

The Parish of St Andrew's Haughton le Skerne

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (including Responding to Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Incidents)

PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following reviewed Parish Safeguarding Policy was adopted at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 20th May 2025.

In performing its responsibilities under this Policy, the PCC will employ the principles and practices of the diocese of Durham Safeguarding Policy:

<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61d750a40a35a/content/pages/documents/diocesan-safeguarding-policy.pdf>

St Andrew's Church is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

Promoting a safer environment and culture.

- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.

- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Mrs Gillian Jones as the Parish Safeguarding Officer. She can be contacted on 07350 870482 or by e-mail at safeguarding@standrewshaughton.org.uk

Incumbent The Revd Mark East

Churchwardens Mike Bird, Val Bowman

Date: 20th May 2025

Parish of St Andrew's Church, Haughton le Skerne

Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone, please contact our Safeguarding Office, Gillian Jones 07350 870482 or by e-mail at safeguarding@standrewshaughton.org.uk

Other Useful Contacts

- The Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Beth Miller, and she can be contacted on 07968 034075.
- Police Call 101 or 999 in an emergency

Local Contacts - Adult and Children's Social Care:

- Children Contact the Children's Access Point on 01325 406222 or Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.
- Adult Contact the First Point of Contact Team on 01325 406111 or the Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.

Helplines for further support

- NSPCC - For adults concerned about a child 0808 800 5000
- ChildLine - For children and young people on 0800 1111
- Action on Elder Abuse Helpline - 0808 808 8141
- 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000 247
- NAPAC – Offer support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse 0808 801 0331
- Stop It Now – Preventing child sexual abuse 0808 1000 900 Cruse
- Bereavement helpline 0808 808 1677

Web Link to Durham Diocese Safeguarding Information:

- <https://durhamdiocese.org/safeguarding-abuse-concerns/>

Appendix A - Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

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In all our responses to safeguarding concerns the Diocese works in partnership with statutory agencies (e.g.: police, adult and children's social care) to protect and safeguard those at risk of harm and abuse.

1 Introduction

All allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported to your Parish Safeguarding Officer, incumbent or the DSA. In emergencies, referrals should be made directly to the Police or Children's / Adults Services.

- Don't keep things to yourself
- Don't rely on someone else to take action
- Don't investigate (this can put people at risk, or have implications for the statutory services)
- At all times the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is of primary importance
- Keep information confidential (only those named above should be informed); the child, young person or adult's right to privacy must be respected
- Don't inform the subject of the allegation (e.g. church worker or volunteer) as this might prejudice any police or other investigations
- Contact the DSA, incumbent or your Parish Safeguarding Officer
- In an emergency, and if you are unable to speak to any of the above, talk to the Archdeacon or contact the Police

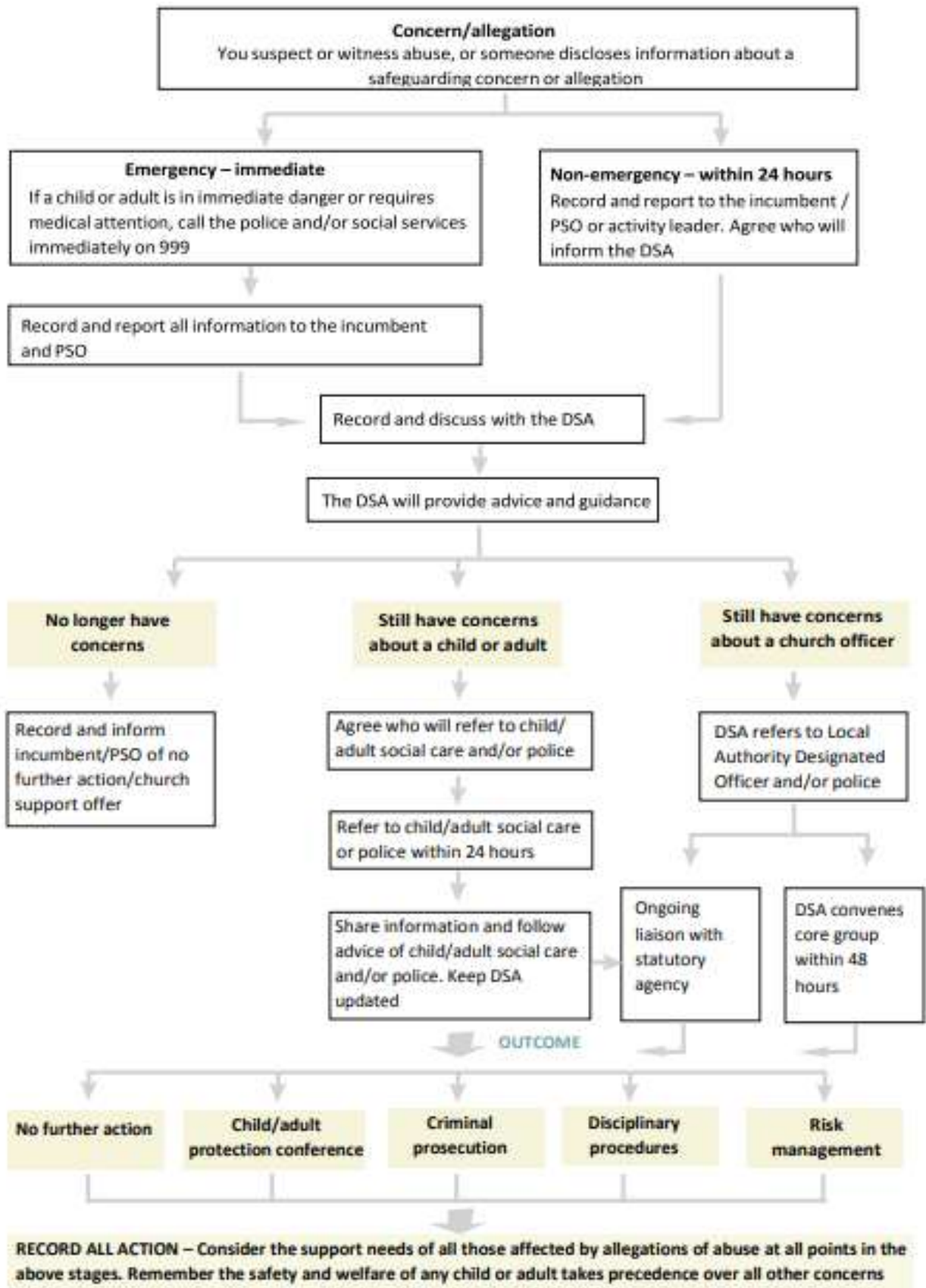
If you are concerned that someone has been or is at risk of abuse, you have no choice but to act. If someone tells you about abuse or harm (either to themselves or another person) you should:

- Reassure the person that you are taking what is being said to you very seriously.
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the person to say what they want. Don't ask them to repeat the information unnecessarily
- Keep calm
- Look at them directly
- Don't prejudge anything
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else - DO NOT promise confidentiality
- Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling
- Whatever the person may have done, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the person may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy
- Never push for more information than is immediately given; do not enquire into the details of the abuse
- Do not ask probing, leading or suggestive questions
- Do not investigate any allegations. Do not contact the person they allege as the abuser; if they are talking about abuse to a third party, do not contact that person

Helpful things to say:

- "Thank you for telling me this"
- "I will have to share this with someone else who can help"
- "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me"
- "I am glad you have told me; it is not your fault, I will help you"

2. Responding to Safeguarding Situations Flowchart



3 Recording a Safeguarding Concern

Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. Records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise, and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. They should clearly differentiate between facts, opinion, judgements and hypothesis.

Why record? In the church context, safeguarding records are needed in order to:

- Ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- Provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- Record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers
- Promote the exercise of accountability
- Provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity
- Allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel

Example: When a minister moves between parishes, a youth worker moves to a different post, or there has been a change of Parish Safeguarding Officer, the availability of a safeguarding record is essential so that one can know what has happened in the past.

A written record of the event or conversation should be made as soon as is practicable (after the event or conversation but always within 24 hours). The following approach is helpful in considering what should be written.

