

Support for survivors



In the Diocese of Oxford, we are committed to safeguarding all people, both children and adults, and creating a safer church for all. Safeguarding is about more than being reactive; it is part of what it means to be a church where all people are accepted, where those who are hurting are cared for, and which brings light into dark places.

Regrettably, church institutions have been places where sexual, physical and emotional abuse have taken place and those affected have sometimes felt unable to speak out for fear of not being listened to or believed.

This leaflet aims to explain how the diocesan safeguarding team will respond to those who come forward to report abuse and explains the support which is available.

The diocese has been working alongside survivors of abuse in a church context to understand how best to respond to the needs of survivors. Our response will evolve as we continue to listen to and learn from survivors of abuse.

What you can expect

Anyone who comes forward to disclose abuse can expect the following from the diocesan safeguarding team:

1. We will listen to your experience with compassion and humanity.
2. We will explain the Church of England processes to you and give you information to enable you to understand the processes.
3. We will keep you updated on the progress of the case and will agree together how often we will be in contact.
4. We will follow through on actions in an agreed time frame.
5. We will keep your information confidential and gain your consent around sharing information.
6. We will help you understand the choices you have and explore what is right for you.
7. We will discuss with you types of support which are available and help you access the support you would like.

The diocese has adopted a trauma-informed approach and aims to work with victims and survivors of abuse to understand what support would meet their needs.

We realise that it can be difficult and overwhelming to talk about experiences that cause pain. You can be reassured that our safeguarding professionals are here to help you. We take all information shared with us very seriously and **it is never too late to report and seek help.**

You can contact the safeguarding team by phone on **01865 208295** or email **safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org**, Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday, 9am to 4.30pm.

For out-of-hours support we work in partnership with thirtyone:eight. They provide a 24/7 telephone service on **0303 003 1111** where you can access confidential advice, guidance, and support.

Alongside making contact and receiving support through the diocesan safeguarding team, the following options are available through the diocese:

- **Support persons:** Our support persons are people with a church background who are there to support survivors of abuse in church settings. They are there to listen to your experience and help you to work out the next steps.
- **Counselling and Therapy:** We will help you to find a counsellor or therapist who is right for you. We fund counselling and therapy sessions on a case-by-case basis.
- **Signposting:** We work with a range of national organisations providing general and specific support and advice for survivors of abuse. We know that each survivor's experience is different, so by referring you to specialist services we ensure that you are receiving support tailored to you.
- **Pastoral support:** We can arrange for you to receive pastoral and spiritual support.
- **Advocacy:** We work with organisations across the diocese who employ Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) and can support you to access these services. They can offer advice and support on a range of issues including seeking legal advice. They can also help with reporting to the police if you feel able to do so.

Other sources of help

Some people who have been abused in a church setting might feel uncomfortable contacting a church institution. That should not stop you sharing your experiences, and there are other organisations that can help.

NAPAC

National Association for People Abused in Childhood

Helpline: 0808 801 0331

napac.org.uk

The Survivors Trust

The largest umbrella agency for specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the UK.

Helpline: 01788 550554

survivorstrust.org

Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces provide a free and independent confidential service for anyone who has been abused by someone in the church.

Support line: 0300 303 1056

safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk

Victim Support

An independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents

Support line: 080 8168 9111

victimsupport.org.uk

This leaflet has been developed with input from survivors of abuse who meet as a group to advise the diocese on responding well to survivors. If you would like more information on this group, please contact the diocesan safeguarding team safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org or **01865 208295**.

oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding

