

# **Safeguarding Policy Part A: Overview of Safeguarding at St Peter's Principles and Procedures**

**St Peter's, Colchester**

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## **GLOSSARY**

DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DSA	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
MAL	Ministry Area Leader
NST	Church of England's National Safeguarding Team
PCC	Parochial Church Council
PSO	Parish Safeguarding Officer
SRPM	Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy

# Policy statement and principles

In accordance with the House of Bishops' Policy Statements 'Promoting a Safer Church' (2017), 'Protecting All God's Children' (2019), various Diocesan Safeguarding Policies, and current best practice standards in safeguarding, our church is committed to:

- Ensuring that safeguarding is prioritised at every level of the church's structure.
- Promoting a safer environment and culture for everyone who interacts with the church in any context.
- Ensuring that the church has proportionate safeguarding policies and procedures in place, that they are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed for compliance and effectiveness.
- Ensuring that safeguarding provision is adequately resourced and supported.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Ensuring that we set and maintain high standards of care and conduct in our ministries through our policies, procedures and codes of conduct, supported by a culture of safeguarding.
- Responding in a timely manner to every safeguarding concern or disclosure of abuse or neglect.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons, whether that abuse is current or historic.
- Seek to care for , and ministering to, those that may pose a present risk to others, while effectively managing the risk and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all in the church community.

The Parish will:

- Seek to create and maintain a safe and caring place for all.
- Have at least one named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the Incumbent and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to implement policies and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults; seeking to ensure that they have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse or neglect.
- Manage health and safety (including insurance) in accordance with our health and safety policies and procedures.
- Display details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs in each of the church premises, and on the parish website.
- Listen to and take seriously any concern, disclosure, or allegation of abuse or neglect.
- Take proportionate and appropriate steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind is identified; following the House of Bishops' guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies in a timely manner when relevant thresholds are met.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse; regardless of the type of abuse, or when or where it occurred.

- Care for and proportionately manage any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children or adults, maintaining appropriate confidentiality, while seeking to ensure safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments (including a Risk Register) are in place and that these are reviewed at least annually.
- Review the implementation and effectiveness of the safeguarding policy, procedures, and codes of conduct at least annually.
- Ensure that each person who acts on behalf of the church community agrees to abide by this policy and the standards established by the church.

This general policy is one part of the whole St Peter's safeguarding policy, which is formed of the following documents:

- Overview of safeguarding at St Peter's principles and procedures (part A)
- Safeguarding policy for children 0-11 (part B)
- Safeguarding policy for youth 11-18 (part C)
- Safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults (part D)
- Safeguarding policy for responding to domestic abuse (part E)
- Safeguarding policy for safer recruitment & people management (part F)
- Safeguarding policy supplement: church staff team (part G)
- Safeguarding policy supplement: PCC statement on recruitment of ex-offenders (part H)

For the purposes of this document and all associated documents listed above, the 'St Peter's safeguarding policy' refers to the sum of all the documents listed.

## Definition of terms used in these documents

**Child / Adult:** A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. People become adults when they reach the age of 18. (Other terms such as 'unborn child', 'young person', 'young adult' etc are commonly used, but are not part of the legal definition.)

**Adult with care and support needs:** is defined in the Care Act (2014) as an adult who requires help or support with essential daily living tasks such as personal care (dressing, washing, toileting etc), cooking, shopping, cleaning, and managing their finances, regardless of whether that need is being met by services or agencies.

**Adult at risk of abuse (sometimes referred to as 'adult in need of protection'):** is defined in the Care Act (2014) as an adult with care and support needs (as defined above), who is also at risk of abuse, and is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect because their support need prevents them from doing so.

**Vulnerable adults:** as used in this policy refers to both of the above categories, but also to adults who do not meet the Care Act criteria for statutory support, but who, nonetheless have additional care and support needs in one or more areas of their life.

**Vulnerable person:** refers to children, young people, and vulnerable adults (as defined above).

**Adult with vulnerabilities:** refers to an adult who do not meet the criteria for an 'adult with care and support needs' (ie an adult who does not require help with essential day-to-day tasks such as personal care, cooking, managing finances etc), but who has specific vulnerabilities, support needs, or other vulnerabilities. For example, poor mental health, trauma, past abuse, domestic abuse etc, but where the person is still able to live independently and without needing support with day-to-day tasks. (Please note that for clarity at various points, in the policy documents, variations such as 'adult with identified vulnerabilities' or 'adult with sub-threshold vulnerabilities' may be used and are included in this definition.)

**Sub-threshold / Low level:** refers to concerns, disclosures, or allegations; whether about children or adults, that do not meet the threshold for referral to statutory agencies. (The majority of concerns raised at the church fall into this category.)

**Caregiver:** refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children or young people. They are recruited according to the Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy (SRPM). This category could include adults with care and support needs, however, at present St Peter's does not engage in any such ministry.

**Safeguarding concern:** refers to a situation where someone has reason to believe that a child, young person or adult with care and support needs may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

**Disclosure (of abuse):** refers to a situation where a child, young person, or adult with care and support needs reveals to us that they have been abused or that they are fearful that they may be abused.

**Allegation:** refers to a claim or suspicion that a person in a position that gives them access to vulnerable people has or may have:

- Harmed, or placed at risk of harm, a person for whose care they are responsible.
- Committed a criminal offence against a vulnerable person for whose care they are responsible or involved such a person in a criminal act.
- Behaved in a way that may indicate that they are unsuitable to work with vulnerable people.

**Note:** In this policy, the term 'allegation' is used in a specific technical sense as defined above. For example, a situation where a young person claims that they have been abused by a parent would be classed as a disclosure. However, if the claim is that someone in a 'position of trust' such as a teacher or youth worker had abused them, this would be an allegation. The term 'allegation' is used specifically in relation to those in a 'position of trust'.

## Overview of safeguarding responsibilities

1. The PCC has overall responsibility for safeguarding within St Peter's. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and approved by the PCC.
2. The PCC delegates responsibility for the operation of the policy to the Safeguarding Committee; consisting of a Chair (usually a member of the clergy team), the PSO, the Children's Champion, the Ministry Area Leads (MALs) for children and youth, and other nominated individuals who have relevant experience or skills and can contribute to the work of the Committee. The Safeguarding Committee provides advice, guidance, recommendations and assurances to the PCC, addressing both strategic/policy matters and the implementation and operational effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements. The committee is also charged with ensuring the provision of appropriate safeguarding training and holding the PSO accountable for policy implementation. For the purposes of safeguarding, the church's various activities have been divided into ministry

areas. Ministry areas which engage in regulated activity with children and young people require a named MAL and must comply with relevant St Peter's safeguarding policies. Caregivers recruited to these ministry areas are recruited in accordance with St Peter's safer recruitment procedures (see part F of this policy).

3. The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is appointed by the PCC and is responsible for leading safeguarding within the church family and the church's various ministries. Given the size of our church and the diversity of our ministries, it is necessary for the PSO to delegate some of their responsibilities to MALs, who are the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns in their ministry area. MALs receive safeguarding training broadly aligned with the PSO role, in accordance with national and diocesan safeguarding arrangements, but remain trained to a slightly lower level than PSOs given the PSO's overall responsibility for leading and coordinating safeguarding. Safeguarding concerns received by the MALs are reported to the PSO, who will advise, and lead the response to any concerns that meet statutory thresholds, liaising with the Diocese and external agencies as required. Where concerns do not meet statutory reporting thresholds, the PSO will advise and support the MALs as required. The PSO will also be consulted when considering the suitability of staff or volunteers to engage in regulated activity; including situations where blemished Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are provided, or where other information is provided under the DBS scheme or otherwise that raises questions about an individual's suitability for a specific role. Where necessary, the PSO will discuss these with the DSA in accordance with the Diocese of Chelmsford procedures.

**Note:** None of the ministry areas make formal provision for adults with care and support needs. However, the vulnerable adult's policy (part D of this policy) outlines considerations relevant to all ministry areas where vulnerable adults may be in attendance. This supplement must be read by anyone providing care to vulnerable adults on behalf of the church.

4. MALs are responsible for leading safeguarding within their ministry area. MALs are listed at the end of the document. Their responsibilities include:
  - Promoting a safer culture within their ministry area.
  - Ensuring that all church staff, volunteers and small group leaders within their area of ministry are familiar with the safeguarding policy.
  - Working with the PSO and safeguarding administrator to ensure that all caregivers within their areas of ministry are recruited and trained in accordance with the Safer Recruitment policy (part F of this safeguarding policy).
  - Working with the PSO to manage and respond to any disclosures of, or concerns about abuse or neglect within their ministry area; including "low level concerns" that do not meet the threshold for referral to statutory services.
5. The Children's Champion raises the profile of children within the church and on the PCC.
6. All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:
  - Loving those in their care as Christ loves them.
  - Setting an example of proper Christian conduct.
  - Praying for those in their care.
7. All caregivers must read Part A 'Overview of safeguarding at St Peter's principles and procedures', and then the relevant policy for their area of work – children (part B), youth (part C) or vulnerable adults (part D).