- **Who** is it about? (the names of all key people including any actual / potential witnesses)
- **What** happened? (use exact quotes where possible, in quotation marks)
- **How** did it happen? (for example, if someone is alleged to have assaulted a child, did they use an implement? Or was it a kick? Or a hit?)
- **Where** did it take place?
- **When** did it take place?
- **Why** did it happen? (this allows you to record any explanations offered to you by the people involved. It is not the place for your own analysis)
- **What should happen next** (what action will follow, for example, what are you going to do next, what is X going to do next, making sure it is in the diary in Y days' time as a reminder)
- **Recording what did happen next and the checks made to ensure effective follow up** (did X do what they said they were going to do?)
- **Include the views / perspective of the child or adult who is vulnerable**
- **Analysis.** The Parish Safeguarding Officer should analyse all the information gathered to decide the nature and level of the child's needs / the needs of the adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing
- **Records must always be dated and the author identified**
- **Indexing.** The Parish Safeguarding Officer should ensure that parish records are able to be searched or indexed so that previous names and concerns can be easily retrieved
- **Summary.** The safeguarding adviser should ensure, if a church worker has a separate personnel file, that a summary of any concerns and the outcome is filed on the personnel file

NB Facts and professional judgments (analysis) should always be distinguished in the record and the record must not be disrespectful to the subjects. Always bear in mind they may well be read by the subject(s) who have a right of access to their files.

*Adapted from "Safeguarding Records joint Practice Guidance
for the Church of England and Methodist Church 2015"*

4 Authorised Listeners

Authorised Listeners have been recruited from within the Diocesan Pastoral Care and Counselling Service. Authorised Listeners reflect the listening needs of people who wish to take the opportunity to speak, perhaps for the first time, about their abuse experiences. The authorised listeners can offer an attentive and attuned listening ear to help someone decide the next steps they want to take; that might include formally reporting abuse, or going on to participate in mediation or counselling.

The Authorised Listening Service promotes and furthers both pastoral and safeguarding responses to people who have experienced abuse within the church.

If someone connected with a church in the Diocese of Durham has experienced abuse or harm, and wants to access the authorised listening service they can do so via the DSA. If they prefer, they can identify someone else to make the approach on their behalf. Having made contact with the DSA they will speak with the person concerned and then will work closely with the Adviser in Pastoral Care and Counselling to arrange for a Listener to engage with the person requiring the service.

5 Safeguarding and Seal of the Confessional

A failure to share information has been identified repeatedly in child abuse enquires as the most common reason for failure to intervene quickly enough in protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults, sometimes with serious consequences. It is possible that relevant information may be disclosed in a one-to-one confession made to a priest in the context of the sacramental ministry of reconciliation. Not least because the legal position differs between the two cases, it is important to recognise the distinction between disclosures made in this formal context, which exists for the quieting of conscience and is intended to lead to absolution, and disclosures made in the context of pastoral conversations. In the first case, but not the second, what is disclosed is subject to a duty of absolute confidentiality arising from the un-repealed proviso to Canon 113 of the Code of 1603. For this reason, a clear distinction should be made between pastoral conversations and confessions made in the context of the ministry of absolution. To that end it is helpful if confessions are normally only heard at advertised times or by special arrangement and are in other ways differentiated from general pastoral conversations or meetings for spiritual direction. A stole might be worn and a liturgy should be used. It is also important that those clergy exercising this ministry should have received appropriate training and be familiar with Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, which has a section in relation to the confession.

If a penitent makes a confession with the intention of receiving absolution, the priest is forbidden from disclosing anything (including any criminal offence) which is revealed in the course of the confession. This requirement of absolute confidentiality applies even after the death of the penitent. However, where a penitent discloses in the course of such a confession that he or she has committed a serious crime, the priest should require him or her to report it to the police or other statutory authority and should withhold absolution if the penitent refuses to do so. In such a case the priest may consider it necessary to alert the

bishop or the bishop's adviser for the ministry of reconciliation (if there is one) to his or her decision, though the penitent's details should not be shared without their permission. The canonical duty of absolute confidentiality does not apply to anything that is said outside the context of a confession made in the context of the ministry of absolution. In particular, if information about abuse that was disclosed when seeking the ministry of absolution.

Taken from Practice Guidance:

Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officer (2017)