

Supporting survivors of abuse

Our safeguarding work is informed by a variety of legislative and national Church requirements, diocesan policy and practices; and, importantly, by the voices of those who have experienced abuse.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to supporting someone who has in the past or is now experiencing abuse of any nature. Every context is different of course, some people will identify as survivors of abuse, others prefer to identify as victims of abuse, and some as those who have experienced/are experiencing abuse. Throughout this document we have used the term 'survivor' as a term simply to capture these identities.

This fact sheet sets out in brief how people can expect to be responded to by the diocesan central safeguarding team and others in our church and worshipping communities; what support might be available, where other organisations and professionals may be useful; and we have been asked to share a few resources that some other survivors of abuse have personally found helpful.

In addition to the diocesan resources detailed here, a dedicated telephone helpline, **0800 80 20 20**, operated independently from the Church, by the NSPCC, has been set up for anyone (child or adult) affected by issues which may arise as a result of a national Church past case review process (PCR2). Further details are on the national Church of England website: [churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/safeguarding-news-statements/past-cases-review-2](https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/safeguarding-news-statements/past-cases-review-2)

1. Our commitment

We recognise that experiencing abuse from within the Church can have a profound impact on a person's life, faith and spiritual wellbeing. The language that is used sometimes can be unhelpful and we know that there have been times when the Church has not responded well to those who have shared their story.

If someone contacts the diocesan safeguarding team to talk about their personal experiences, our commitment is that:

- You will be taken seriously and listened to.
- Where there are any actions to follow up, we will talk these through with you.
- Where we can offer further advice and support, we will.
- Where there are other organisations or bodies that might be able to help and advise, we will signpost you to them.
- If you call or email and leave a message, you will be responded to within 24 hours of your message.
- If you receive an out of office message from us it will always direct you to an alternative way of reaching someone. (We also have an out of hours phone and messages left will be responded to as quickly as possible.)

2. Contacting the Diocesan Safeguarding Team

The team is based at Church House in Gloucester and supports all our churches and worshipping communities in their safeguarding policy and practice. We deal with casework, work with statutory bodies, and work together with them to join up things wherever that is appropriate; we run training and awareness-raising workshops; importantly we have links to local, regional and national safeguarding related organisations. All the contact details you need are here:

www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/safeguarding

3. Contact from the diocesan Safeguarding Team

On occasions it may be that we need to contact someone because either a process or review has identified where either statutory reporting, risk mitigation, criminal investigation or survivor support has been inadequate. In such cases the team will never contact someone without having carefully researched, planned and checked that immediate care and support can be accessed. We ensure appropriate anonymity and the assurance that sensitive information shared will be handled professionally. Any approach will be person-centred and sensitive, and we will always ask individuals how we can offer support to them.

4. Getting feedback

The Diocesan Team always finds getting feedback from survivors on our advice and support helpful. This informs our practices and shows us where we might either learn from a situation or offer a wider or different approach. Anything from an email, call or face to face meeting is welcome.

In turn, we ensure that any feedback received is shared (anonymously and within updated policies and practices), with our Safeguarding Advisory Panel (SAP). The SAP is a diocesan board with an independent chair that acts as challenger and champion for all our safeguarding work.

5. Support and contact details

There are a range of networks and organisations that we can signpost people to. Many have websites and contact details freely available. We promote and link up where we can with:

- Childline
- NSPCC
- The Samaritans
- National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)
- Gloucester Domestic Abuse Support Services (GDASS)
- Gloucestershire Children's Helpdesk
- Gloucestershire Adults Helpdesk
- GRASAC (Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre)

- National Domestic Violence Helpline.
- National Stalking Helpline.

6. Resources that some survivors of abuse have asked us to share that they personally have found helpful.

It is hard to recommend theological and spiritual resources for individual survivors as everyone's circumstances are different. We can offer the following links to those independently searching to understand the church's pastoral, theological and spiritual response, which can be especially helpful to survivors who are still members of a local church.

The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church – a theological resource for the local church

The Faith and Order Commission

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/theologicalresourcefaocweb.pdf

Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Aftermath of abuse

The Faith and Order Commission

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/forgivenessandreconciliation_0.pdf

For a list of helplines and links that might be helpful please see the next page.

Helplines

These free helplines are here to help. Unless it says otherwise, they're open 24 hours a day, every day.

[Samaritans](#) – for everyone
0330 094 5717

[Childline](#) – for children and young people under 19
0800 1111 (the number won't show up on your phone bill)

[NSPCC](#) – national helpline
0800 80 20 20

[GDASS](#) - Gloucester Domestic Abuse Advice Service
Monday to Friday 9-5pm
01452 726 570

[Teens in Crisis](#) – check the website <https://ticplus.org.uk/>
01594 372777 or text 07520 634063

[Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\)](#) – for men
5pm to midnight every day
Call **0800 58 58 58** or visit the **webchat page** www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/

[Papyrus](#) – for people under 35
Monday to Friday 10am to 10pm, weekends 2pm to 10pm, bank holidays 2pm to 5pm
Call **0800 068 41 41**
Text **07786 209697**

[The Silver Line](#) – for older people
Call **0800 4 70 80 90**