8. When a separate organisation uses our parish premises, we require them to confirm that they have a safeguarding policy and procedures and that activity risk assessments have been completed. This will be required of any external organisation which hires or uses parish premises. In addition, the organisation is required to notify the PSO of any safeguarding incidents that could carry reputational risk for St Peter's, whether or not the incident took place in a St Peter's building.

## Responding well to a disclosure or concern of abuse

This guidance has been abbreviated from the Church of England Safeguarding e-manual. The full version can be found here: [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse | The Church of England](#). This guidance relates to any disclosure or concern of abuse whether this is recent or in the past. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with pastoral sensitivity.

In 2020, the National Safeguarding Team (NST) commissioned [Survivors Voices](#) to contribute to the development of national standards in responding well to victims and survivors. Through a survey and focus groups with victims and survivors, they identified the following as 'what good looks like' in responding well to victims and survivors:

- Survivors know that they are heard, understood, taken seriously, and that they will be supported.
- The response by Church Bodies and Church Officers to disclosures is victim and survivor-centred and seeks to avoid causing further trauma to the person disclosing.
- People with safeguarding responsibilities understand the impact of trauma and how to respond to it.
- Churches create a culture of listening, transparency and respect that makes it safe to disclose.
- Victims and survivors, and Church workers, know what process will be followed if someone reports abuse.
- Survivors are helped to receive the support they need, both from the Church and other people and organisations.
- Safeguarding concerns are acted upon appropriately, transparently, with accountability and in a timely fashion.

## Principles for responding well

### Clarify early that information might be shared

A relational approach involves honesty and transparency by church staff and volunteers receiving disclosures. This will involve clarifying that the information disclosed might be shared on a confidential basis with others (such as the PSO, DSA and statutory authorities) for safeguarding purposes.

### Provide a safe space for disclosure

Church staff and volunteers should listen to disclosures where privacy can be achieved, and interruptions minimised. Some victims or survivors may want a quiet place while others may need suitably public places which are visible to others because this makes them feel safer. If the

conversation is planned, then it is preferable to allow victim or survivor to choose the location and time. Care should be exercised to avoid locations which might trigger negative emotions for the victim or survivor. If the disclosure is spontaneous, the person disclosing abuse should be asked if they would like to relocate to a space where privacy can be maintained (this does not override code of conduct standards).

## **Record the details of the disclosure**

Church staff and volunteers should make an accurate record of what the victim or survivor discloses. To ensure accuracy, it may help for them to show the notes they have made to the victim or survivor and ask them to confirm that it is an accurate record of the conversation.

## **Reflective listening**

Research suggests that victims and survivors “want to be actively listened to when they tell their story...” Listeners can show ‘active listening’ by reflecting back what the speaker says and what they hear, not in parrot-fashion, but by clarifying points and checking the meaning of phrases, words, or even events. This will enable the listener to understand what the disclosure means to the victim/survivor, while also showing empathy, humanity and care about recovery and healing. Care should, however, be taken to stick to ‘clarifying questions’ that help the person receiving the disclosure to understand its meaning, avoiding leading questions that suggest a specific answer or intrude into areas that the person disclosing has not spoken about.

## **Understanding the person’s position**

When disclosing abuse, victims’ survivors may feel as if they are reliving, rather than just remembering and talking about, some truly awful events. Victims disclosing recent or ongoing abuse may still be fearful of their abuser. How the person receiving the disclosure responds to the information shared can have a profound effect on whether the person disclosing trusts the church to protect and/or support them. Church staff and volunteers can assure victims or survivors of their safety by explaining that they will immediately inform the PSO who will determine and take the required safeguarding measures. For some victims and survivors, a response that recognises their humanity, their right to care, safety and the support of the church can be powerful first steps to their healing.

In the event that the individual is at immediate risk of harm, immediate support should be sought, including from emergency services if necessary.

