

Responding to a Disclosure or Safeguarding Concern

When responding to a **disclosure or concern**, remember the 4 “Rs”: recognise, respond, record and refer.

Disclosures and safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people must always be reported to the PSO or the incumbent regardless of whether or not the child or young person has given their consent.

The person receiving a disclosure or concern should:

- Listen carefully to what the person is saying, bearing in mind that the disclosure may be coming from a third party, i.e. not the victim / survivor
- Allow the person to continue at their own pace
- Not try to investigate or asking probing / leading questions
- Remain calm, be compassionate and reassuring
- Not make promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to confidentiality

Disclosure or safeguarding concern involving a child or young person:

Safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people is paramount. The person receiving the disclosure or concern should treat the matter with care, respecting the privacy of the child or young person making the disclosure and not share it with others who do not need to know.

Disclosure or safeguarding concern involving an adult:

These require careful consideration as adults have a general right to independence, choice, and self-determination, including control over information about themselves. Where possible the consent of the adult should be gained before the information is shared with the PSO or incumbent.

However, there are situations where the consent of an adult does not need to be sought prior to information being shared:

- If the person disclosing and / or other people are, or may be, at risk of harm
- If a crime has, or may have been, committed
- If sharing the information would prevent a crime
- If the person lacks the mental capacity to make that decision and it is in their best interests to share that information in order to ensure their safety and wellbeing

In any of these situations, the person receiving the information should explain that they have a duty to share it with the PSO or the incumbent.

Providing support:

The person receiving the disclosure should establish whether or not the person needs any immediate support, practical or emotional. This information should be recorded and shared with the PSO or incumbent (see below).

Making a written record:

The person receiving the disclosure should make a written record as soon as possible afterwards. If a third party is raising a concern they should be asked for basic information such as their contact details to allow the PSO or incumbent to follow up on their concerns.

The information to be recorded should include:

- The nature of the disclosure or concern
- The names of people involved
- Contact details for the person raising a concern
- Information about whether other individuals or dependents, such as children or young people may be at risk

The information being recorded should be shared with the person concerned, and any disagreement should be added to the record. A copy of the record may be given to the person if they request it.

The record should be signed and dated by the person receiving the information, and the location or means by which the information was provided, added.

Responding to anonymous concerns or allegations:

Anxiety or fear may lead to some people not revealing their identity in the first instance. The person raising the matter should be assured that their concerns will be treated confidentiality by the PSO and incumbent, and only shared where the nature of the concern makes it necessary to inform / involve the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, or other external professional bodies that can offer advice and support.