

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



THE CHAPLAINCY OF CHRIST CHURCH - AMSTERDAM

PROTOCOL WHAT TO DO WITH CONCERNS AND INCIDENTS

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The Diocese in Europe

The Chaplaincy of Christ Church - Amsterdam

Protocol - What to do with concerns and incidents

This document explains the necessary steps if you suspect that abuse may be taking place – or that there is a potential risk of abuse. It also covers what the Christ Church Safeguarding Team will do with any information regarding concerns and how incidents are handled by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Please remember that abuse takes many forms, may affect children, young people or vulnerable adults and that there are no stereotypes for those who do the abusing. Definitions of the types of abuse can be found online [at https://europe.anglican.org/diocese-safeguarding-guidelines](https://europe.anglican.org/diocese-safeguarding-guidelines)

It is very important that any suspicions (no matter how slight these may be) are raised with the appropriate people as soon as possible.

Any suspected case of abuse carries with it the need to maintain a sensible level of confidentiality both to protect the individual who has been abused (and indeed the accused in the event that the suspicions are not subsequently confirmed). This does not however remove the need to report all suspected cases of abuse as outlined in this section.

What follows is a simple set of ‘rules’ to ensure that everyone who suspects that abuse is happening (or could be happening) knows what they must do.

Don’t forget that we all have a personal responsibility (which cannot be delegated) to keep children and adults who may be vulnerable safe. If you believe the physical safety of a child or a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk, treat it as an emergency and please make every endeavour to notify the police or local children’s services (or local equivalent) immediately. Also, please make sure the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the Safeguarding Christ Church team (unless the concern is about them) are informed.

Section 1 – What do we need to do within Christ Church?

1.1 – What to do when you become aware of an incident or concern

You may become aware of a possible case of abuse (no matter how slight this is) from a number of different sources, for example what the individual who has been abused might have said to you or to others, or from the behaviour of either that individual or their abuser. This may be in the context of a Chaplaincy activity, involving someone from the chaplaincy congregation, or something unrelated to the Chaplaincy.

Please remember that the most important thing is to share your concerns. Please do not attempt to ‘investigate’ (other than to ask simple questions for clarification), as this is a very specialised area requiring considerable skill and expertise to avoid further harming the

individual, or alerting the abuser, or damaging evidence which may be needed in a criminal investigation.

Whilst the subsequent actions will vary, it remains important that you share the information with the appropriate people as soon as you can. You are asked to make your concerns known (in complete confidence) to one or other of the following people:

- The Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer or the Safeguarding Coordinator for your congregation; or
- The Chaplain, the presiding minister, one of your Chaplaincy Wardens; or
- The Archdeacon or Area Dean; or
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Team (contact details in chapter 5 of the Christ Church Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Policy) or
- Thirtyone:Eight (formerly known as CCPAS). In case of an **emergency, out of hours**, advice can be sought from their helpline on **+44 303 003 1111**. You will be able to get confidential advice, guidance and support.
- The Diocesan confidential reporting line. You can use this number if you need to talk to someone of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and there is no emergency. It is a confidential recorded telephone line available 24 hours a day - please remember to leave your contact details so that the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can get back to you. Tel +44 (0)207 898 1163.

1.2 – What will the Christ Church Safeguarding Team do?

The initial first step will depend on the severity of the situation. In an emergency or life-threatening situation, the appropriate emergency service should be contacted before any of the following steps are taken.

- The appropriate Safeguarding Coordinator and/or the presiding minister who is notified by someone about a concern or an incident, needs to inform (in confidence) the Diocesan Safeguarding Team as soon as they can (this is a ‘must’ in every case no matter how trivial).
- The Safeguarding Coordinator and/or the presiding minister writes down an accurate and acceptable record about what has happened. Guidance on how to keep accurate and acceptable records is given in section 3 of this document.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator and/or the presiding minister should inform the Safeguarding Officer and the Chaplain about the concern or incident. Together they will decide who will be responsible for contact with:
 - the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
 - the person who raised the initial concern
 - any other (needed) persons, like e.g. the Dutch authorities (police, Bureau Jeugdzorg, Bureau Jeugdbescherming) etc.

All appointments must be written down according to the record keeping requirements, see section 3 of this document.

1.3 – Sharing information without consent

The 2018 General Data Protection Regulations adds greater accountability for the chaplaincy to gain explicit consent and transparency in the sharing of personal information. However, it is possible to share information legally, even without consent, if it is to keep a child or vulnerable adult safe from neglect, or physical, emotional or mental harm. It may be possible, at least initially, to share information without identifying the individual.

The sharing of personal information without consent is not a decision to take lightly and it should be discussed with the Diocesan Team beforehand. Legal advice may also need to be sought.

Ultimately, the most important consideration is whether the sharing of information would help safeguarding the child or vulnerable adult.

1.4 – What will happen next

The Diocese will work with Christ Church to respond promptly to any concern. The process, actions and recommendations put in place will depend on the type and severity of the concern raised. In general terms, the Diocese will:

- Inform the Chaplain and/or Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer of all concerns (unless of course they are directly implicated).
- Work with Christ Church to produce a ‘Risk Assessment’ of the concern/incident. This will include a full written record of the concerns identified, how they have been approached to date and any actions already taken.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Team, in appropriate consultation with senior members of the diocese, will then identify the appropriate next steps, along with any recommended process changes.
- Review assessment points will be identified and shared, where appropriate, with the Chaplaincy Safeguarding Team.

Section 2 – Record Keeping

The maintenance of suitable records is an essential element of the protocol. The importance of generating and maintaining adequate records cannot be understated. They provide confidence that the policy is being properly delivered and in the event of an issue being raised provide crucial evidence to any inquiry.

2.1 - What Records do we need to keep?

In the following you will find information on which records need to be kept and who is responsible for them:

1. A “Record of Safeguarding checks”; this includes who has been checked, which checks have been made and who has followed the appropriate training. This is the responsibility of the safeguarding coordinators and part of their work.
2. A “*Record of Concern*” for use when a matter of concern (or possible concern) is raised within a Chaplaincy.

Record of Concern

The ‘*Record of Concern*’ is a simple record which provides for the recording of all relevant information regarding a safeguarding concern reported within a Chaplaincy. Please ensure that all conversations are recorded ‘verbatim’ and not translated using your own phrases or words. A model ‘Safeguarding Concern Record’ has been produced by the Diocese and can be found at: <https://europe.anglican.org/section-7/78-recording-data-protection-and-information-sharing>. A copy of this form will also be kept in the Safeguarding Google Drive.

An individual ‘folder’ is to be maintained for each case of concern containing these forms and any ancillary documentation (e.g. subsequent correspondence and the outcome of investigations/inquiries). All such folders should be stored in a lockable cabinet with access limited to the Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer.

2.2 - Guidance on keeping accurate and acceptable records

Taking or making notes is very important with any allegation or concern about safeguarding. The simple rules set out below will help to provide accurate and acceptable records which you may need to refer to at some later date.

Notes recorded must be:

- Comprehensive – as much detail as possible about what you saw or heard, who did what, who said what, what was reported to you as a third person, etc.
- Factual – nothing that could not later be read out in a court or tribunal. Direct speech should be quoted, even if it is offensive.
- Dated and timed – give the date and the time of the event to which the notes refer and record or store them in a chronological order.
- Written in ink at the time or as soon as possible afterwards. State when the notes were written and why there was a delay. Give the time at which the note taking ended. (Printed copies of original email communications will satisfy this requirement.)

- Original written notes and not copied from elsewhere. If the original notes were made on a notepad or other paper, retain this together with your completed set of notes.
- Any computerised notes should be password protected and any physical notes should be kept within a lockable cabinet.

Errors and alterations:

- If you make a mistake, cross it out so it remains legible and initial it. Do not erase the mistake.
- No blank spaces should be left – if there are blank spaces they should be lined through and initialled.
- No overwriting.
- No writing between lines.
- Amendments and alterations should be initialled and the reasons why they have been altered set out in the notes.

2.3 - Archiving

Record Retention - Archiving

Records must be maintained by the Chaplain or Safeguarding officer in accordance with the Church of England's retention guidelines. These guidelines can be found at: <https://europe.anglican.org/downloads/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/2019/section-7/6-safeguarding-records-retention.pdf> If the incumbent moves churches, the records should be passed onto the new incumbent.

It is important that any records that may be needed in future inquiries are kept; cases of abuse are often reported after many years have elapsed.

What documents need to be kept? For how long?

- Any records relating to concerns and incidents (including risk assessments and agreements) must be kept for 70 years.
- Any documents relating to concerns made against any Church Officer (paid or unpaid) must be kept for 75 years from closure.
- Record of Kids Church/Youth Group Activities (such as membership forms, attendance records) must be kept for 50 years after the activity ceases.
- The record of safeguarding checks for individuals (including Confidential Declaration Forms) must be kept for 75 years after they leave the role.
- Police certificates can only be kept for 6 months from the date of issue. The date of the check, certificate number and convictions raised should be entered on the record of safeguarding checks and then destroyed.

If you have any questions you can get advice on this topic from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Section 3 – Helping Those Who Have Been Abused

The needs of those who have been abused (in whatever form; at whatever time in their lives; or in whatever setting) are very complex and demanding. Chaplaincies throughout the Diocese can be well placed, often in the heart of the communities, to offer safe places for the abused to come and where they can share their experiences. This section gives guidance on what our response should be.

3.1 – Appropriate response

The challenge of meeting the needs of those who have been abused is enormous and is generally well beyond the experience and abilities of Chaplaincy members. Such is the challenge that we all need to be mindful that inappropriate advice (no matter how well intentioned) can simply serve to reinforce the level of emotional harm which the abused will already have suffered. The provision of counselling and specific practical help requires both specialist training and practical experience.

We therefore need to approach this sensitive matter in a very careful manner. The following gives outline guidance on how Chaplaincies might seek to provide support to those who have been abused:

- It is crucial that any support offered in whatever form must be with the agreement of the individual or their family. (The individual may already be receiving help from professional bodies and this must not be affected.)
- We should seek to support the individual through prayer if they wish (both with and for the individual – perhaps with a focus on seeking professional help and counselling).
- If asked by the individual we can provide a local ‘listening ear’ – but please be very careful about commenting on or judging situations which, if done inappropriately (no matter how well meaning), can have the effect of exacerbating the concerns an abused individual may have.
- We can explore with the individual (and perhaps with their families) the benefits of professional help and counselling. This can typically be sought through the local health/medical networks, through local agencies that provide support on the particular form of abuse experienced, or through the Diocese (see below). We can support the individuals to find their way to professional help.

Dealing with abuse is a very personal journey, for some people this will involve forgiveness but for others it may not be. There should not be any pressure or expectation from the church on the victim/survivor to forgive.

Advice on how to properly support an individual can be gained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). It’s also possible to seek for professional help within the Dutch psychological network. There is the Dutch Meldpunt Seksueel Misbruik in de kerk (SMPR) www.smpr.nl but there are other possibilities for professional help and these can be found in Appendix 4 of the ‘Safeguarding Guidelines’.

Section 4 – Working With Offenders

In this section you will find guidance on how to work with those within the Chaplaincy who have a record of abuse of children, young people or adults. This may be a criminal record or as advised by another organisation through, for example, a reference sought because of a particular role the individual was seeking to undertake, or by the inappropriate behaviour of a person, which suggests that they may pose a risk to children or adults who may be vulnerable. Throughout the section we need to be mindful of our Christian principles, taking account of the issues that may emerge on a case by case basis but, as a general rule, we need to be very cautious when working with offenders.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team should be advised within 24 hours if you learn of any person who worships within your church:

- is placed on the sex offenders register, have a conviction for a violent offence, or barred from working with children/adults
- anyone who admits to being an abuser, including non-recent abuse
- anyone subject to an investigation on abuse, including possession of indecent images, or is suspended from their usual role
- anyone who may pose a risk to child or vulnerable adult due to their behaviour, irrespective of convictions

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor will determine the appropriate action appropriate to be taken to best safeguard the chaplaincy and its congregation/s, based on the particular facts and circumstances of each case. They will undertake a risk assessment and the formation of a risk management plan known as a Safeguarding Agreement.

Helping Offenders

If a person is assessed as posing a risk to children or adults, the DSA, together with the police and any local agencies involved, will support the parish to:

- Form a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to monitor the respondent.
- Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or vulnerable adult.
- Agree with the respondent that he/she worship elsewhere if his/her victim or their family worship in the same church.
- Ensure the respondent is never offered any official role in the church, or any position of responsibility where he/she may be trusted by others, for example that of churchwarden, worship leader or any in which a child or vulnerable adult may, as a result, place trust in that person.
- Consider whether, with the person's agreement and that of any local authorities involved, the congregation should be informed.
- Meet with the respondent to draft a Safeguarding Agreement, setting out the parameters of his/her behaviour in the church setting.

Please remember that the Diocesan Safeguarding Team are there to help and advise you on what to do.

Section 5 – Care for the Congregation

In addition to the care given to both the victim and the abuser, the congregation also has a need for pastoral care. Any form of abuse within a congregation can cause feelings of guilt, anger and resentment. Because of the need for confidentiality, it is very easy for an atmosphere of misunderstanding and gossip to arise. In order to avoid this, there needs to be open communication, whilst keeping the details of the incident confidential. It is important to create an atmosphere of open communication so that members of the congregation feel able to seek pastoral care and prayer. In particular, members of the congregation who have worked closely with either the abused person or the abuser may need pastoral care, prayer and may also need guidance in seeking professional help.