

Will there be prayers?

Prayers will not be offered unless you ask for them.

My abuser is a priest. Surely you will believe him or her rather than me?

We are well aware that some clergy and other church officials can and do abuse people.

Wherever possible we involve the police and other statutory bodies whose job it is to investigate and, where possible and appropriate, to bring prosecutions. We also take disciplinary action to deal with abusive clergy and church officials. We recognise that spiritual abuse will be part of any abuse by clergy or church officials.

My abuser is dead. Surely there is nothing you can do?

Our concern is for your experience and how the abuse has left you. What matters is that the issue still concerns you.

My abuser is a woman. I thought all other abusers were men.

A surprisingly large number of people report abuse by women. Your listener will be aware of this and will probably have heard others with similar stories.

You are only doing this to try to make up for all the scandals in the Church, aren't you?

We certainly hope we have learned from them. Offering this service is one way of trying to do better in future.

To ask for a listener contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org or ring 01865 208290.

They will then contact a suitable listener who will contact you to offer a meeting.

 DIOCESE OF
OXFORD



DO YOU
NEED
TO TALK?

Supporting

Survivors of Abuse

 DIOCESE OF OXFORD
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire



Who is a survivor?

A survivor is any adult who was abused as a child, particularly someone who was sexually abused. We say survivor rather than victim as this is the term most people prefer. It encourages people to reclaim their lives.

Who are the listeners you offer?

They are church people, some ordained and some lay, who have come forward to offer a listening service to survivors. They have a background in this kind of work and have been specifically recruited and trained for this role.

What do they do?

They will offer up to three sessions to meet you and hear what you have to say. It is always up to you whether to meet, whether to meet again and to decide what you want to do. The listener will not impose any particular course of action on you.

How long is a session?

Normally around an hour.

What will this cost me?

Nothing. This is a free service and our listeners are all volunteers in this role.

Will they tell anyone about seeing me?

The only records to be kept will be of who was seen, when and by whom. Details of your discussions will not be kept. If it appears that a perpetrator may be still around and possibly abusing other adults you will be encouraged to report this. But the decision to do so is yours. Only if children may still be at risk from a perpetrator does this have to be reported, but no action can be taken unless you are willing to be identified. Listeners also receive supervision for their listening work, in which they discuss the issues raised by survivors and receive advice, but without identifying details.

Where do I meet the listener?

You decide that with the listener. It may be at the listener's home, an office or another neutral place. It will not normally be at your own home.

Will the listener offer counselling?

No. But you may wish to discuss with the listener whether counselling might help you and where to go for it.

What if I don't get on with the listener?

Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org, who will try to arrange for a different listener to see you.

Will the listener believe my story?

Yes. It is not up to the listener to decide on issues of criminal justice or guilt but simply to hear your story and help you decide what, if anything, you would like to do.

Will the listener tell me to forgive my abuser?

No. You can discuss issues of justice and forgiveness with the listener if you want to, but you don't have to and they won't ask you.

Suppose I don't really believe in God?

It doesn't matter. The fact that you have made this enquiry shows that you are willing to have some contact with church, but what you believe is up to you.

I have problems with going to church. Will the listener expect me to be a convinced and committed Christian?

No. If you want to talk about matters of faith, worship or the Christian life with the listener you are welcome to do so but you don't have to.