

Safeguarding Advice and Guidance

Foreword

Pope Francis, April 2014:

“I feel compelled to take personal responsibility for all the evil that some priests – many in number, (although) not in comparison with the totality – to assume personal responsibility and to ask forgiveness for the damage caused by the sexual abuse of children. The Church is aware of this damage... We don’t want to take a step back in dealing with this problem and the sanctions that must be imposed, on the contrary I think we must be even stronger! You don’t play around with the lives of children.”

Introduction

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has a single approach to Safeguarding. Each Diocese has a Safeguarding Team who are responsible for the day to day work and a Commission which has oversight of that work. Most Religious Orders and Congregations are now linked to the Safeguarding arrangements in a named diocese.

The Commission has an independent Chair and representatives from statutory authorities as well as from the Church. Details are available on the Archdiocese of Birmingham website.

Scope

This booklet is intended as a basic guide to safeguarding arrangements and the management of issues in the Archdiocese of Birmingham and in those Religious Orders and Congregations aligned to it.

The policies and procedures which we operate under are those adopted by the Bishops of England and Wales. Details of all these policies can be found on the website of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service:

<https://www.csas.uk.net/procedures-manual/>

Further information about the Church and Safeguarding can be found on the National Safeguarding Commission website: www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

We strongly recommend that you visit these sites.

Advice about what to do if an issue arises and about the vetting procedures used by the Church for anyone working with children or with adults who are in vulnerable situations is available from the Safeguarding Team at Cathedral House in Birmingham the telephone number is: **0121 230 6240**

Safeguarding Children

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 defines abuse as: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child abuse and neglect occurs in a range of situations, for a range of reasons and children are rarely only subject to one form of abuse.

The five types of abuse generally referred to are:

- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Bullying

It is also very important to remember that children can often be caught up in violence in their own home or be victims of organised sexual abuse.

It is important to remember that issues are seldom clear. The key element is that all children need to be cared for and protected and that we all have a responsibility to do what is necessary to ensure that this happens. If you are faced with a situation in which a child is in danger contact the Police. If you have a concern, please seek advice from the Safeguarding Team on: **0121 230 6240**

What to do if you are told something by or about a child

Concerns and allegations about a child being at risk of some form of significant harm can come to the notice of an adult within the church in many different ways.

It may be an observation of a change in a child or a pattern of concerns over time; it may be that a child tells an adult something about themselves or often one child tells an adult about another child; sometimes it will be the parents of another child who has been told by their own child.

If, as a result of the information, there is a concern that a child may have suffered or be at risk of suffering significant harm, a referral to your local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police must be made. In the Archdiocese of Birmingham the Safeguarding Team will ensure that this is done as efficiently and sensitively as possible. They can be contacted on: **0121 230 6240**

Whatever the source of the information, the adult receiving it needs to observe some basic rules:

- Listen to the information and acknowledge what you hear without passing judgement or minimising things.
- Do not put words into the person or child's mouth or make judgemental statements about anyone.
- Take into account the person or child's age and level of understanding, their culture and use of language.
- Do not interrogate the child or person but be calm and reassuring.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep e.g. not to tell anyone else.
- Whether it is a child or an adult, be clear about what you are going to do next and when.
- Tell them who you will need to contact i.e., Safeguarding Team
- Do not promise total confidentiality but explain that the information will be treated with great care and, where necessary to safeguard the child, the information may be shared appropriately between specific adults trained to deal with safeguarding children matters.

- Make a record of what you have been told this should not include opinion just facts. It is important to note the dates, the time and who was present. Sign the notes and keep them securely.
- Contact the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible to inform and consult them about the need for action, including the need to make a referral to your local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police.
- **In an emergency contact the Police directly.**
- Provide the child or adult with some means to contact you and be clear about how and when you will contact them to feed back what will happen next.
- Never leave a child to wait to hear from someone without any idea of timescale or place.
- Do not contact the adult about whom the allegation or concerns are being raised.

It is also possible that you may notice something about a child which causes you concern please seek advice at once without discussing your concerns with the child or its parents if this happens.

Adults who were abused as children

Sadly abuse is common in our society and this means that there will be a number of abused people in every congregation. Sometimes this abuse involves Church personnel directly. The Safeguarding Team is happy to help anyone in these circumstances or indeed anyone who is worried by issue of abuse in the Church. Please encourage those with issues to call us on: **0121 230 6240**

Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding adults who may have care and support needs from abuse or neglect is everyone's business.

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

There are two very important issues to keep in mind: Firstly, the term "vulnerable adult" is no longer used. The emphasis is now on the circumstance that the person is in. The second point is that the list of abuse has been extended as follows:

There are now 10 categories of abuse and neglect for adults:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect

If you are concerned about the welfare of an adult seek advice immediately.

What to do if you receive a disclosure

If any person in the Church reasonably suspects or is told that an adult is being, has been or is likely to be abused they must take action.

Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context or to more than one person at a time. This makes it important to look beyond the single incident to underlying dynamics or patterns of harm. Some actions will constitute a criminal offence.

Under no circumstances should the alleged abuser be alerted, directly or indirectly, as important evidence may be lost. Formal investigations will be carried out by the police and Adult Social Care Services.

If a concern is raised by the vulnerable person themselves remember to:

- Listen and acknowledge what is being said.
- Be reassuring and calm.
- Be aware that the person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, language and communication skills and disability.
- Do not promise full confidentiality.
- Ask their consent to take up their concerns.
- Explain what you will do next.
- If they do not agree consult with the Safeguarding Team.
- Try to encourage and support them to share their information.
- Give them your contact details and those of the Safeguarding Team.
- Give them a timescale for when and how you will contact them again. Never leave an adult who is in a vulnerable situation to wait to hear from someone, e.g. a Police officer or social worker, without any idea of timescale or place.

- **Do not contact the adult about whom the allegation or concerns are being raised.** By doing so you could put a vulnerable person in serious danger, e.g. where there is domestic violence taking place. You can also prejudice any future investigation.
- Where the concerns or allegation are about another adult in a position of trust within the church do not inform the person in question as you might prejudice any police investigations, always contact Safeguarding Team immediately.

If the concerns or allegations are raised by another person or follow from observations made by a member of the Church make notes of the information and contact the Safeguarding Coordinator immediately for consultation about what action to take.

If the information about abuse towards an adult is given by the abuser him or herself to a member of the Church, the person who receives the information must make it clear to the person that the information must be passed to the Safeguarding Team for consultation and further action to be taken.

In all events do not delay in contacting the Safeguarding Team on **0121 230 6240** as the risk may be considerable.

Safer Recruitment arrangements

In order to ensure that everyone who works with children or adults in vulnerable situations through the Church as an employee or a volunteer is suitable, everyone is asked to go through a number of checks. In some circumstances this will include a Disclosure & Barring Service check (DBS, previously CRB). This is for the protection of all concerned and it is the policy of the Church.

Each Parish has a Safeguarding Representative. This person is responsible for doing everything possible to ensure that the Parish is a safe place. The Representative manages the recruitment processes within the parish.

Anyone who has or who wishes to take up a role which means having significant regular contact or taking responsibility for children or vulnerable groups should contact their Parish Safeguarding Representative who will ensure that the necessary forms are completed.

The name and contact details for the Parish Safeguarding Representative:

Liz Moran

tel: 01865 778685

email: safeguarding@olhoccowley.co.uk