



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

— **SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES** —

Please contact your local Safeguarding Representative if you require a copy of these guidelines in large print.

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What is Safeguarding?

Every human being has a value and dignity which we as Catholics acknowledge as coming directly from God's creation of male and female in his own image and likeness. This implies a duty to value all people and therefore to support them and protect them from harm. This is done by implementing legislation through policies and procedures.

In the Catholic Church this is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults; supporting families under stress, caring for those hurt by abuse in the past, ministering to those who have caused harm.

It is because of these varied ministries that we need to provide a safe environment for all which promotes and supports their wellbeing. This will include carefully selecting and appointing those who work with children, young people or adults at risk of harm and responding robustly where concerns arise.

Our own Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle, Rt. Rev. Séamus Cunningham, states that "caring for and honouring the dignity of individuals with special needs was a priority for Jesus. It still is. And we must be good at it."

Therefore, all clergy, employees and volunteers working with vulnerable groups, including children, must adhere to the Catholic Church's national safeguarding policies before they can be appointed and will be supplied with a copy of this leaflet for reference.

This is essential, basic safeguarding information but should you wish to learn more, there is free online training available for all Catholics by contacting the Department for Safeguarding at e-learning.safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk

How do We Create Safe Environments?

Many of these will be followed by our parishes routinely but this checklist should help to define the tasks which lead to sound safeguarding in our communities. In these ways we can firm up our practice and ensure that it is uniform across the Diocese.

- ✓ Ensure that all new and existing volunteers in roles which have been defined nationally as requiring safe recruitment checks complete the three stage process - Volunteer Application, Confidential Safeguarding Self Declaration and DBS Disclosure Application Form, which includes a Home Office requirement for your identity to be verified.
- ✓ Have a trial period of 3 months for all volunteers, at the end of which both parties review the situation. Inexperienced parish workers and/ or inexperienced volunteers will benefit from clear guidance and supervision.
- ✓ Make everyone aware of the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures - young people, parents/ carers, volunteers and visitors. Each church and hall should display information on the notice board giving contact information to anyone who has a concern.
- ✓ Always think and act carefully to avoid situations of embarrassment, accusations or temptations. An example of 'danger' is one leader/ worker and one young person being together 'in private' - whether that be in counselling, on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car. Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned. Do not just rely on your good name to protect you.
- ✓ Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times, set an example you would wish others to follow and always behave appropriately, in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Ensure that any premises used for parish groups and events are safe and well maintained.
- ✓ Know where the emergency exits, fire extinguishers and alarms are and be fully aware of the evacuation plan in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Encourage all parish workers and volunteers to be involved in regular training (including First Aid). Ensure there is a first aid kit and that is checked frequently.
- ✓ Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place. This applies to any mini buses and/ or private cars which are used - insurance and any necessary permits must be obtained and transport volunteers should always inform their private motor insurance companies.
- ✓ Ensure that external groups or private hirers for one-off arrangements who are using Church premises should always complete the required safeguarding agreement forms, taking responsibility for any vulnerable groups, including children, who may be present.

What do We Need to Know when Working with Children?

Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015) defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

The Church has a legal and moral duty of care to any child or young person placed in our charge and, quite rightly, parents or carers expect that anyone in a position of trust for children is fully aware of and adheres to the Church's national child protection policies. The following checklist will help you; however, if you have any doubts or concerns, always consult a leader or the Department for Safeguarding.

- ✓ Keep an up to date register of group contact information; names of children, their address, telephone number, special medications, doctor's name and contact details and permission to be 'in loco parentis'. Ensure that there is always access to a parent or carer phone/ mobile number in case of emergency.
- ✓ Ensure that a **minimum** of two leaders is always present, maintaining the gender balance of the group where possible. In many groups or clubs, more than two leaders will be necessary and the adult to children ratios should be increased according to the age ranges of the children present:

Children under 5 years: 1 adult leader to every 3 children	Children aged 8—11 years: 1 adult leader to every 10-15 children
Children aged 5—8 years: 1 adult leader to every 6 children	Children over 11 years: 1 adult leader to every 15-20 children

