



Liverpool Parish Church

Safeguarding Policy protecting children and adults at risk

**Reviewed and Adopted by the Parochial Church Council
12 September 2024**

INTRODUCTION

The Church of England, Liverpool Parish Church (OLSN) and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Liverpool Parish Church, are committed to and will champion the protection of children, young people and adults at risk both in society as a whole and in its own communities. The Church of England, OLSN and PCC will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and adults at risk by supporting parents and carers. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well being of children, young people and adults at risk. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or adult at risk about the behaviour of another person towards any member of these groups, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into abuse is necessary. It fully accepts, endorses, and will implement the common principle enshrined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children Act (2018) and the Children's Act (2004), that the welfare of the child is paramount.

We are committed to encouraging an environment where all people, and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey, with encouragement and in safety. Everyone, whether they see themselves as vulnerable or not, will receive respectful pastoral ministry recognising any power imbalance within such a relationship.

As a Regulated Activity Provider, the PCC is committed to safe recruiting and continuing vigilance for the safety and protection of vulnerable people in our community.

Any allegations of mistreatment, abuse, harassment or bullying will be responded to without delay. Sensitive and informed pastoral care will be offered to anyone who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired and/or help to find appropriate specialist care either from the church or secular agencies will be offered.

The PCC undertakes to review this policy whenever it appears necessary, and, in particular, in response to revisions to the Diocesan policy or new government legislation.

The parish is committed to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust and to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable. The parish will follow guidelines issued by the House of Bishops and the Diocese of Liverpool. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives. The parish commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect. It is people who protect, not just procedures. Our aim is to create informed vigilance at all levels in the church.

This policy has been compiled with reference to with the following documents:

The Parish Safeguarding Handbook

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

Promoting a Safer Church

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/promoting-a-safer-church-policy-notes.pdf>

A hard copy of each is available in the Parish Office and they are also available on our website

Safeguarding Group

The following PCC members constitute the Safeguarding Group of Liverpool Parish Church:

Revd Michelle Montrose (Safeguarding Officer – Vulnerable Adults)

Sarah Wrightson (Safeguarding Officer – Children)

Rupert Litherland

Elaine Price

The role of the parish Safeguarding Group is:

To ensure that the Parish Safeguarding Policy is reviewed, updated and adopted annually by PCC.

To ensure that the policy document is widely available and given to all PCC members and particularly to existing and DBS cleared leaders.

To ensure that the appropriate parish policy is shared with any groups that may use the church premises.

To ensure that all volunteers go through the appropriate recruitment process in conjunction with the PCC and incumbent.

To ensure that each volunteer has a role description and a volunteer agreement in respect of their work.

To monitor parish policies and bring to Safeguarding Group and PCC any difficulties with same.

1. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

There are four categories of child abuse that are used by every local authority in England and Wales:

NEGLECT.

Where adults through carelessness or indifference ignore a child's need or fail to protect a child from any kind of danger.

PHYSICAL HARM.

Where a child has suffered actually physical harm or where it seems likely that injuries have been caused non-accidentally.

EMOTIONAL HARM.

Where there is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. Hurt emotions are just as painful as hurt bodies but you cannot see the scars.

SEXUAL HARM.

Where there is actual or likely sexual exploitation of children or adolescents.

In addition, we identify the following:

SPIRITUAL HARM.

Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically.

DOMESTIC ABUSE.

It must be recognised that children and young people may be harmed in homes where there is domestic abuse.

Liverpool Parish Church follows the Diocesan Policy on this. See website for further details. Rev Michelle Montrose is the contact for all such concerns.

BULLYING.

Children may experience bullying through being called names, having property damaged and/or stolen, through having rumours spread about them, through cyberbullying, through being hurt, and through people getting them into trouble.

For further information, see the Church of England's *Parish Safeguarding Handbook* (2019)¹, pp.7-9.

Recognition of abuse

Children and adults at risks may suffer from one or a combination of categories of abuse. The government guidelines *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018)² identifies four categories: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. In addition, the 'Adult Safeguarding' section of The Department of Health's publication issued under The Care Act 2014 called *Care and Support: Statutory Guidance* (2014)³ defines abuse as being Physical, Sexual, Psychological, Financial or Material, Discriminatory, and Organisational, as well as identifying Modern Slavery, Neglect and Acts of Omission and Self-Neglect.

1

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Parish%20Safeguarding%20Handbook%20March%202019.pdf>

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

3

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506202/23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf

Concerns about the wellbeing of a child or adult may come from a number of sources:

From the person him/herself

From a family member or other adult

From someone who has abused

From someone who has been abused

From a teacher, health visitor or other professional

In addition, there are various ways in which a child or adult may give signals that possible abuse is taking place: visual, behavioural, verbal or a combination of these. These signals may be manifested in a number of ways:

Visual signs might include a child or adult looking neglected or poorly cared for. There may be unexplained bruising or marks.

Behavioural signs may include a sudden change in temperament (such as suddenly becoming depressed, withdrawn or naughty and disruptive); also, a child may become fearful of adults.

Verbal signs may include inappropriate explanations for bruises or marks or the use of sexually explicit language or behaviour that would not be age appropriate.

If any child or adult at risk drops hints, confides or in any other way discloses information about possible abuse, this must be reported to the Rector (Safeguarding Coordinator) or another member of the Safeguarding Committee.

If you have information about a safeguarding situation where a child or adult is in immediate danger, or requires immediate medical attention, call 999.

If one of the clergy is the subject of the allegation, the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser and/or the Archdeacon must be consulted for advice.

See 'Child Abuse Flow Chart'

Confidentiality

The highest degree of ethical confidentiality must be maintained and information only passed to others who need to know. This personal information from the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Children or adults who disclose will need to know that the information will be passed to a statutory agency, usually the Social Services Department.

It is good practice for clergy to inform the penitent that matters disclosed in confession (or any other context) that include possible self-harm, harm to others or illegal activity would be reported to the relevant authorities.

In general it is advisable to gain agreement from a parent (guardian or other responsible adult) before making a referral to an agency; the child or adult at risk may also be informed of the referral. If it is not in the child or adult's best interests to do this, the justification should be recorded in writing, signed and dated.

Record Keeping

A written record of the conversation should be made as soon as possible; any notes taken during the conversation should be retained.

Do not attempt to investigate the allegation nor contact the alleged perpetrator.

Support of workers

It should be recognised that people involved in dealing with allegations of abuse against children or adults at risk may need support and that this support can be arranged as appropriate.

Safe Recruiting

The appointment of volunteers and paid workers will be made in line with the diocesan policy: [Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance | The Church of England](#)

Images and Social Media

Parental consent must be obtained for any images or recordings made or used in any media or context; for more specific information about the use of images and policy relating to social media see *Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2019)*, pp.39-46 and pp.47-51.

Trips and Outings

Written permission must be obtained whenever children are taken off the premises in which the group normally meets. The consent form should be headed with the title date, and destination of the trip or outing.

As well as the information requested in the General Consent Form a consent form for trips and outings should ask the following:

Details of any infectious diseases with which the child has been in contact in the last 3 weeks; any medication required during the trip/outing; specific consent for each activity to be undertaken during the trip/outing (i.e. if swimming involved is the child able to swim); consent to the transport arrangements, which should be clearly described either on the form or clearly described on an accompanying letter; assurance to be given regarding the competency, insurance etc., of the vehicle and driver.

An accompanying letter must give details of timings for departure and return, and arrangements for getting updated information if there is an unavoidable delay in return. The date, destination cost and transport details should be given, together with a list of items to bring, contact numbers at the venue and the mobile phone number of one of the leaders. A deadline date must be given for confirmation and it made clear that no child may go without signed consent. A verbal consent must NEVER be accepted. Consent forms should be taken on the trip with copies left at the church.

Organisers of any trip/outing should collect consent forms well in advance.

A risk assessment must be completed for any activity in which children are involved

Recommended Good Practice:

Minimum Adult / Child Ratios

Guidance recommends the following ratio of adults/leaders to children according to their age:

0 – 2 years 1 adult to 3 children 1:3

2 – 3 years 1 adult to 4 children 1:4

4 – 8 years 1 adult to 6 children 1:6

9 – 12 years 1 adult to 8 children 1:8

13 – 18 years 1 adult to 10 children 1:10

We have increased the Diocesan minimum levels so as to allow for a child to be taken to the toilet with still a minimum of 1 adult remaining.

Facilities in Toilets

Ideal ratio: 1 toilet and hand basin to 10 children.

Environment

Areas used should be clean, warm, adequately lit and ventilated.

Special Needs

We are able to accept and accommodate children with special needs following discussions between the child's parent and Sunday School Leader.

Entrances and Exits

Should be clear and safe at all times; should ALWAYS be viewed as areas of RISK to ANY child unsupervised.

One adult / One child

Where the adult is not the parent of the child. 1:1 management should be kept to a minimum. This is especially important when not in vision of others.

Administration

An accurately maintained Register and Record of children MUST be maintained.

Alongside a record of attendance of children, parents and others involved in Sunday School, a record of contact numbers, medical information, consents etc. must be kept (this is a Police requirement, necessary if any allegations are made).

For further information relating to recommended good practice (including health and safety) see *Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2019)*, pp.39-46.

The Role of the Church

It is expected that every member of the church community will take an active and responsible role in protecting children and adults at risk. For further clarification about the role and procedures for safeguarding relating specifically to churches, see *Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2019)*, pp.34-38.

Safeguarding procedures are regularly updated and the law will often change. Any updates will be found at:

www.liverpoolcofe.org/safeguarding-matters

Training

Diocesan policy will be followed.

DBS

Diocesan policy will be followed.

Recruitment of Ex Offenders

Diocesan policy will be followed. See website for details.

2. Vulnerable Adults

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time, everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is invulnerable; some people may consider themselves to be strong but, when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognize and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person, we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity.

In order to bring into focus those people for whom the Church should have a particular care this working definition may be helpful:

According to Section 6 of the *Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016* (cited in the appendix to *Parish Safeguarding Handbook, 2019*), the term 'vulnerable adult' refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. Some factors that increase vulnerability include:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute.
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- A learning disability.
- A physical illness.
- Dementia.
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- Failing faculties of old age.
- Those who are homeless.

- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum).
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion.
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood.
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma.

Some factors that increase vulnerability include:

These factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.

What we mean by ‘Abuse’

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately, or unknowingly, causes him or her harm, endangers their life, or violates their rights. Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological, and financial or may arise through neglect. Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation. Abuse concerns the misuse of power; control and/or authority and can manifest itself as:

- Domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Racially or religiously motivated assaults
- Discrimination and oppression
- Institutional abuse

Abuse can take place in the person’s home, day centre, family home, place of employment, community setting and in public places (including churches and ancillary buildings). Any act of abuse, whether a single act or repeated, is a violation of the individual human and their civil rights.

Abuse can take various forms:

Physical Abuse This is the ill treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury.

Psychological abuse including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Neglect This is any pattern or behaviour by another person, which seriously impairs the individual.

Financial/Legal Abuse This is the wilful extortion or manipulation of an adult at risk's legal or civil rights including misappropriation of monies or goods.

Domestic Abuse Statement on website

Sexual Abuse Any sexual act carried out without the informed consent of an adult at risk is abuse. It includes contact and non-contact abuse.

Spiritual Abuse Within faith communities harm may be caused to adults at risk by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice.

Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Modern Slavery This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Self-Neglect This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Examples of each of these categories of abuse can be found in the Diocesan Policy, along with indicators of abuse.

Abuse can be intentional or unintentional, passive (e.g.) neglect, or active (e.g.) hitting. It may be part of a significant pattern of behaviour or a one-off

incident. It can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, community settings - anywhere.

A single act of abuse or repeated acts of abuse is a violation of the individual's human and civil rights. It is important to recognise the vulnerability and possible 'childlike' state of survivors, especially when they are in crisis or the early stages of healing. They can be over-compliant and easily manipulated. Power abuse within pastoral care is a real danger.

Dealing with reports of Abuse

The adult safeguarding procedure identifies three distinct roles in the protection of vulnerable people.

