

Responding to safeguarding disclosures or concerns

This document is owned and maintained by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and outlines the required procedures for responding to safeguarding disclosures or concerns. All staff, small group leaders, and volunteers serving with children must read and adhere to these procedures. This document is publicly available on the church website for reference to anyone engaging with our church family.

The role of staff or volunteers

Abuse is serious and unacceptable legally and morally. The church has specific legal responsibilities. To effectively fulfil these legal responsibilities, all caregivers need to recognise indicators or disclosures of abuse and to report them to their Ministry Area Lead (MAL) or the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). The MAL and PSO cannot fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that the church meets its legal duties if concerns are not reported. The following procedures are in place to ensure that all caregivers understand their role is safeguarding vulnerable people.

There are three stages of responding to disclosures or concerns: **Respond, record, and report.**

Training material and appendixes have been moved from this policy, however descriptions for the signs and indicators of abuse, for both children and adults, can be found [here](#).

Respond

- If immediate action is required to ensure the person's safety, this should be taken. Advice can be sought from the MAL or the PSO, but this should not prevent or unnecessarily delay responding to ensure safety.
- Explain what will happen next; that you will seek advice confidentially from your MAL and/or the PSO, who will determine the required safeguarding measures.
- If there is any current risk to children or adults, they should be informed that their identity will be shared confidentially with the MAL and the PSO and may be shared with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and /or statutory agencies. Assure them that you will let them know the outcome of that discussion and that they will be kept informed and will be involved in any further action.

Record

- Make an accurate record of the disclosure as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours).
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Record what was said and when, what you said in reply, including relevant contextual information such as what was happening immediately before the disclosure (e.g. a description of the activity/situation), the general demeanour of the person disclosing, whether anyone else was present or involved, and if so, who, etc.
- The safeguarding concern form is available to staff members on Trellis for this purpose.
- Keep all handwritten notes. Alternatively, the Safeguarding Administrator can scan and store the notes on St Helen's servers, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept securely and retained in line with the Church of England data retention guidelines.

Report

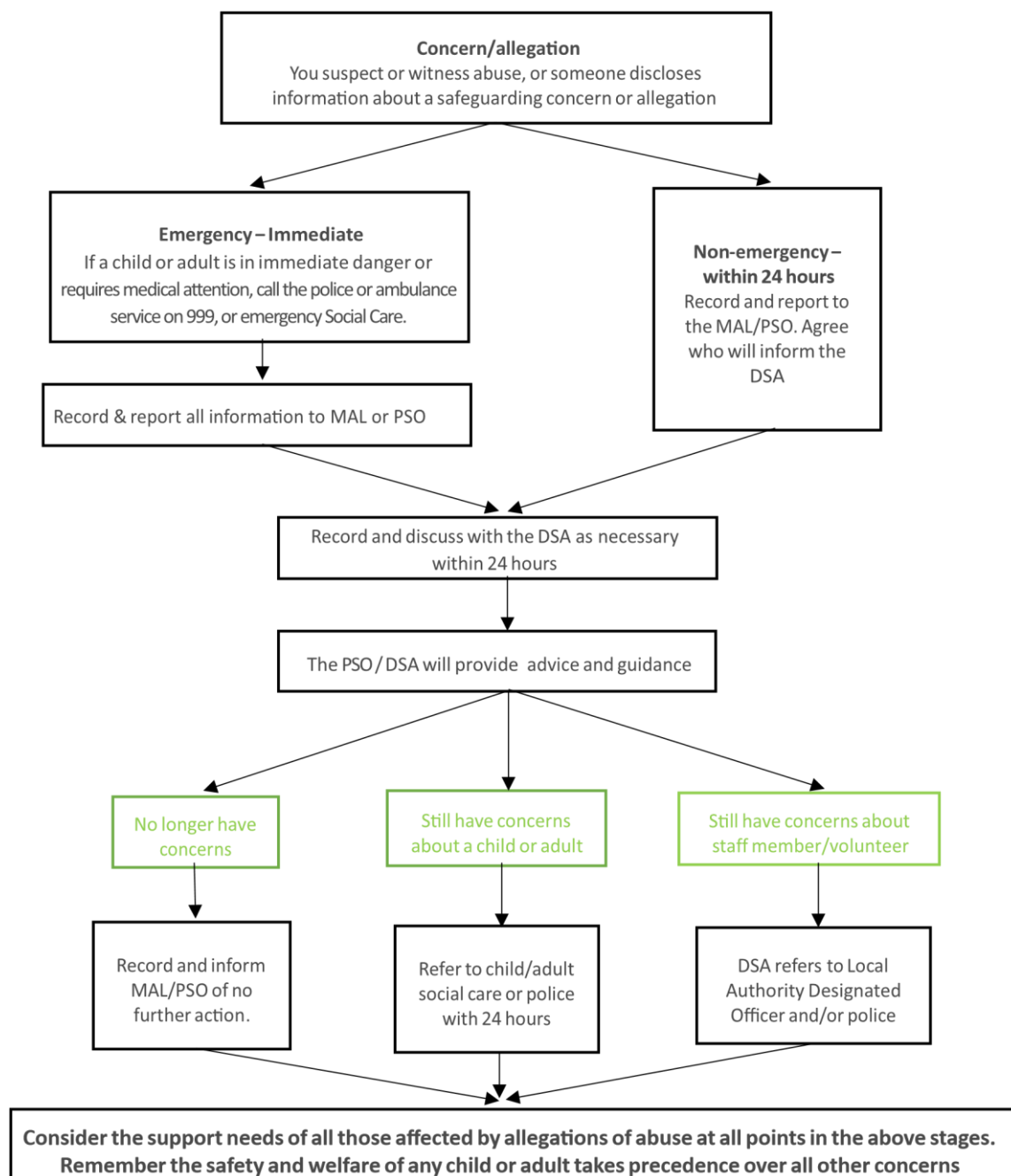
Emergency: If you believe a child, or an adult who is not able to protect themselves, is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, or if they require urgent medical attention, contact emergency services by phoning 999.

Non-emergency: Contact your MAL as soon as possible. If the allegation is against your MAL, contact the PSO. Contact details are in Appendix 1.

If required, the MAL/PSO will then seek advice from the DSA within 24 hours. The MAL and PSO will act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given. They will also consider whether any additional action is required.

- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services, the police, or the DSA. Even so you must also contact either your MAL or the PSO.
- If you are not sure whether the concern needs reporting, check with your MAL or the PSO. You don't need to mention names initially unless advised to do so, and any information given will be handled confidentially.
- Apart from telling your MAL or the PSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with other church members.
- Do not investigate the concerns of abuse yourself. Do not contact 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 DSA or statutory agencies.
- Consider your own wellbeing and ask your ministry area leader for pastoral support if needed.

Process flowchart for responding to safeguarding disclosures or concerns: the role of staff or volunteers



Responding to safeguarding disclosures or concerns: the role of the MAL

- Upon receipt of a concern, if the MAL decides there are no safeguarding implications they do not need to share it with the PSO.
- However, at any point, if the MAL requires advice to clarify if the concern requires a safeguarding response, they will contact the PSO.
- The MAL will make an assessment as to whether any immediate action is necessary to protect the individual.
- The MAL will seek advice from the PSO; however, the seeking of advice should not unnecessarily delay or prevent the protective action or place the individual at risk of further or increased harm.
- In such urgent situations and if the PSO cannot be immediately contacted, the MAL can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. If the DST cannot be contacted, the MAL should contact either the relevant emergency service on 999 or Social Care to obtain support. Under such circumstances, the PSO should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

Responding to safeguarding disclosures or concerns: the role of the PSO

- Upon receipt of a safeguarding concern from a MAL, the PSO will provide advice.
- If any immediate actions were taken by the MAL, the PSO will review them and will be responsible for follow-up or further action that may be required.
- The PSO will consult with the DSA for advice where required.
- Where the concern meets the statutory threshold, the PSO will notify the parent or carer of the individual concerned (or the individual themselves if they are a competent adult) that a referral is being made to Social Care. Information will not be shared with the parent / carer in situations where to do so would place a child / adult at increased risk of harm or abuse.
- The referral will be made to the appropriate Social Care service.
- If the referral has not been acknowledged within 2 working days, the PSO will follow up with Social Care (or other agencies as required).
- The PSO will work with the Local Authority and other partners on behalf of the church to ensure that we fully participate in the safeguarding process.
- The PSO will maintain written records.
- The PSO will keep the DSA updated.

Disclosures of historical / non-recent abuse by an adult

'Historical abuse', also referred to as 'non-recent abuse', refers to a concern or disclosure of abuse committed in the past. It may have been perpetrated against:

- A child or young person who is now an adult
- An adult

Please note: this procedure ONLY applies to those who are now 18 years of age or over. If the victim/survivor is still under 18, the safeguarding concern must be reported as abuse of a child or young person (as described above) regardless of how long ago the abuse took place or the context in which it occurred.

If anyone reports abuse to you, whether recent or historical, and whether they were the abused or the abuser, you must follow the action points in the previous section by reporting the matter to your MAL/PSO.

Please remember

- Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse.
- The church is required to decide what action can and should be taken. If necessary, we may need to consult with the DSA, or report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the police.

General principles

- If the victim/survivor is now an adult, it is their decision whether they take any action.
- Allegations or disclosures of historic abuse are handled by the police.
- The victim/survivor should be informed of this route to address the abuse. There is no time limit on reporting child abuse.
- If practical, we can support the victim to report to the police if they wish.
- The disclosure should still be reported to the MAL or PSO in the usual manner as outlined above, however, no action will be taken without discussion with the victim/survivor, and their personal information will not be shared without their consent.
- If the perpetrator still has access to vulnerable people and poses an ongoing risk, consideration will be given by the PSO and DSA to what could realistically be done to manage that risk. In such circumstances, the victim's identity will only be shared with statutory agencies if they give explicit consent.

Appendix: Safeguarding Contacts

Ministry Area Leads

Sunday morning 9.30am meeting CYP Church activities: crèche, Sunday school, 9.30am long weekend away, 9.30am weekends not away	Drew Balch drew.balch@st-helens.org.uk
Sunday morning 11.15am meeting CYP Church activities: crèche, Sunday school, 11.15am weekend, long weekend, occasional seminars e.g. marriage or parenting days	Phil Hudson phil.hudson@st-helens.org.uk
Sunday Mandarin meeting CYP Church activities: crèche, Sunday school, IGG, IGG weekends	Henry Eatock-Taylor henry.eatock-taylor@st-helens.org.uk
Sunday afternoon meeting CYP Church activities: crèche, Sunday school, food at 5s, 4pm weekends	Aneirin Glyn aneirin.glyn@st-helens.org.uk
Sunday evening meeting	George Diwakar george.diwakar@st-helens.org.uk
City ministry CYP Church activities: City Summer School, City weekend	Wes Illingsworth wes.illingsworth@st-helens.org.uk
Little Pickles CYP Church activities: morning stay and play group and any additional activities Women on Wednesday (WoW) CYP Church activities: Central WoW crèche, any WoW event with advertised childcare or activities	Rachel Anderson rachel.anderson@btinternet.com
Student ministry	Jack Stileman jack.stileman@st-helens.org.uk
Youth CYP Church activities: Bridge/Junction/Youth RML, Youth weekend, Youth getaways, socials	Will Waugh will.waugh@st-helens.org.uk

St Helens Safeguarding sub-committee

Aneirin Glyn Chair of Safeguarding Sub-committee aneirin.glyn@st-helens.org.uk	Will Waugh Youth Worker & St Peter-upon-Cornhill Parish Safeguarding Officer will.waugh@st-helens.org.uk
Paul & Sue Harrison Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) safeguarding.officer@st-helens.org.uk	Phil Hudson Team Leader phil.hudson@st-helens.org.uk
Rachael Adegbemisoye Safeguarding Administrator safeguarding.admin@st-helens.org.uk	Anna Lamb Women's Worker anna.lamb@st-helens.org.uk
Linden Webster Children's Champion childrens.champion@st-helens.org.uk	Beccy Scott Lay Member

Diocesan Safeguarding Contacts

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR (DSA) Claire Meaney Email: Claire.Meaney@london.anglican.org Tel: 020 3837 5097
Diocesan Safeguarding Team Tel: 020 7932 1224
The Ven Luke Miller Archdeacon of London Email: Archdeacon.London@london.anglican.org 020 3837 5204

Local Social Care contacts

Children's Social Care Team City of London – Worried about a child 020 7332 3621 - Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm 020 8356 2710 - Before 9am or after 5pm or any time on weekends and bank holidays
Adult Social Care Team City of London – Concerned about an Adult 020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) 020 8356 8855 / 020 8356 2300 (outside normal working hours)

National contacts

- [Childline](#) a free 24-hour confidential counselling service for children and young people (up to age 19) 0800 1111
- [Family Lives](#) (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222/support@napac.org.uk
- [NAPAC – Supporting Recovery From Childhood Abuse](#) 0808 801 0331
- [Respect](#) supports men experiencing domestic abuse 0808 8010327/info@mensadvice.org.uk
- [Safe Spaces](#) a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, the Catholic Church of England and Wales or the Church of Wales 0300 303 1056 /safespaces@firstlight.org.uk
- [Samaritans helpline](#) a free support service if you feel you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to 116 123 /jo@samaritans.org
- [The Silver Line Helpline](#) a free support service for older people suffering abuse, neglect or loneliness 0800 4 70 80 90
- [Victim Support](#) provides specialist help to support people who have experienced crime and traumatic incidents 0808 16 89 111
- [Women's Aid](#) work to support women and children who are victims of domestic abuse helpline@womensaid.org.uk/chat online via their website 0808 2000 247
- [Your GP](#) Speaking to your own doctor is a good way to get support for your well-being and mental health

Further Resources

- 'The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook' – promoting a safer church, 2019
- 'The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016' (Chapter 14)
- Church of England Responding Well to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Practice Guidance, March 2017
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Safeguarding e-manual | The Church of England](#)
- [Policy and practice guidance | The Church of England](#)
- [Code of Safer Working Practice 02.07.2021.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)
- [Safer Environment and Activities Oct19_o.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Training Portal \(cofeportal.org\)](#)
- [www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding](#)