- ✓ Ensure that prior to any activities taken away from the normal meeting place, a risk assessment is undertaken and the supervision ratios increased accordingly. See your local Safeguarding Representative or consult the Department for Safeguarding for risk assessment forms and guidance.
- ✓ Ensure that for any activities away from the normal meeting place, parents/ guardians have signed a consent form. Ensure that someone knows where the group is working away from the usual meeting place.
- ✓ Ensure that any photographs or videos to be taken or displayed of parish or youth group events have parental consent. Never show a photograph of a child or young person with personal details (including their name) accompanying it. Be especially vigilant at youth events where young people may be prone to share images, without consent, on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or Twitter and always warn young people in your risk assessments about the potential dangers of online predators and cyberbullying.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse involves the maltreatment of children - physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect and can give major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Here is a summary of the definitions of the different types of abuse a child may suffer, taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015). Please familiarise yourself with these and be alert to signs and indicators that a child or a young person could be a victim of abuse and may turn to you, as someone they trust within the Church, for help.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Certain cultures also practice female genital mutilation which is a severe form of physical abuse and is a crime in the United Kingdom.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include suppressing a child's views, or exploiting, corrupting or radicalising them. It may involve interactions beyond a child's capability or overprotection and limiting the child's development, bullying a child or causing them to be frightened, in some cases by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another individual. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include physical contact or non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images; talking about or watching sexual activities; encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failing to protect a child from harm or danger or failing to ensure access to medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The immediate and longer-term impact of child abuse can include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders and self harm, offending and anti-social behaviour. Maltreatment is likely to have a deep impact upon the child's self-image and self-esteem and difficulties may extend into adulthood—in forming or sustaining close relationships, establishing oneself in work or in developing the skills for effective parenthood. It is important to be aware that domestic abuse taking place within a child's home can also have a serious impact on children's safety and welfare and that any concerns should always be reported (see page 11).

What do We Need to Know when Working with Adults?

An adult at risk is any person aged 18 years or over who may need care services because of a mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or being exploited. Personal circumstances and lifestyle may also cause adults to be vulnerable in some situations, **either** permanently or temporarily.

Characteristics to look out for:

People who lack the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety	People who do not have access to information which could help them or the support they need to be independent
People who are physically dependent	People who have low self-esteem or who are gullible
People who are bullied, discriminated against or are the focus of anti-social behaviour	People who have communication difficulties — speech or cognitive impairment
People who are socially isolated	People who have been abused previously

What if a person lacks capacity? How will we know?

You must act in their best interests. Someone lacks capacity if they cannot:

Understand information given to them	Retain that information long enough to be able to make a decision
Weigh up the information to make a decision	Communicate their decision

What is our duty of care to adults at risk?

Section 41 of the Care Act 2014 states that if a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a vulnerable adult is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect him or herself from harm, then the local authority must make whatever enquiries it thinks are necessary to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case. The Care Act 2014 recognises that local authorities can only safeguard vulnerable people by working together with the Police, NHS and other key organisations and the wider public.

What if a person does not want you to share their information?

Care Act Guidance states that frontline workers and volunteers should always share their safeguarding concerns with their line manager or safeguarding lead in the first instance, except in emergency situations (see page 11). The safeguarding principle of proportionality should underpin decisions about sharing information without consent, and decisions should be on a case by case basis.

What is Adult Abuse?

The Office of the Public Guardian states that abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur when an adult at risk is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not consented, or cannot consent to. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any type of abuse may be perpetrated against an adult at risk as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE:

Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, withholding or misuse of medication or aids and inappropriate restraint, confinement or enforced isolation.

Sexual abuse includes sexual acts where an adult has not consented, could not consent to or was coerced into. It may also include non-contact sexual activities, such as voyeurism, viewing or making pornography, indecent exposure and serious or persistent sexual teasing, innuendo or harassment.

Psychological and emotional abuse is included in all other forms of abuse and may involve insults, verbal abuse, shouting and swearing. It arises from a power imbalance in a relationship and the adult at risk is controlled and manipulated, leaving them feeling unworthy, unwanted, unhappy, anxious, insecure, fearful, humiliated and devalued.

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, and the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Discriminatory abuse is an abuser focussing upon an adult's disability (physical, mental health, learning or sensory impairment), race, gender, age, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, political convictions, appearance, social situation, dependence upon drugs or alcohol.

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Institutional abuse can be understood as organisational practices or failings which may place the management or needs of a service above the needs and wishes of a service user. The term 'institution' includes the Church, hospitals, prisons, children's homes or schools, universities, nursing or care homes.

Spiritual abuse can be forcing one's religious beliefs onto a child or vulnerable person; telling someone that God hates them, preventing them from worship, using faith as a weapon to control or terrorize a person for pleasure or gain, using religious teaching to justify abuse (e.g. wives submit to your husbands) or to compel forgiveness.

Neglect and acts of omission include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

We should also be mindful of the increase in **trafficking**, **grooming** and **hate crime** which can be perpetrated against adults or children and should always be referred if you have any concerns.

Advice for Vulnerable Groups including Children

Everyone who comes to a Church service or activity is created in God's image and must be treated according to this Code of Behaviour. Any form of abuse is unacceptable. A poster giving advice and contact details for anyone who has concerns must be displayed on the parish notice board. Copies are available from the Diocesan Department for Safeguarding.

In keeping with this statement, all clergy, employees and volunteers working with vulnerable groups, including children, must adhere to the following Code of Behaviour.

Code of Behaviour

DO:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Respect people's right to personal privacy.
- Plan activities so that more than one person is present, or at least within sight or hearing of others.
- Follow National Procedures and Guidance (summarised in this booklet and available in full online at www.csasprocedures.uk.net).
- Encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable pointing out attitudes or behaviours they don't like.
- Remember that others might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Remember that we all have a responsibility to challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.

DO NOT:

- Permit abusive peer activities (such as name calling, ridiculing, bullying).
- Play physical contact games with children and young people.
- Have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Jump to conclusions without checking facts.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- Render yourself unfit for duty through the consumption of excess alcohol, drugs, prescribed medication or lack of sleep.
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or unreported.

What Should We Do if We Have Any Concerns?

KEY PRINCIPLES:

If you suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being, has been or is likely to be abused, you must take action. **To do nothing is not an option.** Do not investigate. The key principles to follow are **Listen—Record—Refer**.

- **Listen** carefully and reassuringly, without making judgement or asking any leading questions. Refrain from asking probing questions and be encouraging. It may be difficult for someone to tell—be patient and go at their pace.
- **Record.** Make, sign and date a written record as soon as possible of all the details which have been given to you, using the informant's exact words if you can.
- **Refer.** If there is an *immediate danger* or the matter is *urgent*, you should report your suspicion without delay to the Police, or to Social Services (Children's or Adults' Services as appropriate) and then inform the Diocese (see page 12).
- If there is no immediate danger, collect the fullest possible information at the time the concern or allegation reaches you. That information may include details of what you see, as well as what you are told. Then, at the first possible opportunity, report the matter to the Diocesan Department for Safeguarding. In order to protect vulnerable people, they need to make a careful assessment of risk, based on fact and professional judgement—and they must be the ones to carry out the investigation in conjunction with the relevant statutory authorities.
- Do not under any circumstances alert the alleged abuser, either directly or indirectly, to what has happened. **This is very important.**
- All information connected with a child, young person or vulnerable adult is strictly confidential. Do not share any information with any person who does not need to know. However, where the concern is in relation to a child, we have not only a duty of care but a legal obligation to refer the matter. Therefore, never promise to keep secret what you have been told. Instead, reassure that you will only share the information with people who can help.

Remember, **to do nothing is not an option** and if you are the first person to hear of the allegations or concerns, keep in mind that what you do may determine how effective a subsequent enquiry is.



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

There are many people who may be able to help, including:

IN AN EMERGENCY, CONTACT THE POLICE ON 999 or 101

Angie Richardson, Coordinator
(or a member of the team)
Department for Safeguarding
Hexham & Newcastle Diocese
St. Cuthbert's House
West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE15 7PY

Telephone: 0191 243 3305

Email:
safeguarding@diocesehn.org.uk

www.rcdhn.org.uk/safeguarding

**Catholic Safeguarding Advisory
Service (CSAS)**

Telephone: 020 7901 1920
www.csas.uk.net

NSPCC

Telephone: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Line

Telephone: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Stop it Now Helpline

(charity to prevent child sexual abuse)

Telephone: 0808 1000 900
www.stopitnow.org.uk

Action on Elder Abuse

Telephone: 0808 808 8141
www.elderabuse.org.uk

Age UK

Telephone: 0800 169 6565
www.ageuk.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Run in partnership between Refuge
and Women's Aid

Telephone: 0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk

Your Local Social Services:

(please enter your local Children's & Adults' Services numbers here)

Your local Safeguarding Representative is: