit apart from children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- stay away from areas of the building where children, young people and/or vulnerable adults meet
- only attend a house group where there are no children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- decline hospitality where there are children, young people and/or vulnerable adults present
- never be alone with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- never work or be part of a mixed-age group with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- take no official role in the Church or any responsible role where they will be trusted by others.

The DSA will be involved in every aspect of this process and must be a party to any agreement and its subsequent monitoring.

## 3 Safer Recruitment

### 3.1 Procedure for the recruitment of Volunteer and Paid Workers

The [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#) guidance was issued in 2021 and replaces previous safer recruitment practice guidance. The updated guidance is available for review within the new [Church of England Safeguarding E-Manual](#).

Additionally, information on the new Safer Recruitment and People Management online learning pathway can be found on the [diocesan website](#).

The requirements detailed in the guidance aim to help Church bodies to:

- Attract the best possible individuals to all roles through inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent processes;
- Identify and reject individuals who are unsuitable by following a proportionate but thorough selection process;
- Ensure that robust induction, oversight and supervision processes are in place for those working and volunteering with children and vulnerable adults.

Reinforcing the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults throughout the recruitment process and beyond will help create and maintain a safe and positive environment that inspires trust, enabling them to thrive and grow and have the very best experience of Christian living through the work of the Church.

#### Resources

The [Safer Recruitment and People Management Toolkit](#) provides the following template resources and examples:

- Volunteer role description
- Volunteer person specification
- Volunteer application form
- Example interview questions
- Reference request form
- DBS eligibility guidance
- Risk assessment form template
- Volunteer appointment letter template
- Induction checklist
- Volunteer support meeting template

**Important note:** it is a criminal offence for an individual, who is barred from working with vulnerable people (children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect), to apply for a regulated activity role and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role. A DBS check is the end of the process when the appointer / appointing body is minded to appoint. A DBS check is not the start of the process and should not be the only check of suitability.

A person who has just moved to the church would not normally take on a role with children, young people or adults experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect within the first 6 months of joining a church (DBS etc. can be completed within this time).

If any information is recorded on the **Confidential Declaration Form**, you must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in order that consideration can be given to the need for a risk assessment.

## 4 Social Media and Mobile Communications

### 4.1 Introduction

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are online platforms that allow users to create, rather than just consume, online content. Social media usage is widespread, particularly amongst younger adults and children. As some have pointed out, if the church does not engage with young people on social media, then the church will not engage with a major aspect of their lives.

This guidance aims to ensure that children and young people (anyone under the age of 18 years old and designated as a minor under statute law) and children's and/or youth worker, youth minister, church officer (or anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church or parish to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid) are appropriately informed and protected while using social media in the context of diocesan or parish work.

While this document refers on the whole to children's/youth workers, it is equally useful to all leaders in churches who involve young people in their activities, including music groups/choirs, sides-people, sacristy teams, bell ringers etc.

### 4.2 The Risks

Risks include:

- Forming inappropriate relationships. It is perhaps easier for inappropriate relationships to develop through online banter and private messaging than in the real world. This is particularly important if communicating with children and young people, where there is the potential for content to be perceived as sexual grooming.
- Blurring of the lines between public ministry and private life. There is always the risk of content published on social media being shared more widely than intended. Care must be taken that what is communicated on social media is consistent with being in a position of trust as an ambassador for the church, and as a role model for young people.
- Prosecution or recrimination from posting offensive or inappropriate comments.

### 4.3 Consent

Written consent from parents/carers should be asked for on an annual basis to the following:

- Use of photographs and videos of children and young people from activities and events on a church's website or social media, or in official church publications and displays
- The way/s that the church/church officers will communicate with young people (including the use of email, phone, text message, social media or other messaging services)

### 4.4 Guidelines

- You should not contact under 14s directly through text, email or social media; such communication should be through parents/carers. It remains preferable to contact young people over 14 via parents/carers.
- The purpose of social media should be to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events/activities) rather than to build relationships
- If contacting young people over 14:
  - do not use one-to-one on-line communication with a young person (i.e. direct messaging)
  - copy in another leader or parent when sending messages or within a group context
  - make sure communication is from a specific account/address known to young people and their parents
  - use clear and appropriate language, avoiding abbreviations that could be misinterpreted

- Do not use visual media (e.g. Zoom, Facetime etc.) for one-to-one conversations with young people – use only in group settings

## 4.5 Social Networking Sites

The safest option to protect children and young people is not to use a personal social media account (e.g. Facebook) and profile for your work. It is far preferable to have an official account for the group in question (such as 'St Andrew's Anywhere Youth Group'), and to ask young people to 'like' that page. Any news about group events or anything else can be posted on that page. More than one leader should have access to this page, providing for accountability and transparency. Conversations between leaders and young people should happen in the public section of these pages (such as the 'wall' or in comments under posts) where everyone can see them, rather than via direct messages.

### On a personal social media account:

- leaders' personal accounts should not be used for communicating with young people
- do not have children or young people for whom you have ministerial responsibility added as 'friends'
- personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature

### On an official social media account:

- do not accept friend requests out of social network terms (most sites require users to be 13 or older)
- do not send request messages to young people or dig through people's posts to find out about them
- only recognised members of that group should be admitted
- there must be at least two authorised adult leaders as account administrators
- display only appropriate and necessary information about yourself
- ensure personal telephone numbers and email contacts are not visible on public display
- be discerning! Do not comment on photos or posts, unless appropriate to your church role. **This** includes posting links to offensive or otherwise inappropriate content, making comments about someone's appearance that could be interpreted as either sexual or offensive, or 'liking' inappropriate content on social media.
- use strong passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you
- make parents/carers aware of the social media that your church uses and ensure that you have their consent to their child's usage (depending on the age, older children can consent in their own right)

## 4.6 Other Resources

The following online resources provide more detailed advice which are regularly updated:

- [Thinkuknow](#)
- [Parentzone](#)
- [Parents Protect – Internet Safety](#)
- [ChildNet International](#)

## 5 Photography

### 5.1 Consent for photographs and filming

Images (still or video) count as sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As with all such data, they should only be used with the consent of the person in the image. The list below provides a simple point of reference for gaining consent regarding the use of images of children:

- Children under the age of 13: consent should be gained from their parents
- Children aged between 13 and 16: consent should be gained from parents and the children themselves
- Children aged 17: consent should be gained from the children themselves

Consent is not needed if children appear in a wide-angle group photograph in a public place but it is good practice to announce at the start of a church service, youth event, nativity play etc. if images will be taken to give people chance to object or remove themselves from view. Therefore official photographers should be easily identifiable.

It is good practice to include photographic consent in registration or activity participation consent forms. Those giving consent should know how, when and where an image may be used.

### 5.2 Best practice with photography

The following practices should be followed:

- Only use images of children in suitable dress/kit
- Children who are in care should not be photographed as this could put them at risk
- Avoid supplying a child's full name or school details unless considered necessary
- Images should be stored securely if they need to be kept
- Photos/videos of children should not be stored on leaders' personal mobiles / devices / cameras. Ideally avoid using personal equipment to take photos and recordings on behalf of the church. This may not be possible and if not, images should be deleted once they have been used for their intended purpose
- Remind children to follow the same guidance

### 5.3 Sexting

Sexting is 'when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages'. The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults constitutes child sexual abuse. To respond to sexting incidents involving young people:

- Refer the incident to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible who will assist in managing the response according to best safeguarding practice. These can be difficult situations which need skilled advice to handle properly.
- An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care will be made if:
  - The image(s) of the young person have been shared by an adult
  - There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about capacity to consent
  - The image involves sexual acts and any person in the image is under 16
  - There is reason to believe the young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the image, e.g. the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

## 6 Types of Abuse

All abuse involves the misuse of power, and there is an emotional abuse aspect to all types of abuse.

The [safeguarding e-manual](#) contains a best practice for use by those in the Church who have a role with children, young people and adults and sets out definitions and signs of abuse, updating existing House of Bishops guidance.

It contains information about the types of abuse which can occur and how to recognise them, including physical signs and symptoms as well as behavioural changes that you might observe. The presence of one or more signs or indicators does not mean that abuse is occurring or has occurred, and we don't need to be experts in identifying harm or abuse ourselves. However, our responsibility lies in being alert to the signs and symptoms and reporting all concerns to the relevant and appropriate people, which could mean the incumbent, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, or to statutory services in the case of an emergency or injury.

It includes:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Organisational abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Exploitation (including sexual and criminal abuse)
- Financial abuse
- Modern slavery
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Discrimination and bullying
- Bullying, cyberbullying and online abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Emotional and Psychological abuse
- Spiritual abuse



## 7 Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

In all our responses to safeguarding concerns the Diocese works in partnership with statutory agencies (e.g.: police, adult and children's social care) to protect and safeguard those at risk of harm and abuse

### 7.1 Introduction

All allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported to your Parish Safeguarding Officer, incumbent or the DSA. In emergencies, referrals should be made directly to the Police or Children's / Adults Services.

