

## **Past Cases Review – Frequently Asked Questions**

Here are some answers to some of the key questions you might have about the Past Cases Review and your role within it.

### **Q Is this Review essential?**

A Yes. It has been approved and established by the Archbishop's Council and it is a priority for each Incumbent to undertake the Review.

### **Q Is every Incumbent being asked to undertake the Review?**

A Yes.

### **Q What is my responsibility as the Church officer leading this review in my parish?**

A You are required to examine all documentation kept within a parish that relates to any safeguarding concerns.

If you are unsure about the type of information you are collating or how to record any information you may have about a safeguarding concern, please contact the Safeguarding team.

### **Q What if I am approached by someone who wants to disclose?**

A You may be approached by a victim or survivor which might result in some uncomfortable conversations and may bring up old wounds or uncover long buried hurts.

With permission of the victim/survivor, this should be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding team. If permission is not granted, the Diocese can advise you about where the victim/survivor can receive support.

### **Q Do I need to sign off separately for every parish in my benefice?**

A Yes. A separate signing sheet for each of your parishes has been included with your copy of the Bishop's letter. A 100% response rate from the Diocese's 213 parishes is required.

### **Q Who is overseeing this process?**

The Bishop's Council has approved the setting up of a Past Cases Review Reference Group. This is led by an independent chair, as well as key members of the Diocesan Safeguarding

team, experts and representatives from victim/survivor groups and organisations such as the Police.

**Q What will happen to all the information gathered by the parishes?**

Any information sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding team will be assessed, and where necessary, referred to the appropriate authorities.

The outcome of the Diocese's review will be sent to an independent reviewer for scrutiny and a final report produced for sign-off by the Diocese's Past Cases Review Reference Group and the Diocesan Bishop.

It will then be passed to the national Past Cases Review management team.

**Q Is the 20 January, 2020 a firm deadline?**

A Yes, all signed responses must be submitted by the 20 January 2020.

This is to allow time for the information to be reviewed, actions undertaken if required by the Diocesan Safeguarding team, and then for the information to independently evaluated to ensure the Diocese has taken appropriate safeguarding action.

**Q How far back should we be looking?**

A It is important to review all files, no matter how old, because even though a perpetrator may now be deceased, their victims may still be alive and in need of pastoral care.

**Q What if the benefice is in a Vacancy?**

A In case of a Vacancy, the Church Wardens of each parish (or the PCC Secretary where there are no Church Wardens) have been sent a copy of the Bishop's letter and need to undertake the review for their parish.

**Q What if the benefice goes into Vacancy after the Bishop's letter has been received?**

A It is the responsibility of the outgoing Incumbent to ensure that all information pertaining to the Review is passed on to the new Incumbent or Church Warden, and also to the Area Dean and Archdeacon.

**Q What if I identify a potential example of abuse or am in doubt?**

A Please contact any member of the Diocesan Safeguarding team, immediately on 01634 560 000.

**Q Will any support and/or counselling be made available to any victims/survivors who come forward?**

A Yes. Please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding team and check the [Safeguarding pages](#) of the website for more information about support available.

**Q Should I report a concern regarding a member of the Church Choir?**

A: We are working on the basis of in doubt report. Choir membership can be a church officer as it is a role that a church appoints unless it is a casual choir that anyone can turn up and sing as part of the choir.

**Q As soon as this Review starts, we're likely to be contacted by the local press. What do we do if we are?**

A Please refer all enquiries from the media to Jennifer Ross, Communications Officer for the Diocese of Rochester: [jennifer.ross@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:jennifer.ross@rochester.anglican.org)

**Q Should I put something in the pew sheet or parish magazine to ask for people to come forward if they have anything they wish to offer?**

A Some suggested words have been put together to help you if you wish to share details of the review. You can find these in the Communications Guidance on the [Past Cases Review](#) page of the Diocesan website.