



5. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are many ways in which people suffer abuse. Everyone has his or her part to play in helping to safeguard children and adults at risk.

- If the behaviour of a child or adult at risk gives any cause for concern
- If an allegation is made in any context about a child or adult at risk being harmed
- If the behaviour of any individual towards children or adults at risk causes concern

What to do if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to and acknowledge what is being said. • Try to be reassuring and remain calm. • Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. • Take action – don't ignore the situation. • Tell them that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They were right to tell you; ○ You are taking what they have said seriously; ○ It was not their fault; ○ That you would like to pass this information on to the appropriate people, with their permission; • Be open and honest. • Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not promise confidentiality. • Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval. • Do not minimise what is being said. • Do not ask probing or leading questions, or push for more information. • Do not offer false reassurance. • Do not delay in contacting the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Parish Priest. • Do not contact the alleged abuser. • Do not investigate the incident any further. • Never leave a child or adult at risk waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be. • Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know; not even for prayer ministry.

Responding Pastorally to Victims/Survivors of Abuse and Affected Others



5. Responding, Reporting and Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Responding well to a disclosure of abuse is essential to supporting a victim/ survivor and to rebuilding their confidence and trust to lead fulfilled lives. For some individuals, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be a powerful, healing event. Some may seek pastoral support from the Church. Some may need advice about how best to seek professional help. This may involve referral to local specialist services. Victims/survivors who are children or young people will require specialist support. Our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) is best placed to advise on, offer and initiate the most appropriate support and should be informed of all safeguarding issues. If you need advice about how best to support a victim/survivor of abuse, please contact the DSA.

Non-recent allegations of abuse must be treated as seriously as recent allegations. A victim/survivor needs to be aware that if a respondent is known to be currently working with children/vulnerable adults in either a paid or voluntary capacity a referral to the statutory services will be made. The DSA will make this referral.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Report all safeguarding concerns at church to a member of the Safeguarding Team

Reporting Concerns about Children

Referrals of suspected abuse to children are made to our Local Safeguarding Children's Board (01628683254) or police.

Reporting Concerns about Adults

Referrals of suspected abuse to adults are made to Adult Social Services (01628683254) or the police. Where possible, for a person over 18, this should be done with their written consent. If there is query concerning an adult's mental capacity to give consent, this should be discussed with the DSA.

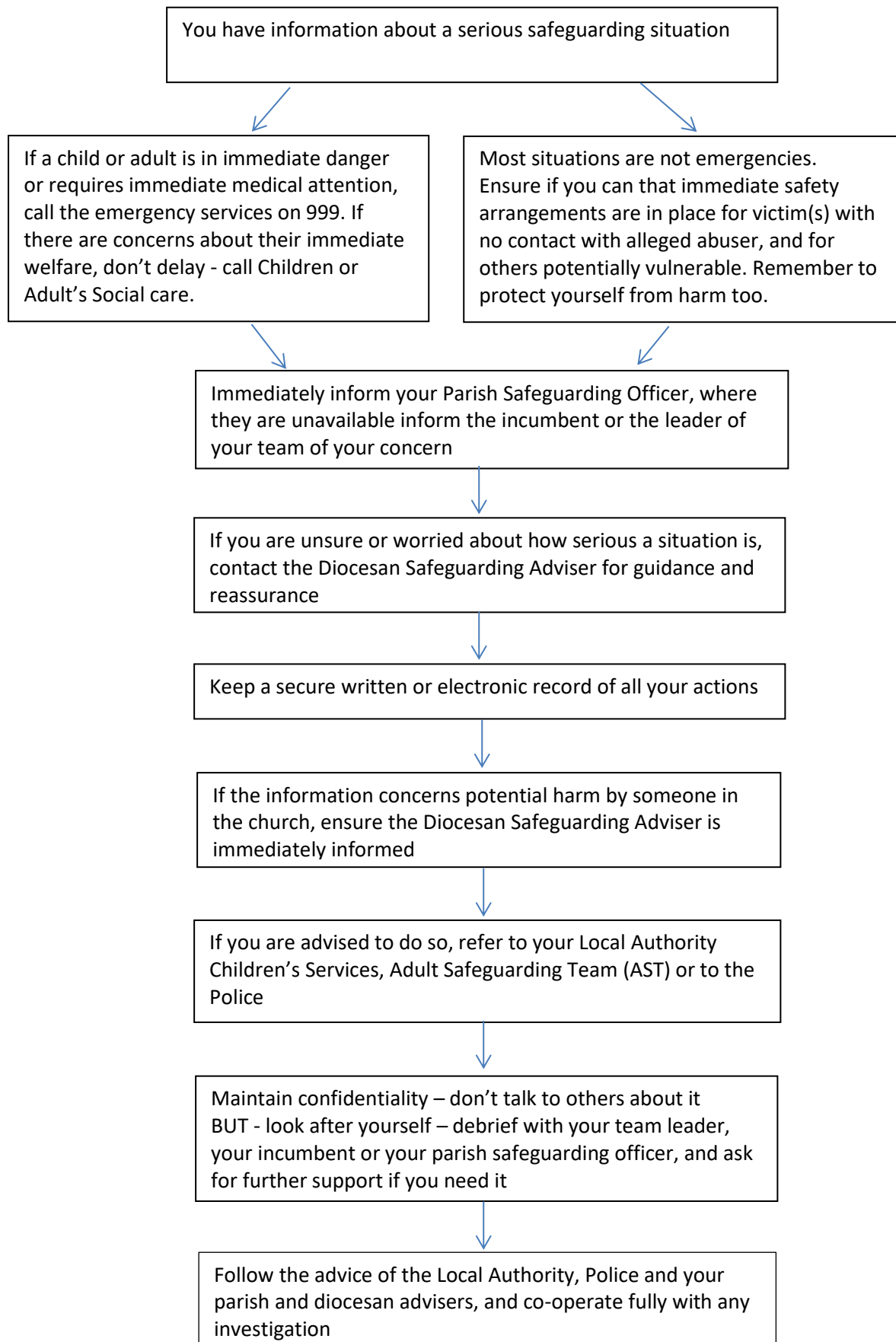
Data Protection and Information Sharing

Advice should be sought from the DSA before sharing sensitive, personal information beyond the PSO and Incumbent.

Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as "special categories of personal data" under the GDPR. This means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. However, The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of the Data Protection, data in relation to the safeguarding of children and individuals at risk. It allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent, for the prevention or detection of unlawful acts or to protect members of the public from dishonesty, malpractice or seriously improper conduct. Ultimately, the most important consideration is whether the sharing of information is likely to support the safeguarding of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.



Reporting a Safeguarding Concern: A Quick Guide





Recording Safeguarding Issues

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. (See example attached)
- Records should use straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case.

Retention of Records and Security of Safeguarding Records

- Paper copies should be stored in a locked filing cabinet to which the incumbent and PSO hold a key.
- Electronic copies should be stored in secure area of the church web site, accessible to the incumbent, the PSO, (and the web master).
- Records in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should be maintained in accordance with the Church's retention guidance. (Excerpt attached)
If the incumbent moves from the church, the records should be passed to the new incumbent.