- Don't keep things to yourself
- Don't rely on someone else to take action
- Don't investigate (this can put people at risk, or have implications for the statutory services)
- At all times the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is of primary importance
- Keep information confidential (only those named above should be informed); the child, young person or adult's right to privacy must be respected
- Don't inform the subject of the allegation (e.g. church worker or volunteer) as this might prejudice any police or other investigations
- **Contact the DSA, incumbent or your Parish Safeguarding Officer**
- In an emergency, and if you are unable to speak to any of the above, talk to the Archdeacon or contact the Police

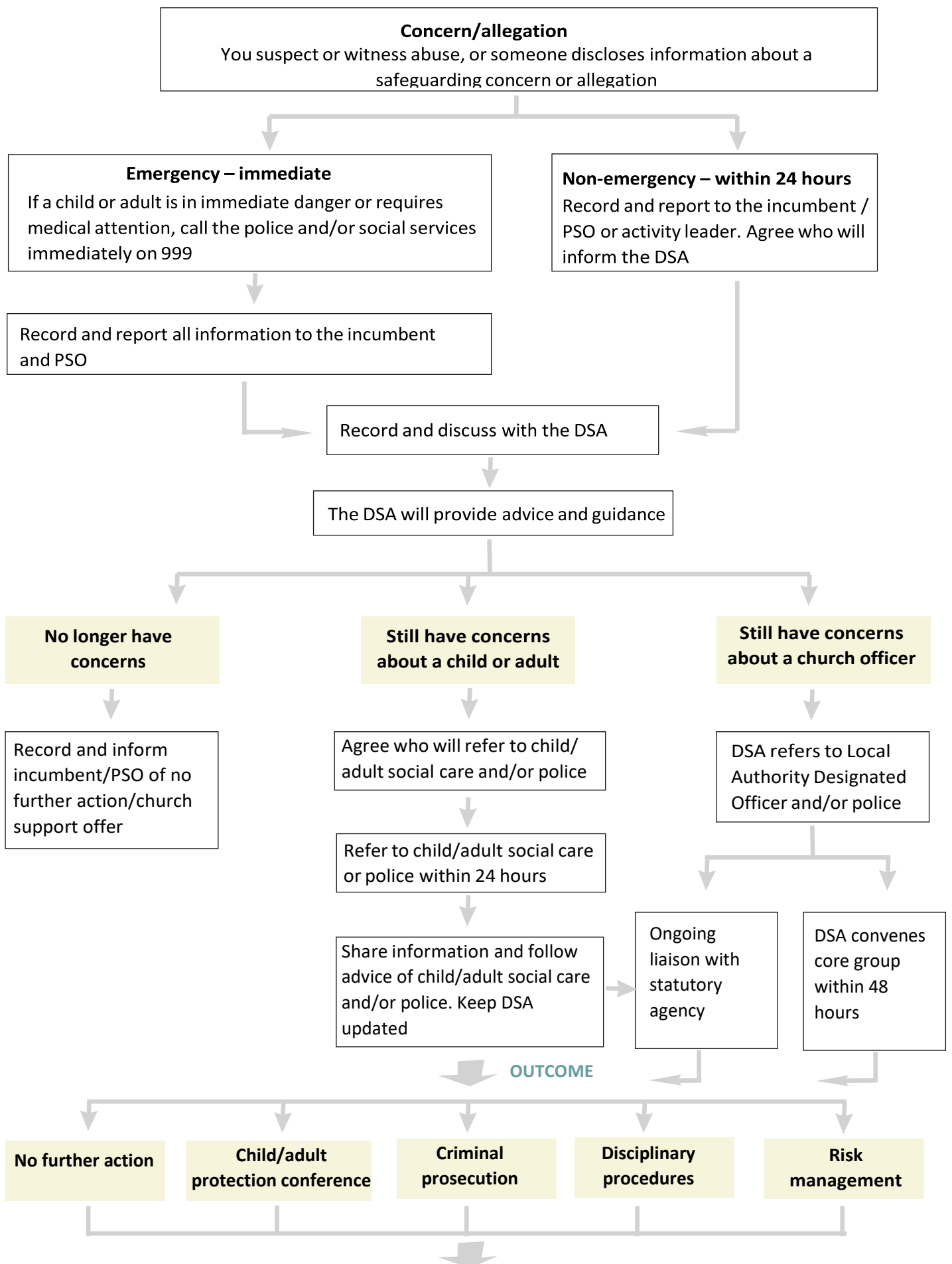
If you are concerned that someone has been or is at risk of abuse, you have no choice but to act. If someone tells you about abuse or harm (either to themselves or another person) you should:

- Reassure the person that you are taking what is being said to you very seriously.
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the person to say what they want. Don't ask them to repeat the information unnecessarily
- Keep calm
- Look at them directly
- Don't prejudge anything
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else - DO NOT promise confidentiality
- Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling
- Whatever the person may have done, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the person may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy
- Never push for more information than is immediately given; do not enquire into the details of the abuse
- Do not ask probing, leading or suggestive questions
- Do not investigate any allegations. Do not contact the person they allege as the abuser; if they are talking about abuse to a third party, do not contact that person

#### *Helpful things to say*

- "Thank you for telling me this"
- "I will have to share this with someone else who can help"
- "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me"
- "I am glad you have told me, it is not your fault, I will help you"

## 7.2 Responding to Safeguarding Situations Flow Chart



**RECORD ALL ACTION – Consider the support needs of all those affected by allegations of abuse at all points in the above stages. Remember the safety and welfare of any child or adult takes precedence over all other concerns**

## 7.3 Recording a Safeguarding Concern

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. Records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise, and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. They should clearly differentiate between facts, opinion, judgements and hypothesis.

**Why record?** In the church context, safeguarding records are needed in order to:

- Ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- Provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- Record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers
- Promote the exercise of accountability
- Provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity
- Allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel

Example: When a minister moves between parishes, a youth worker moves to a different post, or there has been a change of Parish Safeguarding Officer, the availability of a safeguarding record is essential so that one can know what has happened in the past.

**A written record** of the event or conversation should be made as soon as is practicable (after the event or conversation but always within 24 hours). The following approach is helpful in considering what should be written.

- **Who** is it about? (the names of all key people including any actual / potential witnesses)
- **What** happened? (use exact quotes where possible, in quotation marks)
- **How** did it happen? (for example, if someone is alleged to have assaulted a child, did they use an implement? Or was it a kick? Or a hit?)
- **Where** did it take place?
- **When** did it take place?
- **Why** did it happen? (this allows you to record any explanations offered to you by the people involved. It is not the place for your own analysis)
- **What should happen next** (what action will follow, for example, what are you going to do next, what is X going to do next, making sure it is in the diary in Y days' time as a reminder)
- **Recording what did happen next and the checks made to ensure effective follow up** (did X do what they said they were going to do?)
- **Include the views / perspective of the child or adult who is vulnerable**
- **Analysis.** The Parish Safeguarding Officer should analyse all the information gathered to decide the nature and level of the child's needs / the needs of the adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing
- **Records must always be dated and the author identified**
- **Indexing.** The Parish Safeguarding Officer should ensure that parish records are able to be searched or indexed so that previous names and concerns can be easily retrieved
- **Summary.** The safeguarding adviser should ensure, if a church worker has a separate personnel file, that a summary of any concerns and the outcome is filed on the personnel file

**NB** Facts and professional judgments (analysis) should always be distinguished in the record and the record must not be disrespectful to the subjects. Always bear in mind they may well be read by the subject(s) who have a right of access to their files.

*Adapted from "Safeguarding Records joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and Methodist Church 2015"*

## 7.4 Support for Survivors/Victims

The Diocese of Durham aims to provide caring, practical and helpful support for all victims and survivors. We recognise that reporting abuse may be very difficult and distressing. Durham Diocese aims to deal with any contact made by a survivor/victim of abuse in a church-related context with empathy and integrity.

### Finding support

To access support from within the Diocese of Durham contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:

Beth Miller - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Address: Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham DH1 3RY

Email: [beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk](mailto:beth@bethmillerisw.co.uk) | [beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org)

Mobile: 07968034075

The safeguarding adviser will be able to arrange for access to the following sources of support:

- **Therapeutic support** to meet emotional and psychological needs in the immediate and medium-term period following a disclosure. Therapeutic support can be arranged by our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and services can usually be provided through the Diocesan College of Counsellors within a fortnight
- **A Support Person.** The role the support person plays must be agreed in consultation with the victim/survivor. The support person, provided the victim/survivor agrees, could be responsible for the following matters:
  - Liaising (which could include attending any meetings) with the statutory agencies to provide support to the victim/survivor, the support person is not the victim/survivors advocate at any meeting they attend.
  - Listening to and representing the victim/survivor's pastoral needs.
  - Identifying any therapeutic or other needs the victim/survivor may have, and offering choices as how these may be best met.
  - Listening to and representing the victim/survivor's views during the management of the safeguarding concern or allegation.
  - Recording any meetings or contact they have with the victim/survivor and passing on relevant information (e.g. to prevent/protect others from harm, any further information supplied in relation to the safeguarding concern or allegation) to the DSA as appropriate, this should be made clear from the outset of the relationship. Records of meetings would include dates, times, locations and an overview of the meeting rather than a specific and detailed account.

