



Survivor Care Policy

The well-being of those with lived experience of abuse from within the Diocese of Rochester and beyond is the Diocese's paramount consideration when responding to and engaging with survivors. This policy outlines what care a survivor should expect from the Diocese of Rochester. It should be read in the wider context of the Church of England's safeguarding¹ guidance, which the Diocese is following. This policy will also be followed in regard to cases involving Rochester Cathedral.

Responding to a concern

When raising a concern, the survivor is very likely to do so with a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). The Adviser will listen carefully and will take time to consider the current circumstances of the individual before suggesting next steps.

After the initial conversation, the Safeguarding Adviser will start to put together a clear survivor focused plan and will send a letter or email to the complainant to

- Check that the Adviser has correctly and fully understood the concerns raised
- Outline what will happen next, the expected timeframe and when to next expect an update
- Pass on the reference number and the details of the Safeguarding Adviser so that the complainant knows how to follow up
- Provide details of available support– via the Diocese as well as nationally
- Invite the complainant to feed back on their experience of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team
- Ask the complainant to confirm the receipt of the letter or email to ensure that this is the correct way to communicate.

More specific guidance on this first communication is shown in Appendix A.

The frequency of updates and other further communication as well as the best way to stay in touch will be determined by the survivor and/or their parent or guardian if appropriate. The Diocese will respond to correspondence from the survivor within a maximum of 14 days of receipt of that correspondence.

In cases where statutory agencies such as the police are also involved the DSA will liaise with them to ensure a consistency of approach.

The response to any allegation irrespective of the length of time between the incident and the date of the matter being reported will always be focussed on the victim/survivor. This applies to all cases including those where the person subject to the allegation or concern is deceased.

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/policy-practice-guidance>

Responding well to those who have been sexually abused practice guidance (2011), Responding well to domestic abuse practice guidance (2017), Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults practice guidance (2018), Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against church officers practice guidance (2017)

Identifying the right support

Currently, the Diocese is offering access to a listening service and can offer a dedicated Support Person, who, for example, listens, liaises with agencies or identifies therapeutic needs. The survivor and the Support Person agree role and responsibilities to ensure expectations and boundaries are set at the outset. For the avoidance of doubt: the Support Person is not the confidant of the victim/survivor nor their advocate and is bound by a responsibility to disclose to the appropriate authorities where there is risk of harm or a crime being committed.

On a national level, there are numerous support organisations ranging from counselling through to Sexual Assault Referral Centres, both voluntary and statutory organisations and from providing support directly to signposting further. The Church of England's National Safeguarding Team provides a list of these on their [website](#).

In addition, the Diocese's Safeguarding Team has established a good relationship with MACSAS – a national organisation specifically supporting Minister And Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors – and will seek to establish further and cement existing effective partnerships with local support organisations.

Feeding back on how we do things

We know that unfortunately we will not get our care and communication right all the time, for every survivor. The best way for us to continuously improve on how we are doing things, is by receiving honest and constructive feedback on what we are doing well and what we are not doing so well. This is why we welcome spontaneous feedback and will also invite Survivors to comment on how we do things, hopefully at appropriate times in their journey. Feedback can be given to any member of the Safeguarding Team in person, via email, via letter and over the phone by ringing the Diocese on 01634 560000 and asking to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

At the end of any investigation into an allegation against a church officer a learning lessons review will take place and the survivor/victim will be asked if they wish to contribute. This review will be conducted in accordance with the national guidance.

Every six months, we will review the feedback received, formulate improvements to be made and make them.

If the survivor does not feel comfortable feeding back to the Safeguarding Team directly or wishes to complain about the service received, they should address their concerns to the Diocesan Secretary. If an investigation by the Diocesan Secretary is required, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that this is appropriate and practical in the circumstances. The person raising complaints or concerns will be informed of the outcome, subject to the normal rules on confidentiality of personal information.

Monitoring how we do things

We will log every concern raised on a database system kept within and only accessible by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. The database will hold details about contacts and actions taken in relation to the concern and thus provide a chronology of events.

Within the Diocese, committees such as the Safeguarding Executive Committee and the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel, receive regular reports on the quantity and quality of concerns raised and their outcomes. This will include data from the system as well as improvements planned and made based on feedback and potential complaints being made.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team is also regularly audited by the National Safeguarding Team.

Keeping the policy up to date

This document is valid from April 2020. Its next review is planned for April 2021 or earlier, if there is a significant change to how we do things.