



St John the Baptist Church, Grove
OX12 7LQ

Safeguarding Procedures and Guidance

What to do if you are a concerned that a child or adult is being abused

1. Respond well to the victim/survivor, if it is a direct disclosure, to ensure they feel listened to and taken seriously. Explain what will happen next and check out support requirements. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with key church officers, and may be shared with the statutory agencies, if there is any current risk to children or adults. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (e.g. the statutory agencies and appropriate church officers).

2. Emergency: If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the emergency services on 999.

3. Non-emergency: Contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent, in the first instance. They must then contact the Dorchester Area Safeguarding Advisor. If neither are available, contact the Dorchester Area Safeguarding Advisor directly. If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the group/activity leader who will contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.

4. Any safeguarding concerns **must** be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team **within 24 hours**.

5. If the PSO/incumbent or the Area Advisor are not available within 24 hours, contact Children's Social Care (MASH: 0345 050 7666) or Adult Social Care (01865 328232) and/or the police directly, if the concern is that a child or adult is being abused.

If the concern is that a church officer may be abusing a child or adult, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or police. Advise the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent as soon as possible that you have made a referral; they will advise the Diocesan Head of Safeguarding. **If in doubt, don't delay – seek advice from statutory agencies.**

6. Do not contact the respondent or anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or statutory agencies.

7. Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards – this must be before the end of the day. Use the **Safeguarding Concern Form**. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. The form should include details of information provided to that person as well as the information received. Always sign and date the form. Keep it factual. Pass on a copy to the PSO and/or incumbent and the Area Advisor. All records should be kept secure and confidential.

If the concern is about a child or adult:

8. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) will act in line with the House of Bishops' guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and help to make the required referrals. If there is a risk of harm, the concerns must be reported to the statutory agencies within 24 hours of the DSA receiving the concerns. This would be Children's or Adult Social Care and/or the police. There should be close communication between the DSA and PSO/incumbent until the situation is resolved. The archdeacon should also be informed.

If the concern also involves a church officer:

9. The DSA will act in line with the House of Bishops' guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and refer the concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or police within 24 hours. The DSA will now take over the management of the safeguarding concern in conjunction with the core group (which will be convened within 48 hours) and statutory agencies. There may also be a requirement for parish representatives to attend a subsequent core group/s. If there are doubts about whether or not to make a referral and under what route, the DSA will seek advice from the LADO. Please note that the procedure is the same for non-recent abuse.

Key contacts

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Anne Cheeseman

Tel: 07827 750217

Email: anneccheeseman@gmail.com

Incumbent: VACANCY

Associate Vicar: Revd Alec Gill

Tel: 07739 563894

Email: vicaralec@valebenefice.org.uk

Dorchester Area Safeguarding Advisor: Erica Hegg

Tel: 07341 866832

Email: erica.hegg@oxford.anglican.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Team – General enquiries

Tel: 01865 208295

Email: safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Team – Urgent concerns/referrals:

Tel: 01865 208295

Email: safeguardingreferrals@oxford.anglican.org

Oxfordshire Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0345 050 7666

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Team: 01865 328232

Urgent out-of-hours enquiries – contact thirtyone:eight

Tel: 0303 003 111

Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

Remember the 4 R's: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report/Refer**

Recognise

Recognise the concern – it could happen here. Be aware and vigilant.

Respond

- Listen
- Take what is said seriously
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no')
- Remain calm
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information)
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Investigate
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made
- Do a physical or medical examination.

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report/Refer

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult, contact the police (999)
- Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately
- Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours
- If there is any doubt, seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or the police.

Non-recent abuse

Safeguarding concerns or allegations may be about something that is going on now and/or something that may happen in the future (recent) or something that happened in the past(non-recent). Non-recent allegations of abuse must be treated as seriously as recent allegations. Research shows that it may take up to 25 years or longer for an adult to disclose sexual abuse that happened to him/her either as a child or younger adult. A victim/survivor needs to be aware that if a respondent is known to be currently working with children/adults at risk of abuse and neglect in either a paid or voluntary capacity a referral to the statutory services will be made. The DSA will make this referral

Domestic abuse

The House of Bishops' policy states that *'The Church is committed to those who have been victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse in all its forms is contrary to the will of God and an affront to human dignity. All need to play their part in preventing or halting it'*. The welfare of the adult victim of domestic abuse is important, but where there are children in the family it must be understood that they too are victims of domestic abuse. **Consideration of the child's welfare always comes first.** In all circumstances, contact the DSA who will help clarify the issues and steps needed, which may involve contacting Children's Social Care. There may be a need for a risk assessment and for a Safeguarding Agreement to be put in place. The DSA will undertake this work in conjunction with the parish church and any statutory agencies.

Ministry of deliverance

Concerns may be expressed that a child, young person or adult is troubled by or possessed by evil spirits or demons and that this may account for behavioural issues in the individual or be considered to justify harsh treatment by the family, guardians, friends or carers. If a church officer, including a member of clergy, becomes aware of the above situation and/or a request is made for deliverance ministry, the parish **must** contact the DSA who will contact the appropriate person.

Recording, data protection and information sharing

Opening a church safeguarding case file

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. A record, called a case file, should be opened whenever a safeguarding concern or allegation occurs in a church. The record should include key contact details, dates of when the information became known and the nature of the concerns. The record should include ongoing actions with dates, other key documents on the case file (e.g. observation notes, reports, consent forms etc.) and the case closure date. Records should use straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. Please use the **Safeguarding Concern Form**.

Record retention and security

The safeguarding case files, whether electronic or paper, must be stored securely by the incumbent and the PSO. This should include identifying who should have access to them. Records in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should be maintained in accordance with the Church's retention guidance. If the incumbent moves from the church, the records should be passed to the new incumbent.

Data protection and information sharing

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 replaced the Data Protection Act 1998. The GDPR contains the principles governing the use of personal data. It should be noted that the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations being accountable and transparent in relation to their use of personal data. Parishes handling personal data need to have the proper arrangements for collecting, storing and sharing information. Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as what is called 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes specific reference to processing data in relation to the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' and allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent:

'The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe' and this can equally be said to apply to adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

Reporting concerns about adults

Referrals of suspected abuse are made to Adult Social Services (01865 328232) and the police. Where possible, for a person over 18, this should be done with their written consent. The starting point is the presumption that an adult can give consent and has the mental

capacity to do so. The provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 are complex and questions and concerns about consent and mental capacity should always be discussed with the DSA. Sharing without consent Information can be shared legally without consent, if a person is unable to or cannot reasonably be expected to gain consent from the individual concerned, or if to gain consent could place somebody at risk. Relevant personal data can be shared lawfully without consent if it is to keep a child or adult at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental or emotional well-being. Never make these decisions on your own. If you are going to share personal data, this should always be discussed with the DSA. Of course, you may be able to share data, at least initially, without identifying the individual concerned both within the church and with the statutory services. Ultimately, the most important consideration is whether the sharing of information is likely to support the safeguarding of a child, young person or adult at risk of abuse or neglect.

Date approved by PCC:.....9 January 2024

Associate Vicar:...Rev Alec Gill

Churchwardens:...Nick Terrill.....Nicky Gibbard

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