



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

— DEPARTMENT FOR SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES —

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.

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 and managing 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 vulnerable adults and responding robustly where concerns arise.

All volunteers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults must agree to adhere to the Catholic Church's national safeguarding policies before they can be appointed and will be supplied with a copy of this leaflet and a pocket-size guide for ready reference.



How do we Create Safe Environments?

Many of these will be followed in 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.

- ✓ All new and existing volunteers in roles which have been defined nationally as requiring safe recruitment checks must 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 new 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.
- ✓ All volunteers should have seen and have ready access to safeguarding guidelines and know what to do in cases of suspected or alleged abuse:
Listen – Record – Refer.
Always take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately.
- ✓ Make everyone aware that 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.
- ✓ 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 any emergency.
- ✓ Encourage all parish workers and volunteers to be involved in regular training (including First Aid). Ensure that there is a first aid kit and that it is checked frequently.



How do we Create Safe Environments? cont.

- ✓ Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place. This applies also to any mini buses and/ or private cars which are used – insurance and any necessary permits must be obtained.
- ✓ Keep an up to date register of group contact information; names of children, address, telephone number, special medications, doctor's name and address, telephone number and permission to be 'in loco parentis'. Ensure that there is always access to a phone/ mobile in case of emergency.
- ✓ Ensure that a **minimum** of two leaders is always present, maintaining the gender balance of the group. In larger groups/ clubs the following supervision ratios should be adhered to:
 - 1 adult to every 3 children under 5 - 1 adult to every 10-15 children aged 8-11
 - 1 adult to every 6 children aged 5-8 - 1 adult to every 15-20 children over 11
- ✓ During any activities away from the normal meeting place, a risk assessment should be undertaken and the supervision ratios should be increased accordingly.
- ✓ For any activities away from the normal meeting place ensure that parents/ guardians have signed a consent form. Ensure that someone knows where the group is working away from the normal meeting place.
- ✓ Always think and act carefully to avoid situations which could lead to difficulties 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, or 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.
- ✓ Do not permit any photographs or videos to be taken or displayed of parish events without parental consent. Never show a photograph of a child or young person with personal details (including their name) accompanying it.
- ✓ 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.



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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 which involve more than one person being 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 to point 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/ 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.
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or unreported.

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.



Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

Any person aged 18 years or over who may need care services because of mental, physical or a 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 at risk in some situations, either permanently or temporarily.

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 values or beliefs onto a child or vulnerable person; telling someone that God hates them; refusing them to worship; using faith as a weapon to control or terrorize a person for pleasure or gain; using religious teaching to justify abuse (wives submit to your husbands) or to compel forgiveness.



Definitions of Abuse cont.

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.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated against a vulnerable adult as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

What is Child Abuse?

A child is defined as any minor under 18 years of age. Child abuse involves the maltreatment of children – physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect and can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing.

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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill-health to a child they are looking after.

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 under-valued. 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, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include non contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, talking about or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic psychological and/or physical needs, in such a way as to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. 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 misuse, 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.



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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 and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser. 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 a record as soon as possible of all the details which have been given to you, using the 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).
- 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.



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SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

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

Paul Young, 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: 0121 237 3740 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	Telephone: 0808 1000 900 www.stopitnow.org.uk
Action on Elder Abuse	Telephone: 0808 808 8141 www.elderabuse.org.uk
Age UK (formerly Help The Aged)	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:

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is: