

# SAFEGUARDING: CARING FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABUSE

Final - June 2020





## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This strategy aims to make sure that people in need of help are able to access it. It is based on advice and comments from those with lived experience of abuse, and has been developed in conjunction with our partners, who are First Light, Adult Social Care & Children's Services - Cornwall Council, and Devon & Cornwall police.
- 1.2. We will strive to put those with a lived experience of abuse at the heart of our approach to managing allegations appropriately and safely and to ensure that they are responded to with care and respect.
- 1.3. Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) is a central part of the Church of England's approach to identifying where abuse allegations have not been managed appropriately or safely, or with the needs of those most vulnerable at the centre of its decision making. The welfare of children and of adults at risk of abuse must be of paramount importance in the planning and execution of PCR2, and the implementation of this strategy will be closely monitored by the PCR2 reference group.  
  
See [Past Cases Review 2](#) on the Church of England website and Section 6 below for more information about how we will engage with those with lived experience of abuse as part of PCR2.
- 1.4. This strategy should be read alongside the Church of England's '[Responding Well](#)' practice guidance.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

Each person's situation and needs will differ. We recognise that a flexible and dynamic approach is crucial if we are to respond appropriately and helpfully to individuals' experiences, pain and need.

We invite anyone who has been harmed within this diocese to make contact, so that they may explore what we can do to hear their experiences, promote healing, seek justice, and strengthen our safeguarding practices.

**Confidentiality is important to us, and we will strive to keep your information secure. We will be guided by your wishes in this matter, but must under circumstances where we believe people may be at risk of harm, share your information with statutory agencies. We will always aim to keep you informed.**

- 2.1. We recognise that everybody's experience is unique to them, and individuals' well-being is our priority.
- 2.2. The following principles will apply when responding to or engaging with those with lived experience of abuse:
  - We will take your complaint seriously

- Abuse that happened many years ago will be treated with the same care and given the same importance as abuse which took place in recent times. If you are disclosing abuse that happened when you were a child, it is equally important to us.
- You retain control - you will be able to shape the nature of how we respond.
- We will tailor our response to make it helpful and practical, according to your needs.
- We will be clear about what we can and can't do.
- We will ensure your anonymity where possible, and any sensitive information will be protected.

### **3. HOW WE WILL ENGAGE WITH YOU**

- 3.1. Any contact with named individuals will be initiated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), who will confirm how people would like to be contacted, and offer independent support if desired.
- 3.2. We will be guided by you about how we communicate, e.g. email, telephone and/or letter.
- 3.3. We will be guided by you as to whether or not you would like ongoing support.
- 3.4. If you prefer not to speak to us, we will offer an independent alternative.
- 3.5. Consideration will be given as to how approaches may appropriately be made to parents or guardians of people under the age of 18.
- 3.6. Consideration will also be given to approaching those with advocacy or support roles for individuals with diminished capacity.

### **4. HOW WE WILL SUPPORT YOU**

- 4.1. The diocesan safeguarding team will ensure that there is a broad spectrum of support options available, with the aim of being able to meet your needs.
- 4.2. We have an independent advocate for those with lived experience of abuse, the Devon & Cornwall Independent Sexual Violence Advisory Manager, First Light, whose role is to:
  - provide support to an individual who has previously asked for help where there is no evidence that appropriate support has been provided or offered;
  - work with the diocesan safeguarding team to ensure the support needs of all those impacted by abuse are considered and provided for; and
  - act as liaison between those with lived experience of abuse and the diocese, to ensure the voices of those who experience abuse are heard.
- 4.3. We have an agreement in place with First Light to provide independent

listening and emotional support to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence within the context of the Church of England. Information about this service and how to access it can be found [here](#).

- 4.4. If you contact the church for support you will be referred to First Light, who will develop a personal care / support plan or signpost you to appropriate support.

The diocese will be advised when care plans are put in place; however the detail, including the identity of the individual, will only be shared if the client agrees.

- 4.5. If an officer of the church who is dealing with a concern identifies that a safeguarding issue has raised personal concerns about their faith, they will be offered spiritual support and/or counselling through their archdeacon with approved counsellors who are sensitive to their Christian faith.

Should the officer prefer counselling outside of these arrangements then the diocese will refer them to First Light.

- 4.6. If a referral to statutory agencies is necessary to prevent the risk of harm to individuals, the DSA will work in partnership with our independent advocate, nominated officers in adults' and children's services and the police in order to ensure that the wellbeing of those with lived experience of abuse is at the centre of any discussions.

- 4.7. The offer of support will remain open and we will be guided by you about when you wish to take it up. If you advise us that you do not wish to accept the offer, you can come back to us at a later date if you change your mind. There is no time limit.

- 4.8. For more information about what to do and who to contact if you have any concerns of a safeguarding nature, the safeguarding pages on our [website](#) provide straightforward advice and links to further advice and help.

## **5. PAST CASES REVIEW 2**

A dedicated telephone helpline operated independently from the church by the NSPCC has been set up for those affected by issues which may arise as a result of PCR2, and who may not feel able to come forward with information or disclosures to the diocesan safeguarding advisor. The phone number is **0800 80 20 20** and more information about the service is on the Church of England [website](#).

- 5.1. When someone seeks to make representations to the PCR2 process, the DSA will liaise with the PCR reference group lead for engaging with those with lived experience of abuse and the Independent Reviewer (IR) to plan how best to receive the representations.

- 5.2. If we are already in contact with you, an open invitation will be extended to you to have contact with the IR if you so wish. Any such approach will be planned by the DSA with advice from the advocate on the PCR reference group who has oversight for the wellbeing and support of those with a lived experience of abuse.
- 5.3. Those with a lived experience of abuse who (after consideration of their needs) are approached, should be made aware that the purpose of their invitation to engage with the IR is to generate information about those who have been responded to by the church. They should be invited to comment on how helpful they found the response.