



# What if.....

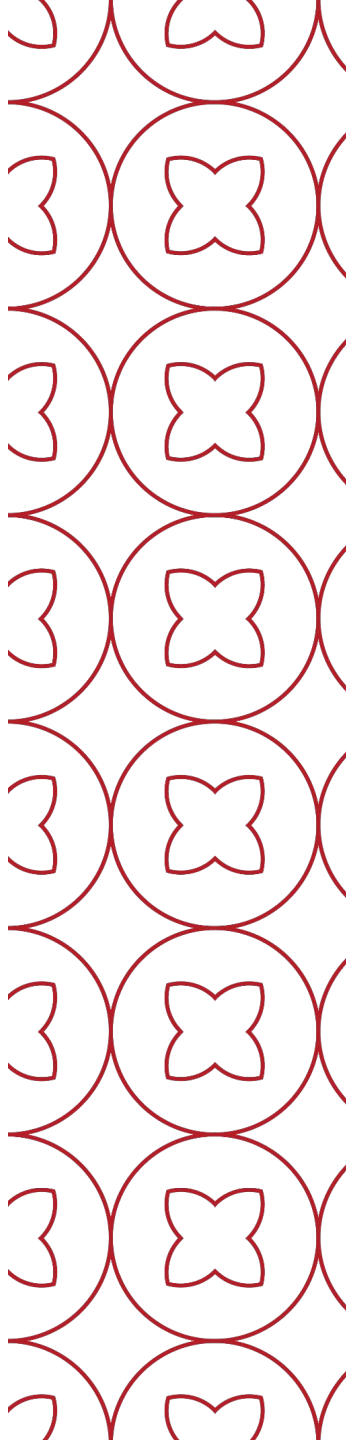
# PSO Forum Nov 25

Nov 2025

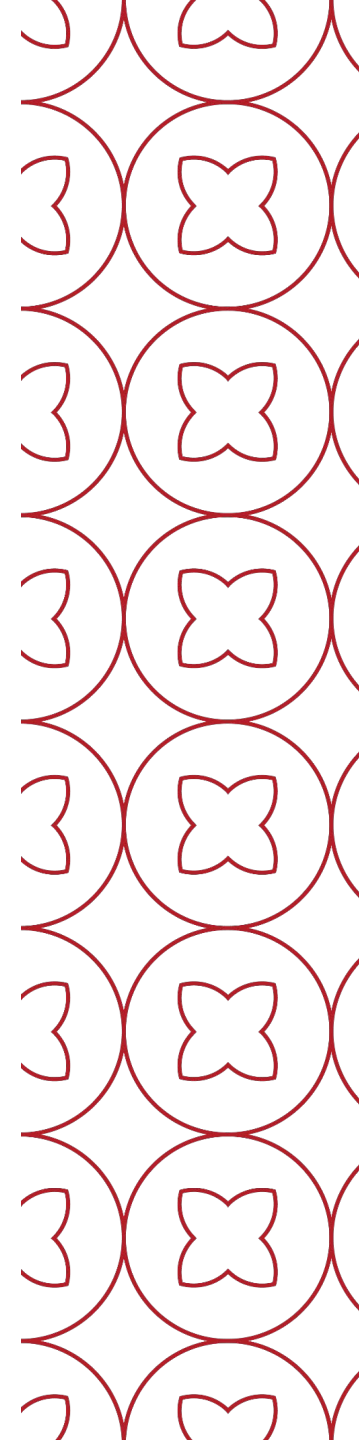
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## PSO Forum – Nov 2025

