

What to do if you have a safeguarding concern about a child, vulnerable adult or church officer

Church Officers are not authorised to investigate any allegations (Police and the Local Authority only) and must never attempt to do so.

1. If there is concern that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, inform the Parish or Cathedral Safeguarding Officer who must take advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). Do not delay.
 2. If there is a concern that a church officer, (i.e. anyone appointed or elected by or on behalf of the church to an office, post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid) may be abusing or neglecting a child or adult, or the church officer's behaviour may not be following safer working practice guidance, contact the DSA. Do not delay.
 3. If there is concern that a child or vulnerable adult has been harmed, immediately inform the Parish/Cathedral Safeguarding Officer who must take advice from the DSA. If no-one is available, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub ("MASH") or Adult Safeguarding Team or Police directly. ***If you believe a child is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm contact the emergency services on 999***
 4. Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral **except where:**
 - it would put a child or adult at risk of significant harm
 - it would impede a Police investigation or social work enquiry
 - sexual abuse, fictitious illness or induced illness is suspected
 - contact with the parents/carers would place you or others at risk
 - it would cause undue delay in making the referral
- If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent a referral.*
- 5 Do not contact the alleged perpetrator until you have sought advice from the DSA or statutory agencies.
 - 6 For out of hours referrals, call the Emergency Social Work Team or where urgent, the Police.
 - 7 *Always* ensure the DSA is informed of the concerns and actions taken, and consult regularly.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT CHILD or ADULT ABUSE