## **Going at the victim or survivor’s pace**

Victims or survivors should be given the time and space to disclose at their own pace and discretion. It may be that the person disclosing needs to take breaks during the conversation, or disclosure is made progressively over multiple conversations. Church staff and volunteers listening to disclosures should avoid pressing for information and provide the required time and space for the conversation to unfold without either participant feeling rushed. The extent of disclosure should rest with the victim or survivor, who should feel in control of their story (within the boundaries of good safeguarding practice) and what is going to happen with it.

**Note:** It is important to distinguish between children and adults, and between situation where consent is required and situations where there is a legal duty to report. Advice can be sought from the MAL or PSO as required to establish what action needs to be taken.

## Checking on well-being

Disclosing the abuse may be difficult for the victim or survivor . They may feel more cared for if the church staff member or volunteer regularly checks on their wellbeing during the disclosure and, with their agreement, make arrangements to check on their wellbeing afterwards as well.

## Remaining non-judgmental and being self-reflective

Listeners should be aware of their own emotions during disclosure. They should demonstrate appropriate empathy and avoid overt displays of shock or distress. The focus should be on the survivor's emotions, not the listener's, who should express deep concern for the victim or survivor whilst seeking to maintain a calm and attentive disposition themselves. Church staff and volunteers should remain non-judgmental during a disclosure. They must take what they are being told seriously, respond empathetically and then act by speaking with those with safeguarding responsibility in the Church Body. It is not their role to judge whether disclosures are 'true' or 'credible'. The response must therefore not be one of disbelief.

**Note:** While it is important that the focus remains on the person disclosing, we also recognise our duty of care to those receiving the disclosure. If, during the disclosure, the listener is struggling to manage their emotions, they should carefully and gently inform the victim or survivor disclosing to them and connect them with another person who is able to hear the disclosure such as the MAL or the PSO. If after receiving a disclosure, you feel distressed or concerned about your own wellbeing, you should seek support from your MAL, the PSO or a member of the clergy.

## Next steps in responding to a disclosure or concern of abuse

### 1. Responding

If immediate action is required to ensure the person's safety, this should be taken. Advice can be sought from the MAL or the PSO, but this should not prevent or unnecessarily delay responding to ensure safety. (See point 3 below).

Explain what will happen next; that you will seek advice from your MAL and/or the PSO, who will determine the required safeguarding measures. If there is any current risk to children or adults, they should be informed that their identity will be shared with the MAL and the PSO and may be shared with the statutory agencies.

Assure the victim that you will let them know the outcome of that discussion.

### 2. Record

Make an accurate record of the disclosure (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours).

Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Record what was said and when, what you said in reply, including relevant contextual information such as what was happening immediately before the disclosure, (eg. a description of the activity/situation), the general demeanour of the person disclosing, whether anyone else was present or involved, and if so, who, etc. The safeguarding concern form is available to staff members on ChurchSuite for this purpose. Keep all handwritten notes, alternatively the Safeguarding Administrator can scan

and store the notes on St Peter's servers, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept securely and retained in line with the Church of England data retention guidelines.

### 3. Report

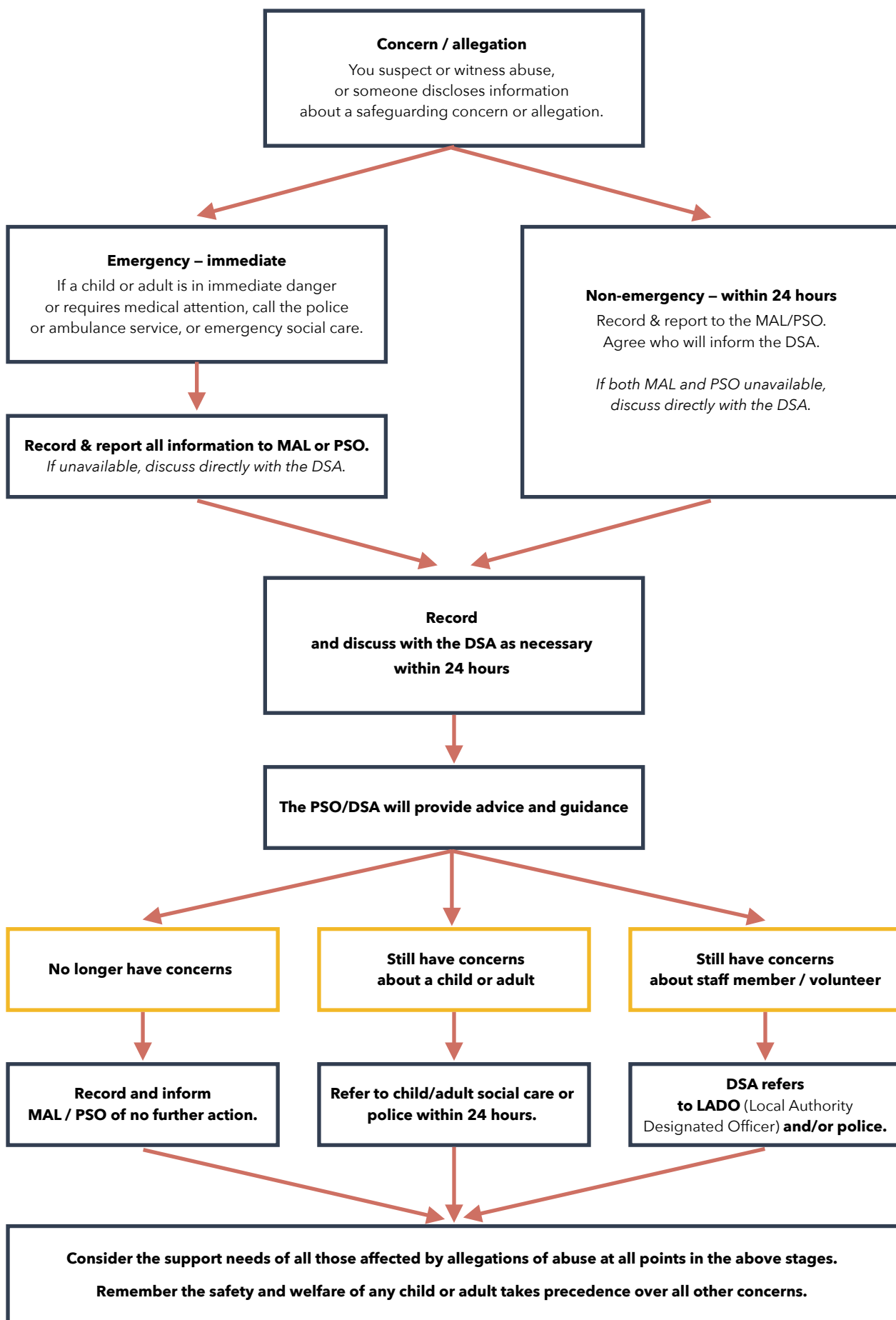
**Emergency:** If you believe a child, or an adult who is not able to protect themselves, is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, or if they require urgent medical attention, contact emergency services by phoning 999.

**Non-emergency:** Contact your MAL as soon as possible. If the allegation is against your MAL, contact the PSO. Contact details are at the end of this document.

If required, the MAL/PSO will then seek advice from the DSA within 24 hours. The MAL and PSO will act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given. They will also consider whether any additional action is required.

## Other principles and guidance for responding to concerns or disclosures

- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services, the police, or the DSA. Even so you must also contact either your MAL or the PSO.
- If you are not sure whether the concern needs reporting, check with your MAL or the PSO. You don't need to mention names initially unless advised to do so, and any information given will be handled confidentially.
- Apart from telling your MAL or the PSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with other church members.
- Do not investigate the concerns of abuse yourself.
- Do not contact anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.



# Guidance for dealing with disclosures of historical / non-recent abuse

'Historical abuse', also referred to as 'non-recent abuse', refers to a concern or disclosure of abuse committed in the past. It may have been perpetrated against:

- A child or young person
- A child or young person who is now an adult
- An adult

If anyone reports abuse to you, whether recent or historical, and whether they were the abused or the abuser, you must follow the action points in the previous section by reporting the matter to your MAL/ PSO.

## Please remember

- Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse.
- The church is required to decide what action can and should be taken. If necessary, we may need to consult with the DSA, or report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the police.

## General principles

- If the victim/survivor is still under 18, the safeguarding concern must be reported in the usual manner, as described above, regardless of how long ago the abuse took place or the context in which it occurred.
- If the victim/survivor is now an adult, it is their decision whether they take any action.
  - Allegations or disclosures of historic abuse are handled by the police.
  - The victim/survivor should be informed of this route to address the abuse. There is no time limit on reporting child abuse.
  - If practical, we can support the victim to report to the police if they wish.
  - The disclosure should still be reported to the MAL or PSO in the usual manner as outlined above, however, no action will be taken without discussion with the victim/survivor and their personal information will not be shared without their consent.
- If the perpetrator still has access to vulnerable people and poses an ongoing risk, consideration will be given by the PSO and DSA to what could realistically be done to manage that risk. In such circumstances, the victim's identity will only be shared with statutory agencies if they give explicit consent.

Please refer to this guidance during the year. More information on supporting vulnerable adults can be found in the St Peter's safeguarding policy part D Vulnerable Adults, found on the Safeguarding page of the St Peter's website" [weblink to be confirmed].

# Key contacts

## St Peter's Church Safeguarding Committee

### Mark Wallace

Chair of Safeguarding Sub-committee  
[mark.wallace@stpeterscolchester.org](mailto:mark.wallace@stpeterscolchester.org)

### Clare Reid

Parish Safeguarding Officer  
[safeguarding@stpeterscolchester.org](mailto:safeguarding@stpeterscolchester.org)

### Julia Howard

Lead Recruiter  
[safeguarding@stpeterscolchester.org](mailto:safeguarding@stpeterscolchester.org)

### Caroline Sheldrick

Children's Champion

### Lizzie Wallace

Safeguarding Administrator  
[office@stpeterscolchester.org](mailto:office@stpeterscolchester.org)

## Ministry Area Leaders (MALs)

Church activities that make formal provision for children and young people (CYP church activities) are as listed under each ministry area.

### Sunday activities: Mark Wallace

CYP activities: Bible Tots, Seekers, Diggers, Spark, Ignite

### Tiny Tots: Lizzie Wallace

CYP activities: regular Thursday mornings and any additional activities

### non-Sunday Children's activities (0-11): Lizzie Wallace

CYP activities: socials and one-off events (on Mondays to Saturdays, inc.)

### mid-week Youth activities (11-18): Mark Wallace

CYP activities: socials, one-off events, Sorted and Sorted Nano (Mondays to Saturdays, inc.)

## Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (DSAs)

Full details of the Chelmsford Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) are available [online](#).

### Danielle Law

Case Worker & Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA)  
01245 294472  
[dlaw@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:dlaw@chelmsford.anglican.org)

### Amanda Knight

Safeguarding Manager & Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA)  
01245 294447  
[aknight@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:aknight@chelmsford.anglican.org)

Address: The Chelmsford DST, Diocesan Office, 53 New Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1AT

## The Archdeacon of Colchester

Full details of the Colchester Area Team are available [online](#).

### Ruth Patten

01376 513130  
[a.colchester@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:a.colchester@chelmsford.anglican.org)

## National contacts

- [Essex County Council - Report a concern about a child](#). 0345 603 7627 (this phone line is open Monday to Thursday 8:45 am to 5pm, and Fridays 8:45am to 4:15pm).
- [Essex County Council - Reporting a concern about an adult or care professional](#).
- [Childline](#) a free 24-hour confidential counselling service for children and young people (up to age 19) 0800 1111
- [Family Lives](#) (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222/[support@napac.org.uk](mailto:support@napac.org.uk)
- NAPAC - Supporting Recovery From Childhood Abuse 0808 801 0331
- [Respect](#) supports men experiencing domestic abuse 0808 [8010327/info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:8010327/info@mensadvice.org.uk)
- [Safe Spaces](#) a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, the Catholic Church of England and Wales or the Church of Wales 0300 303 1056 / [safespaces@firstlight.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@firstlight.org.uk)
- [Samaritans helpline](#) a free support service if you feel you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to 116 123 / [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- [The Silver Line Helpline](#) a free support service for older people suffering abuse, neglect or loneliness 0800 470 8090

- [Victim Support](#) provides specialist help to support people who have experienced crime and traumatic incidents 0808 16 89 111
- [Women's Aid](#) work to support women and children who are victims of domestic abuse [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)/chat online via their website 0808 2000 247
- [Your GP](#) Speaking to your own doctor is a good way to get support for your well-being and mental health

## Further Resources

- 'The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook' - promoting a safer church, 2019
- 'The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016' (Chapter 14)
- Church of England Responding Well to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Practice Guidance, March 2017
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Safeguarding e-manual | The Church of England](#)
- [Policy and practice guidance | The Church of England](#)
- [Code of Safer Working Practice 02.07.2021.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)
- [Safer Environment and Activities Oct19\\_0.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Training Portal \(cofeportal.org\)](#)
- [www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/)