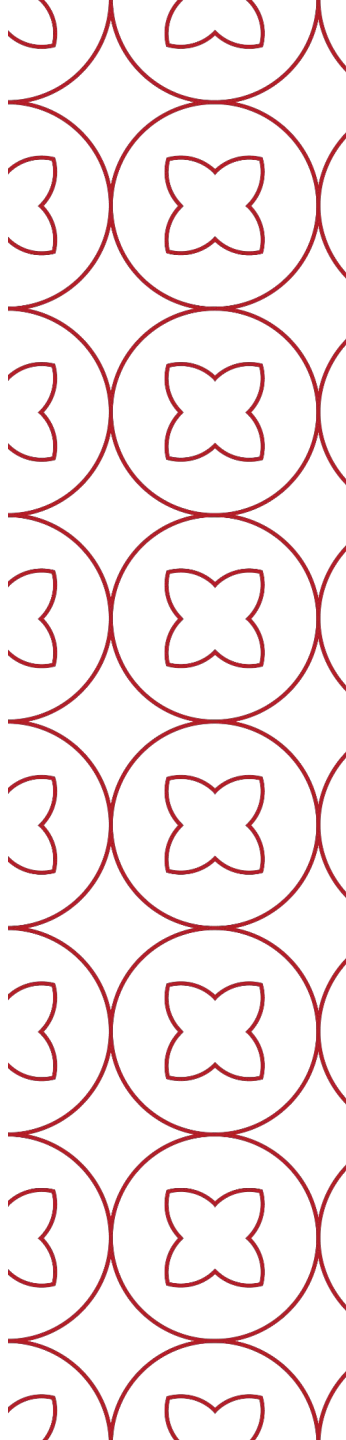
- Welcomes and Introductions
- Case Study / Scenario work through
- Break
- Questions and updates



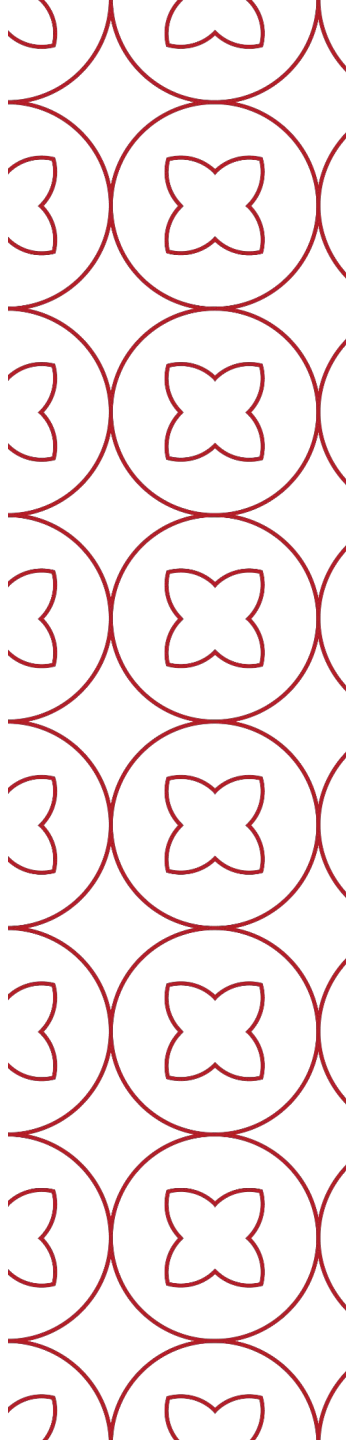
- **Safeguarding Scenario**



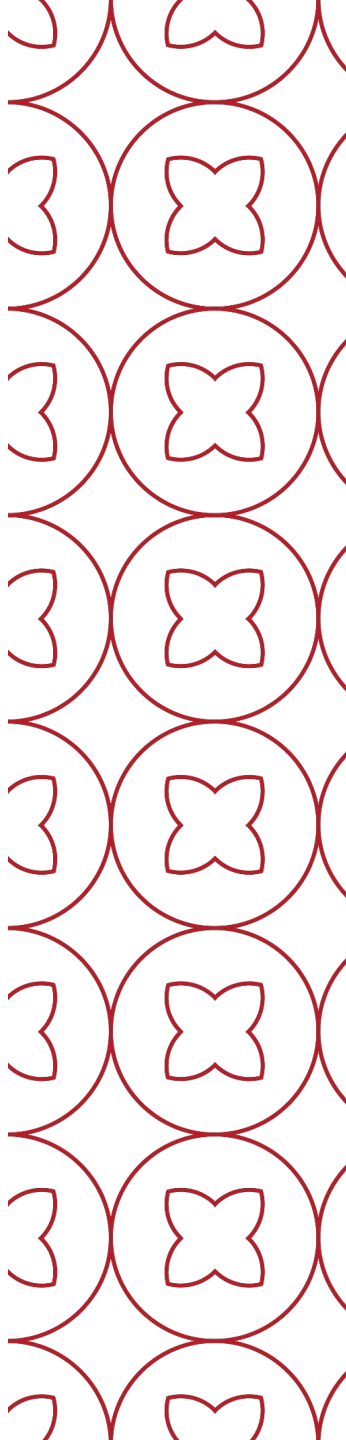
- St Johns church is empty except for a small group of flower arrangers. The door opens and a man enters. He introduces himself as Michael, he is new to the area and is looking for a church for him and his family to settle into.
- Michael went on to say that some years ago, his mum's funeral took place at the church and he remembers how well they cared for him and the family and it would be nice to experience that kind of care again.
- He asks about the choir and whether there are any people under the ages of 16 who usually attend – he explains he has an 18-year-old son who isn't very mature for his age, and for whom a church choir group has been important in the past, but if younger kids are in the group it might be tricky for them.
- The flower arranger tells him not to worry, the Choir only has 3 young people, all aged 16 and 17 and all behave themselves. They had younger children but they had been too disruptive so they had left.
- **What should the flower arrangers do next?**



