

Safeguarding Policy and Practice Statement

The Diocese of Sodor and Man and the Diocesan Board of Finance recognise and are committed to fulfilling our obligation to the protection and safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The care and protection of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all.

The Diocese of Sodor and Man is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and service of the Diocese.

The following five statements have been agreed as the diocesan vision for safeguarding:

- Safeguarding flows from our faith in Jesus Christ - it's part of who we are.
- We long for a day when safeguarding is second nature - woven into Island life, simple, trusted, and instinctive.
- We celebrate a culture of 'safe caring' - done well, embraced by all, and part of our shared identity.
- Our safeguarding aims to be clear and compassionate - guided by relationships, not bureaucracy.
- We want every church and ministry to be a place of sanctuary and welcome - for all ages, at all times.

This document sets out the Diocese of Sodor and Man's Safeguarding Policy which should be read in conjunction with the relevant Church of England safeguarding policies and practice guidance as set out in Annex I. Taken together, this policy and Church of England safeguarding policies and practice guidance help the diocese, parishes and individuals work towards a safer church for everyone.

Application of policy

The policy applies to all church bodies and church officers within the Diocese of Sodor and Man. This is a Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and is not applicable to the Cathedral. Those who work or volunteer in the Cathedral must adhere to Cathedral specific safeguarding policies and procedures.

In accordance with the Church of England's policy statement [Promoting a Safer Church, 2017](#), the Diocese is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may present a risk to others

Promoting a safer environment and culture

The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk of harm is the responsibility of everyone within a church community. The church community, including all its members, must be alert to risks and dangers and be prepared to report concerns and to take action as, and when, necessary.

The Diocese will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions for children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is the responsibility of all who work and volunteer in the Diocese, and particularly those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In [Promoting a Safer Church](#) a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as 'a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired'.

The Diocese will strive to support all those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. We will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments through the provision of training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes.

The Diocese strongly encourages and supports full and consistent use of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard by parishes, as an administrative tool for recording actions against requirements as set out in current safeguarding policy, practice guidance and this policy.

Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Diocese

The Diocese is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all Church officers (clergy, volunteers and employees) and accepts and follows the Church of England's Guidance on [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#) (2021). It is expected that parishes will follow the same practice guidance in their recruitment of volunteers and paid staff with responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Diocese will equip and train all those who have responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be

done by providing and co-ordinating consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with the Church of England's [Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework](#).

Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Diocese will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the relevant policy and practice guidance from the Church of England: [Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults](#).

All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and will be recorded in line with the relevant safeguarding practice guidance.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the DSO, or other designated safeguarding officer in another church body, to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All Church Officers will co-operate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the Diocese will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations: [Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against Church Officers \(2017\)](#).

Anyone should feel able, if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk, to contact either the police or local social services. Where possible, consent should be given by the child or young person's parents or the vulnerable adult, unless it is considered that seeking consent will increase the risk of harm.

The Diocese is committed to continuing to learn how to respond to victims and survivors in a supportive way and a [Complaints Procedure](#) is available for anyone who is unhappy with the way their concern has been addressed by the Diocese.

Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

The Diocese will offer care and support to all those in their care who have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred. All victims or survivors and other affected persons will be offered the support of a safely recruited and trained support person.

The Diocese is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing ways to the needs of those who have experienced abuse and offers trauma informed response to disclosure training for anyone who wishes to engage with it.

Those who have experienced abuse connected to the Diocese will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Diocese will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with the policy and the practice guidance of the Church of England. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support.

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or others will be considered with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved and to the administration of justice.

Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

The Diocese, in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, will respect the rights under criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law of any accused. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and (where appropriate) Church inquiry process. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

The Diocese will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when there are known persons accessing church services and activities who are considered to be a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding risk assessment and safety plan.

Church Officers who are subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. The Diocese will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families as well as the parishes and congregations affected by the concerns or allegations of abuse.

Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

The Diocese will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safety plan in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law.

The Church based on the message of the Gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member, or anyone who seeks to become a member of a church community, who may present a risk of harm to others due to the following:

- having a conviction or caution for offences against children or vulnerable adults or;
- who has been barred or prohibited in some way from working with children or adults or;
- is considered to present a risk to either group but the outcome of an investigation is as yet unknown

Where an individual comes to the attention of the Diocese we will seek to implement a safety plan, where it is safe to do so, in line with advice from the local statutory agencies. Any agreement will contain safeguards for the individual and children and/or adults at risk and the parish.

Safeguarding and Seal of the Confessional

The Policy Guidance document Responding to, Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations against Church Officers (2017) states that *'All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.'*

The only exception to this requirement concerns information received under what is known as "the seal of the confessional", which is subject to a duty of absolute confidentiality. (The legal position here follows from the still binding Proviso to Canon 113 of the Code of 1603, which stipulates this duty of confidentiality).

The seal of the confessional does not apply to each private or confidential conversation between a priest and another person, but only to confessions heard formally, in the manner set out in Canon B29, sections 2, 3 and 4. This provides for priests, in specific circumstances and following the directions of the Canon, to hear personal confessions and – if the confessor is truly penitent – grant absolution. This practice is often called "the Ministry of Reconciliation

The Report of the Seal of the Confessional Working Party (March 2018) is the latest position statement available, and this should be read and understood by clergy offering the Ministry of Reconciliation.

This report quotes in full clear guidance given to clergy around the Ministry of Reconciliation in section 3 of The Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy (2015) . Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of this guidance should particularly be noted and followed:

'3.6 If, in the context of such a confession, the penitent discloses that he or she has committed a serious crime, such as the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, the priest must require the penitent to report his or her conduct to the police or other statutory authority. If the penitent refuses to do so the priest should withhold absolution.'

3.7 The canonical duty of absolute confidentiality does not apply to anything that is said outside the context of such a confession. In particular, if information about abuse that was disclosed when seeking the ministry of absolution is repeated by the penitent outside that context the priest must follow the established procedures for reporting abuse of children or vulnerable adults.'

Church of England Safeguarding Policy & Practice Guidance Promoting a Safer Church

[Promoting a Safer Church](#)

[National Safeguarding Standards](#)

[Safeguarding e-manual](#)

[Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Officer Holders and Bodies](#)

[Code of Safer Working Practice](#)

[Safer Environments and Activities](#)

[Safer Recruitment and People Management](#)

[Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework](#)

[Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults](#)

Responding Practice and Policy Guidance

[Safeguarding e-manual](#)

[Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults](#)

[Responding to, assessing and managing concerns or allegations against Church Officers](#)

[Responding Well to Domestic Abuse](#)

[Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse](#)

Local help lines for further support

Elderly

Age Concern Isle of Man

631740

Citizens Advice Service:

Douglas 626863 Southern 833976 Ramsey 813466

Adult and Children's Services

(Office hours) 686179

Adults out of hours duty social worker

650000

Drug and Alcohol Team

617889

Children out of hours duty social worker

631212 (Police HQ)

Mental Health

(24 hr line) 650000

Crisis and home response team 642860

Hospice

Hospice Isle of Man provides support for the family of a loved one who has died.

Tel: 647449 Website: www.hospice.org.im

Isle Listen

A positive community mental health project focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Tel: 679118 Website: www.islelisten.im

Bereaved survivors of suicide

Email: dhiggy@manx.net Facebook Group: Bereaved Survivors of Suicide Isle of Man

Cruise Isle of Man

Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support to anyone who has been bereaved. Tel: 668191 Website: www.cruseisleofman.org

Samaritans

Call 116 123 – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year Email: jo@samaritans.org

Police

999 / 631212

Public Protection Unit: Public Protection Unit, 01624 631301

Relationships

Relate 623902

Victim Support enquiries@victimsupport.im - Opening hours: Monday to Friday - 08:30am-4:30pm 679950

Women's Aid/Refuge

677900 Plus Facebook page

Domestic abuse Police phone line on (01624) 631212 or the Domestic Abuse Officer directly on (01624) 631495.

Websites for further information and resources

www.nspcc.org.uk

<https://womensaid.org.uk>

<https://www.restoringrelationships.org>

www.stopitnow.org.uk

www.scie.org.uk

www.ceop.police.uk

www.wearehourglass.org/action-elder-abuse-now-hourglass

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.barnardos.org.uk

www.spiritualabuse.com

www.modernslavery.co.uk

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Written by: Tony Connell. Diocesan Secretary

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