

To:

All Incumbent and Licensed Clergy
Churchwardens in vacant parishes
Dean of Winchester Cathedral
Prior of Alton Abbey
Parish Safeguarding Officers

Dear colleagues

February 2020

Past Cases Review 2 - urgent action required

Deadline for signed response 31 March 2020

In 2007, the Church of England commissioned a Past Cases Review which sought to review the handling, by the church, of child protection cases over many years. This review 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 acted on appropriately.

In the spirit of the Gospel we all want to protect and care for our children and vulnerable adults, at a time when the Church's safeguarding policies and practices are under close scrutiny. I am sure you will recognise the importance of being as sure as possible that all known instances of concern have been addressed.

The Archbishops' Council has now directed all dioceses to embark on a comprehensive independent review of all relevant safeguarding information held by parishes and other church bodies and has expanded the review to cover cases of abuse and concerns against vulnerable adults – now known as adults at risk of abuse.

In order to complete this review, please would you therefore make thorough enquiries to identify:

- **all known safeguarding concerns, past and present which relate to the behaviour of clergy and other church officers.**

The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that all concerns about the behaviour of clergy and church officers towards children and vulnerable adults have been considered and dealt with appropriately.

What sort of concerns to look for:

Please endeavour to identify any records that detail the following behaviours, which need to be reported as safeguarding concerns:

- Behaviour which has harmed, may have harmed or is likely to harm a child or vulnerable adult, including neglect
- Possible commission of a criminal offence against or related to a child, including the viewing, downloading or possession of indecent images of children
- Possible commission of a criminal offence against or related to an adult
- Behaviour which indicates that the person is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults
- More than one low level concern which would not, taken individually, meet the threshold for referral but taken together would justify further exploration
- Alleged cases of young people over the age of 16 who later say they gave consent and which have not led to prosecution or a caution
- Cases where victims have reported abuse, but it has subsequently lacked foundation

These behaviours may include: physical, sexual, emotional and domestic abuse, neglect, discrimination, theft, fraud, and financial exploitation. A list of types of concerns is provided in Appendix 3

Who is a “church officer”?

A church officer is: *anyone appointed or elected by or on behalf of the church to an office, post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.*

This includes all clergy, including retired clergy and those with PTO, deceased clergy, licensed lay readers/ministers, and all lay parish employees and volunteers.

Information is not being requested on worshippers and those attending church activities subject to safeguarding concerns, who do not hold formal office in the Church.

The details of all persons managed under safeguarding agreements should already be known to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office, however the advice of the Diocese Safeguarding Office should be sought in any instances of doubt.

How to conduct your review

- 1) Please begin by checking all available documentary records held by the parish, going back as far as records may be available.
- 2) Where there appears to be a past concern full details of which are not known, please make every attempt to identify those persons involved who may hold additional information. For example, you may wish to make enquiries within your parish, of past volunteers and members of the congregation, for issues of concern that fit the criteria, whether or not they have previously been reported.

- 3) Please review your records of known instances of concern about the behaviour of clergy or church officers within the parish(es), both non-recent and current. We are asking you to include a list of these cases so that we can ensure that they have been notified to the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager.

How to complete your review

Please complete the forms included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and return them by email to: PCR2@winchester.anglican.org or by post to: Past Cases 2, Diocesan Office, Safeguarding Office, Old Alresford Place, Old Alresford, Hants, SO24 9DH, as soon as possible.

A written response in the forms is required from every parish and church body, which receives this letter. You should return the signed return, *even if your enquiries have not identified any concerns*.

The deadline for returns is 31 March 2020

Thank you

Jackie Rowlands
Safeguarding Manager
Diocese of Winchester

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