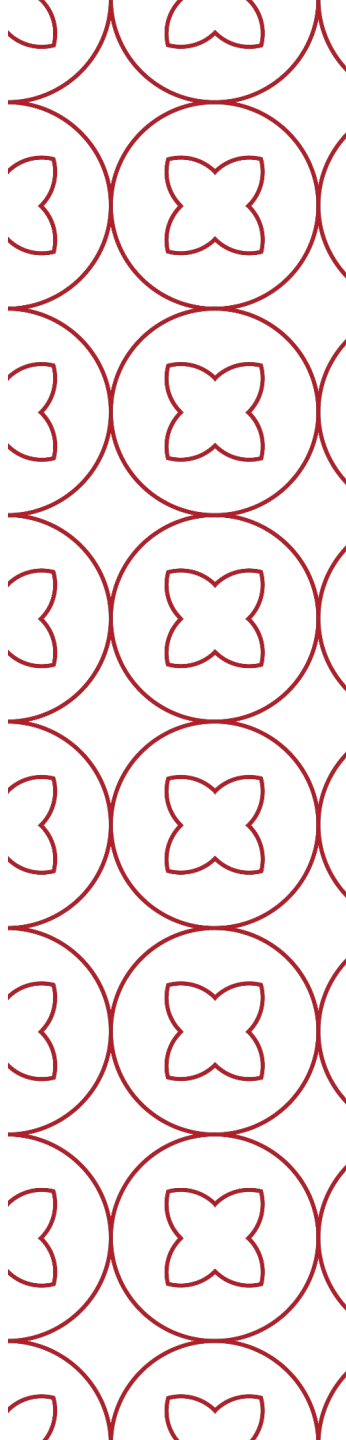
- Give him the times of Sunday Services ?
- Give him the times of the Sunday Services and say they will be there to welcome him?
- Give details for the choir?
- Any worries?



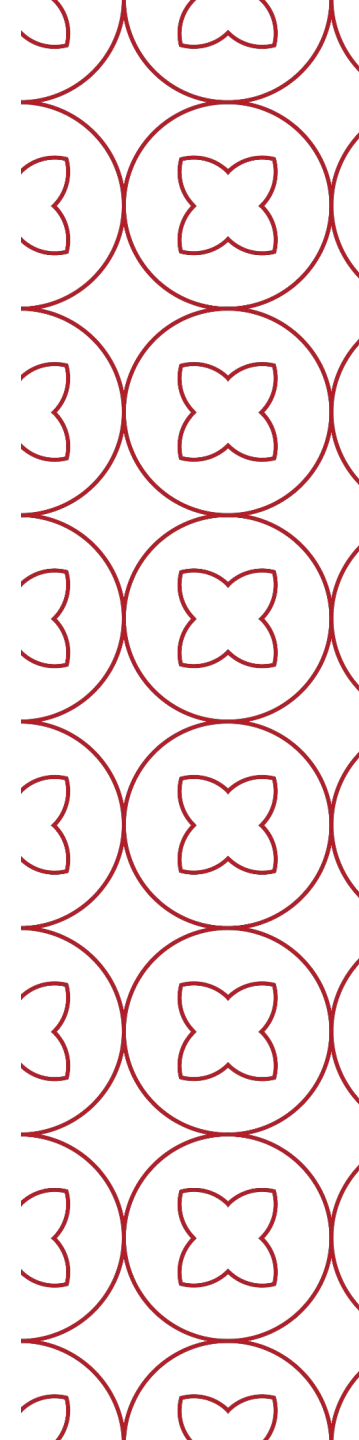
- Michael attends church on Sunday with his son, David. They sit at the back of the church and Michael stays with David throughout.
  - They don't engage with anyone else at all, at one point Michael stops David getting up from his seat by putting his arm across him and saying "Don't move" loudly enough that the people around them hear. Michael then softens his voice and seems to direct David when moving around the church. At the end of the service they leave, avoiding speaking to anyone else. They collect a leaflet about the choir who meet on Thursday evenings on their way out.
  - On Thursday, David turns up at the choir practice, accompanied by his Dad (Michael) who sat and watched and then took him home. The choir master explained that Michael didn't need to be there, but Michael explained he was there to 'supervise' his son, who can "sometimes be a pain".
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- **Any thoughts?**
  - **Breakout Rooms**



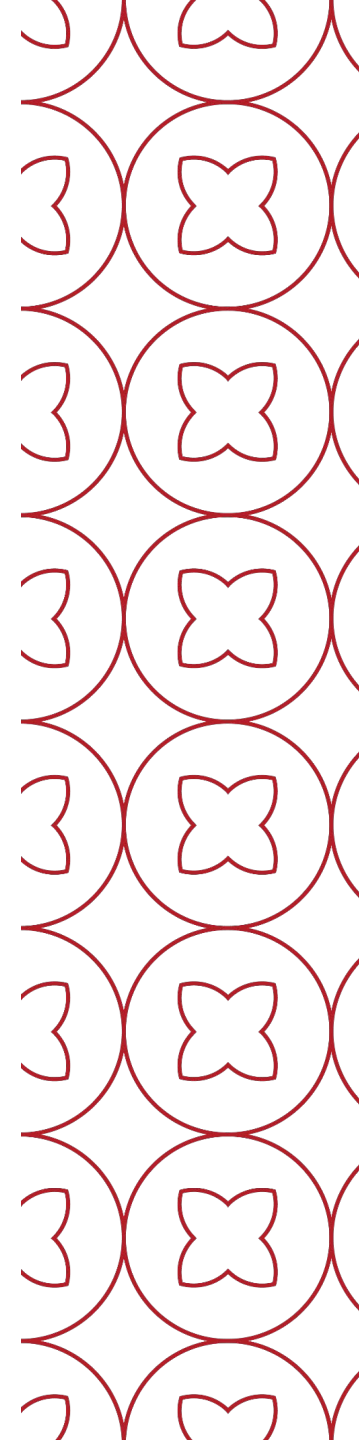
- This pattern occurs again over the next few weeks – they keep themselves to themselves at church and David goes to the choir group every week.
- Every week Michael sits and watches, immediately as the session ends he takes David to the car and they go home.
- The choir master thinks something might not be right and tells the PSO about what is happening. He is just a bit worried that something feels 'off'.
- **What are your thoughts and what would you do next?**



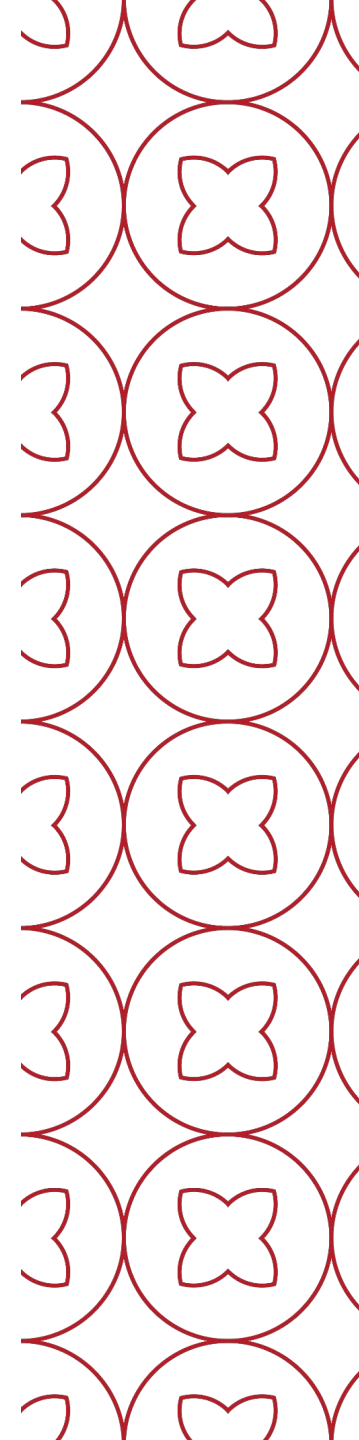
- The PSO is a bit worried about what he is hearing and decides to tell the Vicar.
- The Vicar agrees that it is a bit strange and they discuss whether to call the DSO. In the end the vicar decides that as she hasn't ever properly had the chance to introduce herself to Michael, she will approach him on Sunday and try to get to know the family a bit more.
- The vicar Speaks to Michael who explains the last few months have been difficult for him and David – they are looking to make a new start but are in 'limbo' at the minute. He thanks the Vicar for taking an interest but explains it's personal and he doesn't want to talk about it at church. The vicar invites him to the Vicarage so she can see if she can help
- **What are your thoughts about the meeting and what would you do next?**
- **Breakout Room**



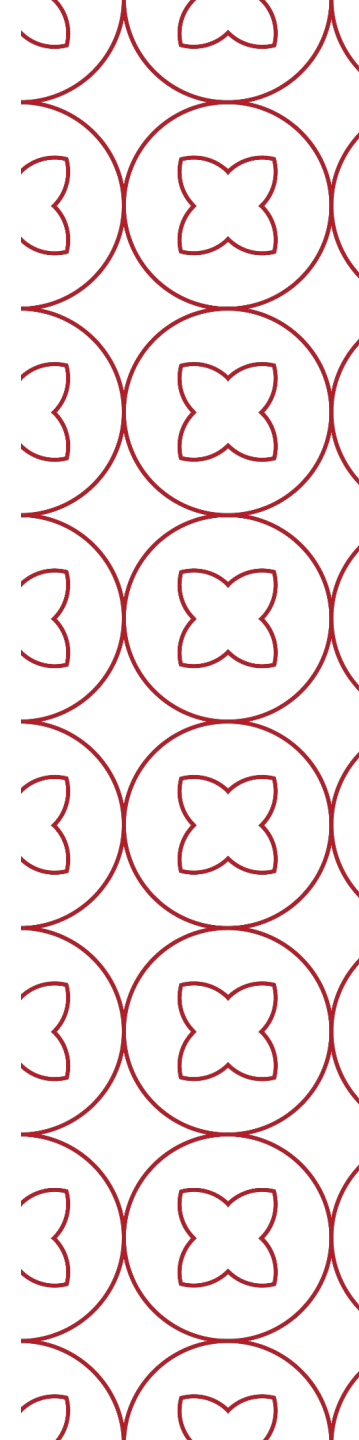
- The vicar asks the PSO to be present for the meeting, as whilst she intends it to be focussed on pastoral matters, the PSO pointed out that they don't know much about anyone in this scenario, it is important to keep everyone safe.
- Michael arrives and explains that David was arrested by police a few months ago for "talking to a 14 year old girl on the internet". He explains "it's all been blown out of proportion" but David has conditions in place that mean he shouldn't have unsupervised contact with any child under 16.
- Michael makes sure David doesn't fall foul of this by making sure he stays with him at church, and at choir. Michael insists this is fine, and that nothing else needs to happen.
- He thanks the vicar, but explains he doesn't need any help. It will be "sorted soon and things will go back to normal"
- **What are your thoughts and what would you do next?**



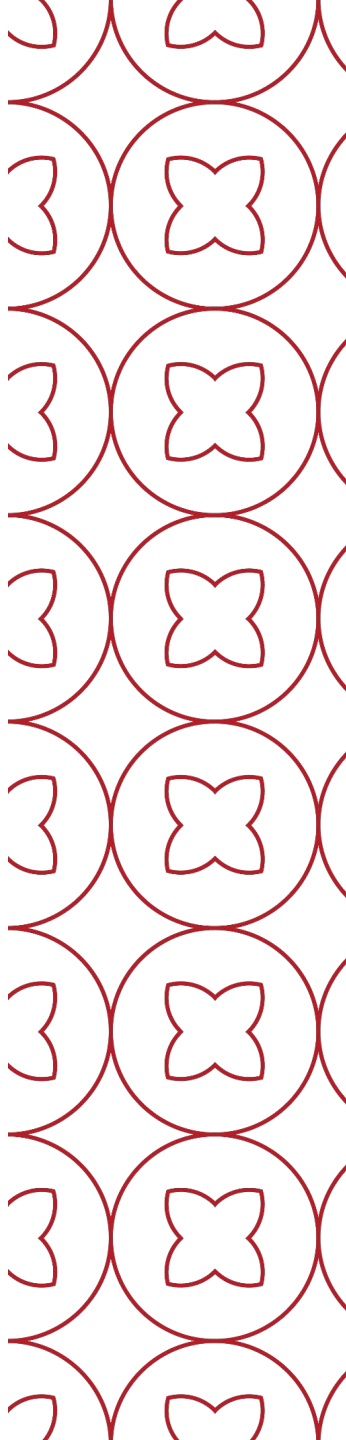
- They decide to call the Diocesan Safeguarding Team
- The DSO advises that the PSO should seek the name and contact details of the Officer in Charge [OIC] from David. There is information here which suggests that David may pose a risk to other people
- A meeting will then be arranged and an agreement will be drawn up in order that David can attend church safely.
- This will inform a personal safety plan for David, the full details of which will only be known to a small number of people – these people are the ‘Reference Group’.
- **Question – Should his Dad, be in the Reference Group?**



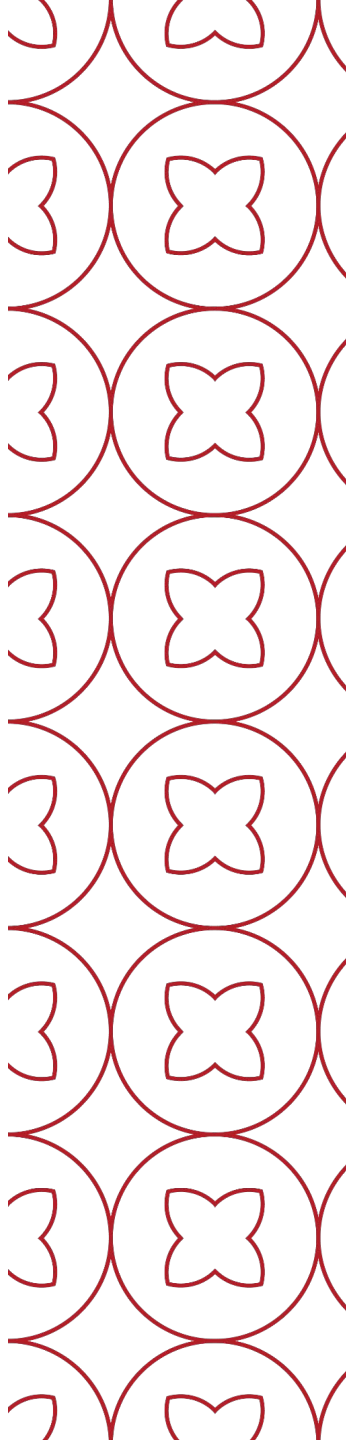
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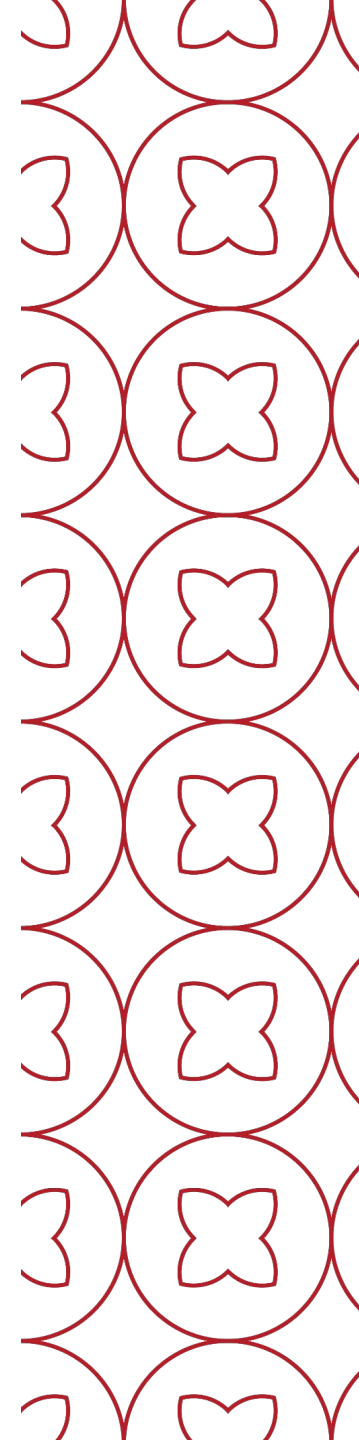
- The arrangement goes fine until one day Michael approaches the vicar and explains that the Police have dropped the case against David, saying “they have decided to drop it all and take no further action” and explains that they can now forget the agreement. He wants the reference group to be told that the police have dropped the case and his son is innocent.
  - He says he knew he shouldn’t have agreed to it in the first place and now people will think badly of his son, and he’s “done nothing wrong”.
  - He says – “That agreement can go in the bin now, and you can leave David alone”
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- **What might the next steps be?**



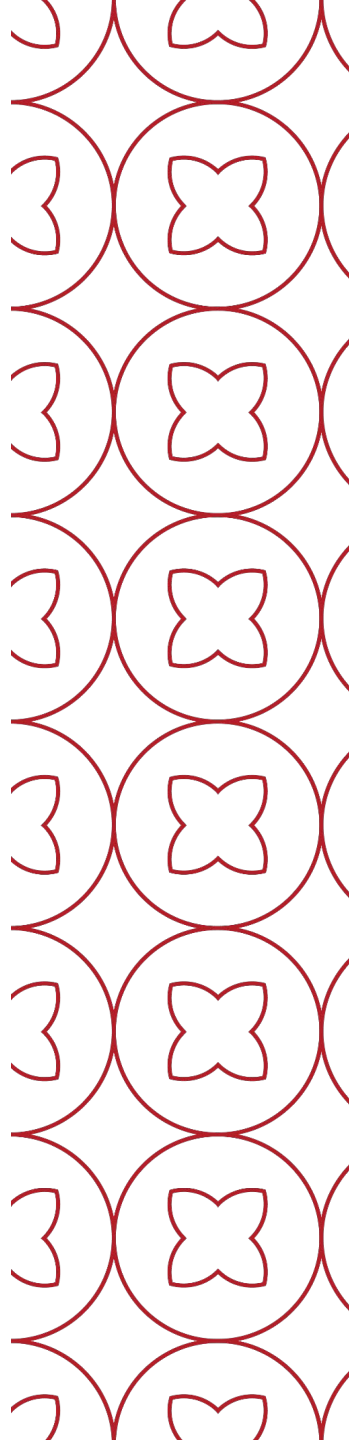
- The DSO contacts the OIC who explains that the victim declined to go to court, and this meant there was no realistic chance of conviction, so were unable to take any further action.
- The police said they found evidence on David's Ipad that he had been visiting youth chat sites often and had been talking to young people frequently but the content of the chat was not retrievable.
- The police will not be taking any action. David has not been charge, cautioned, or found guilty of any offence
- Do we need to do anything else? Do things go "back to normal"?
  
- **What happens next?**
- **Breakout Room**



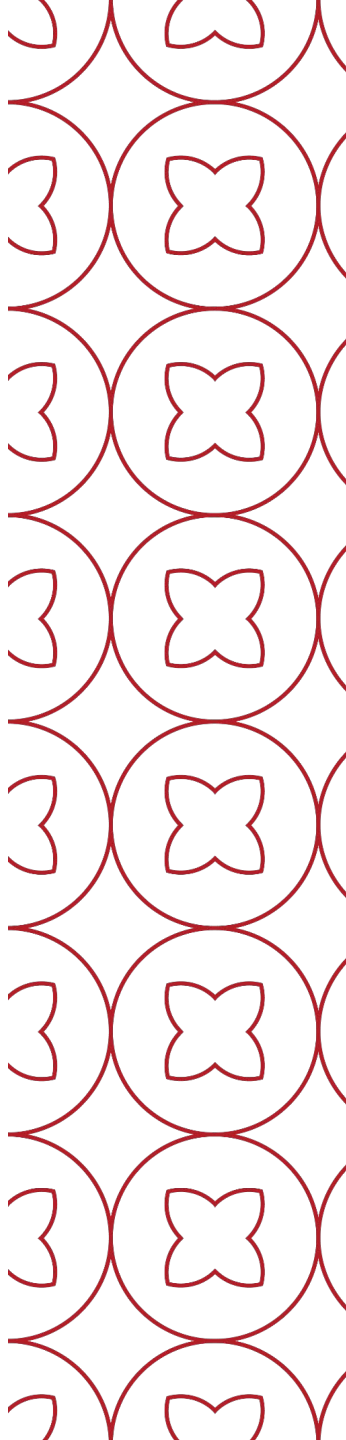
- A risk assessment is required to understand whether David poses a risk to anybody in the church setting.
- The police has shared information which suggests David *MAY* pose risk to others – there were barriers to prosecution that may not relate to risk
- **In this case the NFA outcome does not mean there is no risk, just that the case did not meet a criminal burden of proof. The safeguarding bar is a lower burden of proof. Identification of potential risk is the priority.**
- **People have a right in law to worship at their local parish church and where this applies, we cannot refuse entry, however we would need to ensure the relevant safeguarding measures are in place regardless. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team would support parishes in instances like this.**



- A risk assessment is required and any risk needs to be addressed – this is likely to be by using a ‘safety plan’ or ‘safeguarding agreement’ in the same way as whilst the police investigation was ongoing.
- In the assessment David explained that he found “younger people” more attractive to him, aged 12 years and up. He liked them as “friends” and would consider one of them being his girlfriend, although not until they were 16 because he knew that was “probably wrong”.
- He explained that he had suggested meeting up with a 14-year-old girl but “just as friends” and that he “didn’t fancy her anyway”.
- **Is there likely to be any risk?**



- A safety plan is put in place, restricting his engagement with young people and David is able to be welcomed safely, when adhering to the plan.
- A reference group is put in place to help support him and oversee the plan is working well
- The DSO and the reference group review the agreement at regular intervals.
  
- Everyone at church is kept safe!!



**Break time**

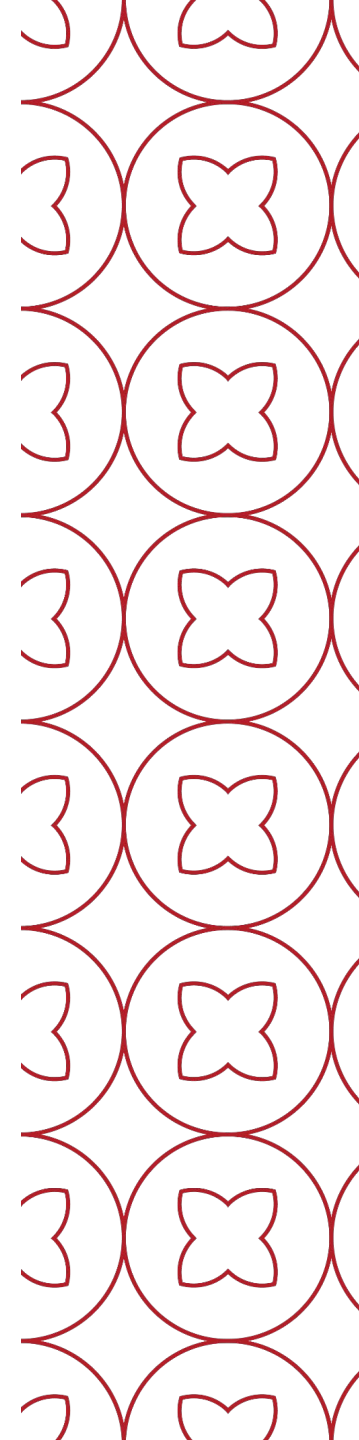


Incels and Misogyny - recorded session

The recording of the basic Incels and Misogyny session is now available on the national safeguarding training portal - it can be accessed here:

[Incels & Misogyny Training - Basic Level: Incels & Misogyny Training - Basic Level | Safeguarding: Training Portal](#)

The recording will be available until September 2026.



## National Safeguarding Panel - Local Safeguarding Voices

The NSP operates as an independent advisory body led by the Independent Chair.

While the NSP has no executive functions or separate legal personality, it operates as an extension of the Archbishops' Council and is funded by the Archbishops' Council.

Importantly, the panel maintains its independence, offering rigorous scrutiny, challenging existing practices, and providing valuable advice. Its focus lies primarily in policy and practice areas and has no role regarding individual safeguarding cases.

In addition to recruiting Independent Members, the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) is also seeking Diocesan Safeguarding Officers and Parish Safeguarding Officers to sit alongside the panel and bring vital local safeguarding insight to national discussions.

This is a valuable opportunity to:

- Share your frontline safeguarding experience at a national level
- Help shape Church of England safeguarding policy and practice
- Ensure diocesan and parish perspectives are heard and respected

All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

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If you are interested, please email [Rebecca.Moronfolu@churchofengland.org](mailto:Rebecca.Moronfolu@churchofengland.org) or [Wendy.bradley@churchofengland.org](mailto:Wendy.bradley@churchofengland.org)

