

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following FAQs are offered to assist parishes in the completion of the PCR2 Submission.

- **Why are we being asked to do this?**

In 2007, the Church of England commissioned a Past Case Review which sought to look at the handling by the church of child protection cases over many years. This entailed an independent scrutiny of the files of clergy and church officers to identify any persons presenting on-going risks to children and young people (a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18) which had not been appropriately responded to at the time.

All Dioceses have now been asked to re-examine and extend the review. The House of Bishops wants to ensure that our churches and church related activities are as safe as possible for children and vulnerable adults. It is important that all known cases of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children **and** vulnerable adults have been considered and dealt with appropriately.

- **How will submitted information be used?**

Parishes are being asked to submit a list of **ALL** safeguarding concerns related to living church officers; these will then be crosschecked against Diocesan records. Where a Diocesan record is found, no further action will be needed (unless otherwise indicated on the form).

If no Diocesan record is found, the concern will be treated as a new safeguarding disclosure and the current national safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Where you believe that you have a safeguarding concern that has **not** previously been reported to the Diocese, the advice is that you contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately by telephone to share the concern. Please then record the details of the concern and the date you contacted the team on the form.

- **How far back do we need to check?**

The national guidance says:

*"The files subject to review are those of every **living** clergy person and all **living** church officers whether or not they are engaged in ministry or in paid or voluntary work at the time of the review."*

- **How do you define a church officer?**

The national guidance says:

"A church officer is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to an office, post or role, whether they be ordained or lay, paid or unpaid."

The Church's definition is open to some interpretation, but for the purposes of PCR2, it will certainly encompass all clergy, including those with PTO and clergy such as hospital, school and prison chaplains who hold the Bishop's licence, readers and licensed lay workers and volunteers and Diocesan and parish lay employees and volunteers whose role includes (or has included) direct involvement with children and vulnerable adults.

This is a wide definition, however the judgement to be made is whether the role has in the past, does currently, or is likely in the future, to provide opportunities for the abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults whilst engaged in church organised activities and whether the role involves a relationship of trust.

- **How do you define a vulnerable adult?**

The national guidance says:

"A vulnerable adult means a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired."

It is acknowledged that this is a broad definition and that discretion will need to be exercised in some cases having regard to the person's entitlement to exercise choice and their mental capacity. Instances of alleged domestic abuse should be included as indicating vulnerability and therefore, all allegations in relation to domestic abuse should be included in PCR2's scope.

- **How can information be shared securely?**

We are asking that you return your Submission in writing on the form provided to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. However, should you wish to communicate with the team via email prior to submission, please ensure that all communication is anonymised, or where documents are sent, they are password protected, with the password being supplied in a separate email, or telephone conversation.

If you do not know how to password-protect a Word document, simply contact Kim Phillips on 01904 699508 who will be happy to assist you.

- **How do we complete the Submission form?**

If you have no safeguarding concerns to report please write NIL on the form.

If you are reporting a concern for the first time, please leave the last two boxes on the line blank.

Please print further copies of the form if you need to report more than four concerns.

- **Can we have more time?**

The PCR2 process is a national church initiative, and our participation in it requires completion of this exercise by the end of February 2020. We are therefore bound by this deadline to complete all related activities. However, should you require more time please contact the DSA on 01904 699524 or in writing to safeguarding@yorkdiocese.org with a proposal for the extension request and we can discuss how this can be supported.

- **Is there help available for people affected by the Past Case Review Process?**

Individuals who wish to make representations to the PCR2 process or who need to come forward with information or make any disclosures regarding church-related abuse are encouraged to make direct contact with their Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, who can provide pastoral support and access to support services. However, recognising that this may not feel safe for those with a lived experience of abuse from within the church, a **dedicated telephone helpline - 0800 80 20 20** - operated independently from the church, by the **NSPCC**, has been set up.

We understand reporting abuse may be very difficult and distressing and it may add to a person's feelings of harm by our not being able to immediately access assistance, therefore here are the contact details of other agencies that are available to assist either on a 24-hour basis or through specialist helplines and services:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are worried about a child.

Child-line: 0800 1111 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are a child or young person and are worried about anything.

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are experiencing domestic abuse.

Samaritans Helpline: 116 123 (open 24 hours). Phone if you feel you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to.

Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: 0808 808 8141 (free phone Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm)

National Rape Crisis Helpline: 0808 802 9999 (open every day from 12.00 noon - 2.30pm and 7.00pm - 9.30pm).

The Survivors Trust: 0808 801 0818 (open Monday to Wednesday 10.00am - 7.30pm, Thursday 10.00am – 6.00pm and Friday 10.00am – 2.00pm).

A list of support services for survivors is available at www.churchofengland.org/media/18788.

- **How do I ask a further question?**

If you have any questions then the Diocesan Safeguarding Team are here to help you. Please contact us on the numbers noted below (in normal office hours) or by email at safeguarding@yorkdiocese.org.

Julie O'Hara (DSA) 01904 699524/07551124951

Rob Marshall (ADSA) 01904 699508/07914668907

Kim Philips (Events Coordinator) 01904 699508

Email: safeguarding@yorkdiocese.org