

## **Guidelines in responding to a person disclosing abuse or safeguarding concern**

The following procedures are designed to support individuals in dealing with disclosures of abuse or safeguarding concern that may arise in the course of work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is taken from para 7.3 of the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

### **Respond**

#### **Do:**

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions  
(open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how? Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check (if face to face) whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parishes Safeguarding Officer (PSO)/ Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

#### **Do not:**

- Make promises that cannot be kept (eg that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do a physical or medical examination.

#### **Record**

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

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**Report**

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.
- Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parishes Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately.
- Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA.
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours.
- If there is any doubt seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or police.

Parishes Safeguarding Officer (PSO):

Neil Wain Tel:01260 226131

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA):

Pauline Butterfield Tel: 01928 718834 or 07703 800 031

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## Flowchart outlining procedure to follow if abuse or a safeguarding concern involving a child or vulnerable adult is disclosed.

(adapted from the Parish Safeguarding Handbook – see chapter 7.1 for more detailed information on the responsibility of incumbent and PSO)