The Diocese of Durham recognises that many victims and survivors may not wish to contact church representatives directly. There are a number of ways in which support can be accessed from outside of the church

If you are a survivor of Church of England-related abuse and are in need of urgent or immediate support, please take a look at the [Interim Support Scheme](#).

If you would like additional support, you can also contact [Safe Spaces](#), which is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England.

As an alternative, you can contact [MACSAS](#), which supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

There is also [Survivors Voices](#), a survivor-led organisation that runs peer support groups for victim-survivors of all kinds of abuse, including faith-based abuse. It has a newsletter and other special events for survivors of abuse experienced in churches and other faith-based communities.

You may also wish to visit the [House of Survivor](#) website. This site has been published by two members of the Survivor Reference Group who are Survivors of Church of England based abuse. Its purpose is to provide helpful information for fellow Church abused survivors in various aspects of understanding or interaction with the Church and/or its representatives (legal, insurance, etc.).

## Survivor Engagement

If you would like to engage with the safeguarding work of the Church today, or find out more about survivor engagement, please contact the Survivor Engagement Team at [engage.safeguarding@churchofengland.org](mailto:engage.safeguarding@churchofengland.org)

## 7.5 Safeguarding and Seal of the Confessional

Responding to, Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers 2017 – states:

*“All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.”*

The only exception to this requirement concerns information received under the seal of the confessional; information disclosed during confession *“is subject to a duty of absolute confidentiality arising from ... Canon 113 of the Code of 1603”*.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Canon law

The seal of the confessional does not apply to each private or confidential conversation between a congregant and a priest.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Canon B29, the practice of confession requires:

- a priest wearing suitable robes – a stole – and being the priest of the relevant parish or district (unless there is the danger of death or other urgency, in which case any priest can hear a confession)
- an advertised or pre-arranged time
- it to be conducted in a private space or in a space where only the priest and penitent are present; and
- that the penitent is a baptised member of the Church of England who confesses their sins in order to demonstrate penitence and seek the forgiveness of God

The priest hearing the confession may give absolution (forgiveness). However, absolution may be withheld if the individual refuses to make appropriate reparations, such as refusing to report themselves to the police.

Under English law, there is no absolute right to the confidentiality of information. For example, a doctor may receive confidential information but is obliged, if ordered to do so, to give this information to the civil or criminal courts if there is a risk to the welfare of a child or if he or she knows a crime has taken place or is going to take place.<sup>[2]</sup> To date, no recent case in England and Wales has decided whether or not a priest may refuse to answer questions in a court of law about the content of a confession. As a result, the Legal Advisory Commission of the General Synod and canon lawyers are undecided whether or not priests might be required to disclose information today.<sup>[3]</sup>

If a penitent makes a confession with the intention of receiving absolution, the priest is forbidden from disclosing anything (including any criminal offence) which is revealed in the course of the confession. This requirement of absolute confidentiality applies even after the death of the penitent.

However, where a penitent discloses in the course of such a confession that he or she has committed a serious crime, the priest should require him or her to report it to the police or other statutory authority and should withhold absolution if the penitent refuses to do so. In such a case the priest may consider it necessary to alert the bishop or the bishop’s adviser for the ministry of reconciliation (if there is one) to his or her decision, though the penitent's details should not be shared without their permission.

The canonical duty of absolute confidentiality does not apply to anything that is said outside the context of a confession made in the context of the ministry of absolution. In particular, if information about abuse that was disclosed when seeking the ministry of absolution.

*Taken from Practice Guidance:  
Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers  
(October 2017)*

At present, the 'seal of the confessional' is upheld in the Church of England's ecclesiastical law. The Working Party which first met in 2015 and produced its report in 2017 did not reach a consensus as to whether this should change. The House of Bishops has commissioned further work on the Seal of the Confessional, building on the report and interim statement from the previous working party.

The new working group will take account of relevant findings, in the final report from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) which was published in October 2022.

The group which will meet over 12 months will bring together theologians, Church leaders and safeguarding professionals along with other advisers as part of the wider reference group. The voices and experiences of survivors will be critical to this work and will be included, but not named, in the group.

### **Terms of Reference**

- To assist the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council in responding to the recommendations of IICSA concerning the Seal of the Confessional, including considering legal options if these are recommended by IICSA
- To review the work on the Seal of the Confessional that led to the Interim Statement currently posted on the Church of England website, as well as the implementation of its recommendations
- To assist the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council in moving from an 'interim statement' to a settled position which can be appropriately set out through different communication channels

## 8 Lone Working Policy

### 8.1 Introduction

Lone working is an everyday occurrence and practice for clergy and some church workers (for instance pastoral visitors). Working from home, being alone in an office or attending remote locations (for example carrying out a home visit) could all constitute lone working.

The perception of what is a risk and the actual risk itself may be seen differently by individuals. In responding to actual or potential risk, each person is responsible for not putting themselves in situations in which they feel very vulnerable, and their views should be respected. The aim of this guidance is to help everyone think about how to undertake lone working safely.

Those working alone should consider what is practical in their situation:

- Have an arrangement with other people whereby they know what your plans are for the day.
- Tell people how you may be contacted and/or when you plan to make contact with the parish office or a colleague. If you change your plans let your contact know immediately.
- Let other people know whom you are meeting, when and where, so that someone is looking after your welfare.
- Liaise with other professionals in the community so that you are aware of houses or other places where there is potential for violent behaviour.
- Ensure that transport is in good working order.
- Carry a mobile phone, which should always be kept as fully charged as possible, and have it readily to hand in the case of an emergency. A mobile phone should never be relied on as the only means of communication however as signal strength may be poor in some areas.
- Refrain from attempting to do any work which would normally require more than one person e.g. heavy manual lifting unless/until other colleagues arrive to assist.

### 8.2 Pastoral Care/Visits

Pastoral care often involves one to one meetings either in a home context or on church premises. It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided. The following simple tips may help everyone to feel safe:

- Carry identification and be prepared to identify yourself.
- Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards. Always be aware of your exits and if possible try to sit in a place where there is no one between you and the exit.
- At a home visit, make sure the door is shut behind you and if you can, make sure you are familiar with the door lock. In church premises, make sure that at least one exit can be easily opened (e.g. a Yale lock, a push bar etc.).
- Set some boundaries at the outset, in particular how long you expect the meeting to take.
- Trust your intuition. If you feel uneasy, act straight away and find a way of ending the meeting, or leaving.
- Make sure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to be back; if you have any reason to be concerned, make specific arrangements to check in with someone; consider making arrangements for someone to contact you after a fixed period of time.
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged and accessible; park your car in a lit area and make sure you know where you have left it.
- If there are animals present and you are not comfortable, then ask the occupants to remove or secure them.

- Keep a simple record of visits, including anything that causes concern. Concerns should be shared appropriately with a supervisor, parish clergy and/or the safeguarding officer. If there is any safeguarding concern the set procedures must be followed (cross reference)

### **8.3 Being Alone in Church Buildings**

A risk assessment is needed for any activity involving being alone in church buildings (organists, cleaners, flower arrangers, administrators), and the practicality of the following should be considered:

- Ensure the doors are locked behind those alone in the buildings at specific times (ensure that there is one access that can easily be opened from the inside in the event of an emergency)
- Ensure that no one is left alone in an open building either whilst setting up worship or at the end of the service. At the end of the service while two or more people are present, check all potential hiding places before locking the external doors.
- Not to respond to night-time alarms alone.

### **8.4 Dealing with Requests for Help**

It is sensible to determine a parish policy about giving money and/or food, and then ensure it is consistently applied. Useful tips include:

- Have a list of resource centres to which enquirers can be directed, both local authority and charities.
- Decide whether to make an arrangement with local cafes/shops about exchanging goods for vouchers, or keep a stock of food to hand out.
- Set times and boundaries when help is available and do not make “knee jerk” responses on demand.



## 9 Running Safe Activities and Events for Groups

### 9.1 DBS Clearance and Safeguarding Training for Adult leaders (paid or volunteers)

Adult leaders working with young people should be DBS checked (renewed every 3 years) at the correct level of checks (i.e. either children and/or vulnerable adults). New volunteer leaders should go through the safer recruitment procedure. Leaders should have safeguarding training (renewed every 3 years) at the correct level for the role.

### 9.2 Recommended Staffing Levels and Adult to Child Ratios

The OFSTED recommended adult-to-child ratios are given below. Please note these are **minimum requirements** and you should carefully consider whether you need more adults than this:

| Age of Children | Number of Adults | Number of Children |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 0-2             | 1                | 3                  |
| 2-3             | 1                | 4                  |
| 4-8             | 1                | 6                  |
| 9-12            | 1                | 8                  |
| 13-18           | 1                | 10                 |

- There should always be a minimum of two adult leaders for any group, from the time the first child arrives until the last child leaves. If only one adult is available to lead the activity, it should be postponed until an appropriate number are available
- In cases where children are taken off site higher ratios are recommended, especially where travel is involved
- Higher ratios are also recommended where groups have young people with additional needs (and this should be reflected in the activity risk assessment)
- If groups are mixed gender, it is good practice (and common sense) to have both male and female leaders where possible
- Ensure you follow 'Safer Recruitment Guidelines' when recruiting staff to work with groups with vulnerable people (children / young people and adults at risk). Ensure that all elements of this are completed satisfactorily before they are in post.
- If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open doors one person per group is allowed
- Young people under 18 years old may help but should not have responsibility for children (and are still counted in the above adult / child ratios)
- A five-year age-gap is recommended helpers and the children in the group where possible
- Parents, carers and occasional helpers can be included in these ratios if they have been formally recruited

### 9.3 Registers and Consent Forms

- A register for both children and leaders should be taken each session of an activity involving children, with up to date contact information for the children and leaders. It is good practice to retain them for 12 months
- Parent or carer consent is needed for any activity for their children at which they are not present. Annual consent forms should be completed and stored safely. An exemplar form can found on the [safeguarding section](#) of the diocesan website. These should include contact details (including emergency contacts), dietary requirements, health information, pick-up information, photographic consent, and consent to means of communication with children.
- A separate/additional consent form needs to be completed for residentials, any hazardous activities or for activities lasting more than half a day. An exemplar form can found on the [safeguarding section](#) of the diocesan website.
- Parents/carers should always be informed of any activity taking place off site (away from the normal meeting venue)
- Specific incidents should be recorded. Best practice is to keep two record books; an Accident Record and a Safeguarding Record. Recording should be concise, factual and clear as they may need to be disclosed in certain situations
- **If there is a possibility that Zoom (or other online conferencing platforms) will be used with a group, consent should be requested for this at the same time.**

### 9.3 Sleeping arrangements at residential activities

Always have separate sleeping arrangements for adults and children

### 9.5 Good behaviour for children and young people

Ensuring children are safe in church activities includes thinking about the behaviour of children towards each other and adults. Codes of behaviour, including a focus on anti-bullying and social media, can be a good way of making expectations clear.

### 9.6 Health and Safety and Risk Assessments

Health and safety should be managed as part of all activities.

- Buildings should be checked for health and safety regularly, at least once a year, and the results noted and reported in writing to the PCC or other appropriate church organization (including fire procedures, first aid kit, kitchen areas, heating appliances, low level sockets, stacked furniture and doors).
- Risk management plans should be carried out for the usual venue and activities that take place. A review of these should take place on a regular basis. An exemplar form can found on the [safeguarding section](#) of the diocesan website. A risk assessment should:
  - identify the risks (including severity of risk and to whom)
  - identify what controls are already in place
  - identify what further action needs to be put into place to reduce these risks
  - identify who is responsible for any further action and by what date
- A First Aid box should be obtained and maintained on site and taken on trips. It is recommended that at least one of the leaders attends a recognised First Aid course
- All accidents should be recorded in an official Accident/Incident Book and parents/carers informed

- The venue should be secure so that visitors are unable to gain access during sessions. Children should not leave the premises unsupervised.
- Parents of children who require medication will usually make you aware of these needs and expect you to follow the medication plan they set. No medicines should be given to a person under the age of 18 without the permission of a parent/carer.

## 9.7 Insurance

Ensure that your church has arranged adequate insurance cover for you and the young people for regular activities as well as additional and any residential experiences.

## 9.8 Transport

- Transport, travel or escort arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents if they make informal arrangements among themselves. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parent to church officer and at which point it is returned to the parent.
- If an adult leader is transporting young people in a car, the following guidelines should be followed:
  - Vehicles should be roadworthy (with current MOT) and adequately insured (business insurance)
  - Drivers must be accompanied by another adult in the car (In an emergency when this is not possible the young person should sit in the back seat)
  - Seat belts must be worn (and correct car seats where applicable)
  - Maximum car capacity is not exceeded
  - When using a minibus, all drivers must hold the correct permit on their driving license or have taken the appropriate driving test and be aged between 21 and 70. It is strongly recommended that drivers take a MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) test

## 9.9 Home Groups and Mentoring

Private houses may sometimes be used as a venue for young people's groups. When this happens

- Adult leaders should not invite young people to their home alone. There should always be a second adult leader present (ideally unrelated) at all times (arriving before the first group member and not leaving until after the last group member has left).
- Make sure that parents/carers are aware of the situation and have given their consent
- If a private house is used on a regular basis, the vicar/PCC needs to be aware of this and that there is adequate insurance cover
- Never use inappropriate rooms (i.e. bedrooms)

An adult leader should never plan to meet up with a young person outside the Church setting unless it is for a legitimate Church purpose (e.g. as part of an organised church mentoring scheme). If this happens it must:

- Be with the signed approval of the parents/carers. The parent is signing to confirm that they are happy for the mentoring relationship to start, what will happen during the mentoring sessions, their frequency, and where they will probably take place.
- This should be in a public area (e.g. a coffee shop), not in a private home.
- Ideally not be on a one-to-one basis (particularly if the young person is under 16).

## **9.10 Alcohol and Smoking Policies**

At youth groups and activity events with young people neither adult leaders nor young people should consume alcohol. This also applies on residential trips when adult leaders are not on duty. Adult leaders must act in ways that recognise that they are role models for young people at all times.

Adults should avoid smoking in the presence of young people. Young people who are smokers should be advised of a designated area away from others.

## 10 The Code of Safer Working Practice

Churches should make it clear what they expect of people who work or volunteer with children, young people and vulnerable adults. One common way of doing this is to provide a written description of behaviour that is, and is not acceptable.

The Code of Safer Working Practice (below) expresses our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister. It sets out what we expect from anyone who ministers in our church, in both paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do. Much of the good practice described in the code is found elsewhere within this Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. [Code of Safer Working Practice document](#)

### **Upholding the Code**

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency.

#### **All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must:**

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity;
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy;
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful;
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern;
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated;
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

#### **In addition, those working with children and young people must:**

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult;
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around;
- Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

#### **All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must not**

- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group;
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking;
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person;
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group;
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media;

- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

**In addition, for children and young people, must not:**

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity);
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people;
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

**Acceptable Touch**

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the person themselves, and kept to the minimum. In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- Ask permission before you touch someone;
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention);
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive;
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors;
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.

## 11 List of Useful Contacts

**Police : Call 101 or 999 in emergency**  
**Local Contacts - Adult and Children's Social Care**

### Stockton

**Adult** Tel: 01642 527764 Out of Hours 08702 402994

**Children** 01429 284284 Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours) 08702 402994

### Darlington

**Children** Contact the Children's Access Point on 01325 406222 or Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.

**Adult** Contact the First Point of Contact Team on 01325 406111 or the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.

### Durham

**Adult** Social Care Direct on 03000 267 979.

**Children** First Contact on Tel: 03000 267 979.

### Gateshead

**Adult** Adult Social Care Direct - 0191 433 7033

**Children** Gateshead Council's Children's Services (in confidence) on:0191 433 2653 (office hours: Monday - Friday, 8.30am to 5pm) or Emergency Duty Team 0191 477 0844 ( outside of office hours)

### South Tyneside

**Adults** Let's Talk Team 0191 424 6000 (Monday-Friday 8.30 am to 5.00pm or 0191 456 2093 ( outside of the above office hours)

**Children** 0191 424 5010 ( Monday to Friday 8.30-5.00) or 0191 456 2093 ( outside of the above office hours)

### Hartlepool

**Adult** Tel: 01429 523390 or Out of Hours 08702 402994

**Children** 01429 284284 or Emergency Duty Team (outside of office hours) 08702 402994

### Sunderland

**Adult** 0191 520 5552.

**Children** Contact Children's Safeguarding on 0191 520 5560

## Helplines for further support

**NSPCC** - For adults concerned about a child 0808 800 5000

**ChildLine** - For children and young people on 0800 1111

**Action on Elder Abuse Helpline** - 0808 808 8141

**24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline** - 0808 2000 247

**NAPAC** – Offer support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse 0808 801 0331

**Stop It Now** – Preventing child sexual abuse 0808 1000 900

**Cruse** – Bereavement helpline 0808 808 1677

**The Survivors Trust:** 0808 801 0818 and is open Monday to Wednesday 10-7.30pm, Thursday 10-6pm and Friday 10-2pm.

**LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0800 999 5428 [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk)

**Men's Advice Line:** 0808 801 0327 [info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadvice.org.uk)

**Age UK Advice Line:** 0800 678 1602

## Websites for further information/resources

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

[www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)

[www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

[www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

[www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

[www.spiritualabuse.com](http://www.spiritualabuse.com)

[www.modernslavery.co.uk](http://www.modernslavery.co.uk)