

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

POLICY GUIDELINES



Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe the types of abuse that may be experienced by children and young people aged under 18 years or by vulnerable adults, to outline how to respond to a disclosure or concern, to advise how to record a concern, and to describe who to contact in the event of a concern.

Types of abuse

The types of abuse relating to children and young people under 18 years are similar to those experienced by vulnerable adults.

The main forms of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. Sexual abuse is the most frequent type of known abuse within the wider church.

Other forms of abuse are domestic, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, bullying and cyber-bullying, online abuse, and spiritual abuse. (Spiritual abuse can be defined as a form of emotional and psychological abuse, characterised by a systematic pattern of controlling and coercive behaviour in a religious context).

Vulnerable adults in particular may also be subject to financial and material abuse. A vulnerable adult is someone who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

There is no time limit to abuse. It can be many years or decades before abuse is disclosed or comes to light. Non-recent abuse also requires a response.

How to respond

In general, abuse will either be **urgent** or **non-urgent**; it will be either **disclosed** or **observed**.

Urgent cases: In rare cases, there may be an immediate risk of serious harm. Always contact the emergency services on 999.

Non-urgent cases:

These will form the majority of cases. Make some brief notes at the time, and then write them up in more detail as soon as possible afterwards. See the section on “taking notes”.

Report the matter immediately to a relevant individual, and always within 24 hours. See the section on “who to contact”.

Disclosure:

Occasionally an individual will disclose abuse.

Listen actively. Remain calm. Show that what is being said is being taken seriously.

If asking questions, use only questions that can be answered with a yes or no.

Be aware of the person's age and/or level of understanding.

Critically, offer reassurance that disclosure is the right thing to do.

Ask if it is acceptable to take notes during the disclosure.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

POLICY GUIDELINES



Try to obtain information as to **what** happened, **when**, **where**, and **who** was involved.

Do not try to prompt the individual or lead the discussion, but instead encourage the individual to talk.

Ascertain what the individual is wanting to happen as a result of the disclosure.

Tell the individual what action you are going to take, including who you are going to inform.

Do not promise to keep the information to yourself, or try to undertake your own investigation, or make assumptions about what has been disclosed, or contact the alleged perpetrator(s).

Observation:

Intervene where necessary, to ensure the immediate well-being of the individual.

Take detailed notes in respect of **what** happened (who said, or did, what), **when** (including the time), **where**, and **who** was involved.

Ensure that the notes are factual; see the section on “taking notes”.

Inform a relevant individual; see the section on “who to contact”.

Taking notes

Make sure the notes are factual: **what, when, who, where**. Record what happened and any words that were used.

Do not include your impressions or possible interpretations of events.

Depending on the circumstances, either make brief initial notes and then write them up fully as soon as possible, or write them in detail immediately, whilst the events are fresh.

Retain your notes. Include the date and time when they were written.

Use them as the basis either for a phone conversation with a relevant individual, or when filling in a Cause for Concern Form.

Do not destroy your notes until advised by a relevant individual; they may be required as evidence in any future proceedings. Keep the notes in a safe place.

Who to contact

In emergencies, contact the police immediately via 999.

In all other cases, you should contact a relevant individual as soon as possible, and always within 24 hours of the event.

A relevant individual is the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), the vicar, a member of the clergy team, or a church warden. If none of these is available within 24 hours of the event, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). In the first instance, you should normally contact the PSO, but in their absence, contact any of the other relevant individuals.

If you are unsure whether to report a concern, either discuss it with a relevant individual or someone you trust with regard to confidentiality. Do not sit on the concern.

Your first contact with a relevant individual can be by phone, email, or in person. Have your notes to hand.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

POLICY GUIDELINES



Alternatively, complete a Cause for Concern form, using the Taking Notes section as a guide. In any event, it is highly likely that you will be asked to complete a Cause for Concern form after any discussion with a relevant individual.

The Cause for Concern form can be found in Microsoft Forms at:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xFO0m8sYUUGVVXCX49qtgXlq_tE2ZS8JLkKe0GW8plsdUNzI2NI ZTSVpHV05YRDhNRU43UDAwMjAxQiQIQCN0PWcu)

[id=xFO0m8sYUUGVVXCX49qtgXlq_tE2ZS8JLkKe0GW8plsdUNzI2NI ZTSVpHV05YRDhNRU43UDAwMjAxQiQIQCN0PWcu](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xFO0m8sYUUGVVXCX49qtgXlq_tE2ZS8JLkKe0GW8plsdUNzI2NI ZTSVpHV05YRDhNRU43UDAwMjAxQiQIQCN0PWcu)

Do not discuss the issue with any other person.

The needs of the child, young person, or vulnerable adult will always take precedence over the needs of any other individual.

Remember:

Listen Observe Record Notify

If you do nothing else, speak to someone about your concern

Contact details:

Position	Name	Tel	Email
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Mark Siddall	07968 332 982	parishsafeguardingofficer@smch.org.uk
Vicar	Mike Resch	07967 771 231	mike.resch@smch.org.uk
Clergy	Liz Resch		liz.resch@smch.org.uk
Clergy	Dan Watts	07977 126438	daniel.watts@smch.org.uk
Clergy	Kim Mason	07 761 356 464	kim.mason@smch.org.uk
Church warden	Alison Glover	07783 949 415	alison.glover@smch.org.uk
Church warden	Dave Ferguson	07702 546 962	dave.ferguson@smch.org.uk
Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor:		0113 353 0257	safeguarding@leeds.anglican.org
North Yorkshire Children's/Adult Social Care:		01609 780780	

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS
POLICY GUIDELINES

