



Past Cases Review 2 – Background, Next Steps and Frequently Asked Questions

Background

In 2007, the Church of England commissioned a national Past Case Review (PCR) which sought to look at the handling by the Church of child protection cases over many years. This entailed an independent scrutiny of the files of clergy and church officers¹ to identify any persons presenting on-going risks to children and young people (a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18) which had not been acted on appropriately.

As a follow up to our initial PCR, in 2014 the Diocese of Bristol undertook another review of all our clergy and church officer files for both the Diocese and the Cathedral.

The House of Bishops wants to ensure that all our worshipping communities and church related activities are as safe as possible for children and vulnerable adults. All Dioceses are now required to undertake a further review process, which is known as the PCR 2.

Next Steps

Please ensure that **all records** that the parish holds, safeguarding and pastoral, are checked. Any records that hold the following behaviours should have been, or need to be, referred:

- Behaviour which has harmed, may have harmed or is likely to harm a child or vulnerable adult, including neglect.
- Possible criminal offence against or related to a child, including the viewing, downloading or possession of indecent images of children.
- Possible criminal offence against or related to an adult.
- Behaviour which indicates that the person might be or is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

¹ A church officer includes all clergy, including those with PTO and clergy such as hospital, school and prison chaplains who hold the Bishop's licence, retired clergy and deceased clergy. It also includes Readers, licensed lay workers, diocesan and parish lay employees and volunteers whose role includes (or has included) direct involvement with children and vulnerable adults.

- More than one low level concern which would not, taken individually, meet the
- threshold for a safeguarding referral, but when taken together may justify further exploration.
- Cases of alleged abuse to people over 16, who have later said they gave their consent, which have not led to prosecution or caution.
- Cases where victims have reported abuse, which have been, and do need follow up.

These behaviours may include: physical, sexual, psychological, neglect and acts of omission, self-neglect, financial, modern slavery, organisational, discriminatory and domestic abuse including controlling or coercive behaviour. Advice on whether a particular circumstance should be reported may be obtained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

If the record is incomplete in anyway it maybe appropriate to undertake discreet enquiries within the Parish or with a previous incumbent. If this is the case please ask the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for advice.

Please refer any matters which have not already been reported immediately to our Diocesan Safeguarding Team by email at safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org or calling 0117 906 0100 or out of office hours 0303 003 1111.

Next steps for all PCCs

- Check your parish/other records for all known incidents of concern about the behaviour of church officers within your parishes/other (see above for further details).
- Report any previously unreported incidents to the DST immediately (You can contact DST to check if incident was reported).
- Complete the attached Table 1A for each parish/other (we cannot accept one form for the whole benefice), detailing all known cases of concern.
- Complete the attached Parish/ other Declaration form (we cannot accept one for the whole benefice).
- Send your signed Parish/other Declaration form and completed Table 1a to safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org, 0117 906 0100, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU.
- We would prefer to receive these forms electronically and electronic signatures are fine. Please save your forms in PDF and in order to email, contact the safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org email when a form is ready to be submitted and you will be provided with a secure email facility to submit the forms.
- Please ensure that your signed Parish/other Declaration Form and completed Table 1a are returned by Monday 23 March 2020 at the latest.

If you have a general question about any of the information here or any part of the PCR2 process, please do not hesitate to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 0117 906 0100 and a member of the Safeguarding Team will assist you.

Frequently asked questions:

Q - Is this Review essential?

A - Yes. It is a priority for each Parish to cooperate with the the Review.

Q: Is every Incumbent and Parish being asked to review their Parish records?

A - Yes. Where there is a vacancy or prolonged absence of an Incumbent or responsible member of Clergy, the Churchwardens are asked to take responsibility for this review.

Q - Do I need to submit a Parish Declaration and Table 1A for every parish in my benefice?

A - Yes. A separate Declaration and Table 1A sheet needs to be submitted for every parish. A 100% response rate from the Diocese's parishes is required.

Q - I am already very busy. I don't have time for this.

A - As set out in the Bishop's letter, the Review is an important undertaking and should be treated as a priority; failure to comply is a CDM matter. Working with your Parish Safeguarding Officers and Churchwardens is recommended as this will ease the burden on your time.

Q - Is the given date a firm deadline?

A - Yes, all signed responses must be submitted by the date stipulated in Bishop Viv's letter. This is to allow the overall Diocesan review to be completed on time.

Q - What if the benefice is in a Vacancy?

A - In case of a Vacancy, the churchwardens of each parish (or the PCC Secretary where there are no churchwardens) will 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 the Review has been undertaken and responses submitted before they leave the benefice.*

Q What if I identify a potential example of abuse?

A - Please contact Adam Bond, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser immediately.

Q What if I'm not sure whether something counts as an abuse?

A Please contact Adam Bond, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice.
(adam.bond@bristoldiocese.org).

Q - *What support is available for those troubled or affected by the Review?*

*A The Diocese offers an Authorised Listening service to support those affected.
Please contact Adam Bond, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for details.*

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

A - Yes. Please contact Adam Bond, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for details. The NSPCC have been commissioned to provide a helpline - 0800 80 20 20

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 ensure that you and your team do not speak to the press direct. Please refer all press enquires to the Diocese Communications Officer.