Alerters

Investigators

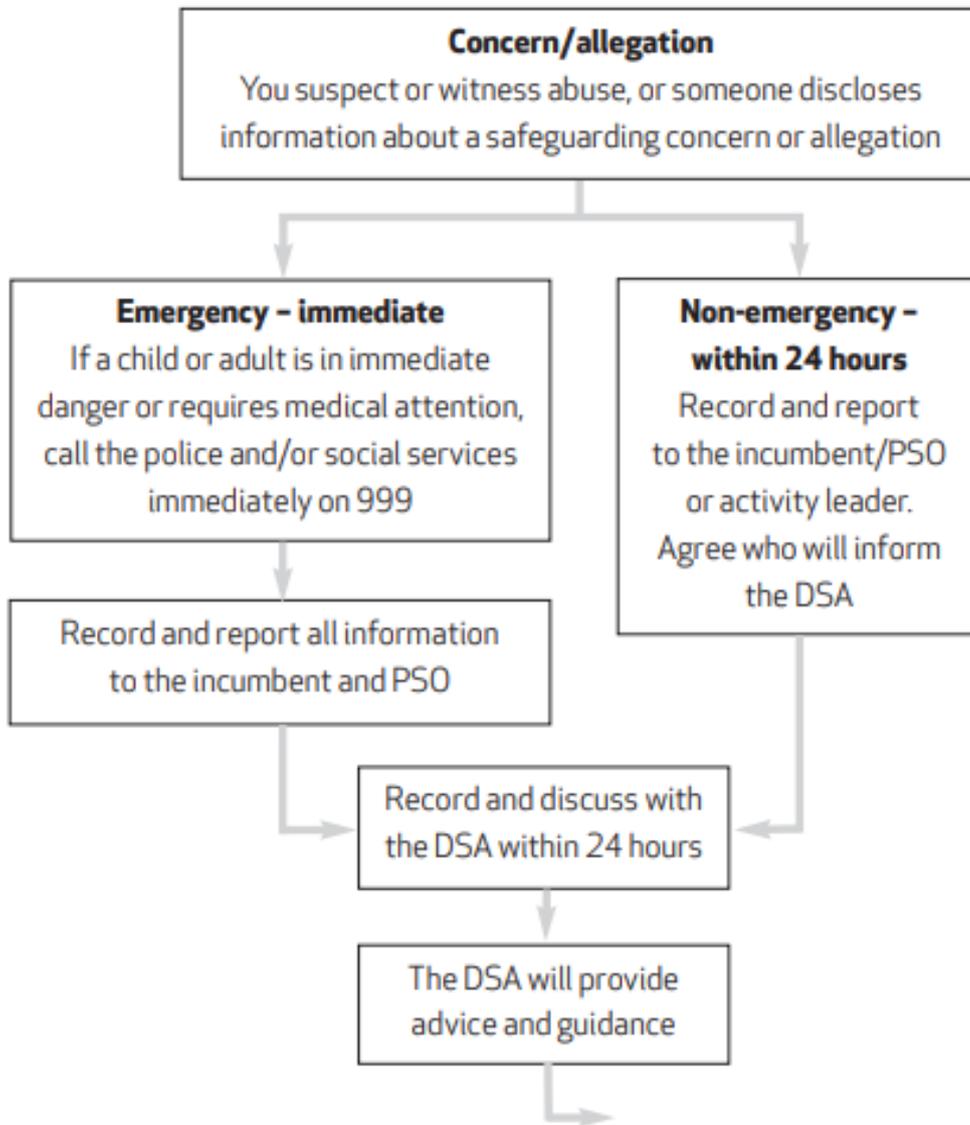
Managers

Lay people and Clergy act as Alerters. Their duty is: to report suspected acts of abuse; to be alert to what abuse means and take seriously what they are told; to think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice; to work strictly in accordance with anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist and anti-disability practices; to ensure the safety of the person you suspect is being mistreated as well as your own safety; to contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation; to be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

If lay people receive disclosure from an individual, they should inform the parish priest. They should also record the disclosure in writing as soon as possible. The Parish Priest will inform Careline/Social Services, then the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Adviser who will inform the Archdeacon.

Please note if the case you are dealing with involves the abuse or suspected abuse of a child by an adult at risk then the child takes precedence and must be given priority. This should be reported using the procedures set out in Part 1 of this Document.

Quick Guide:



Andy Holmes, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

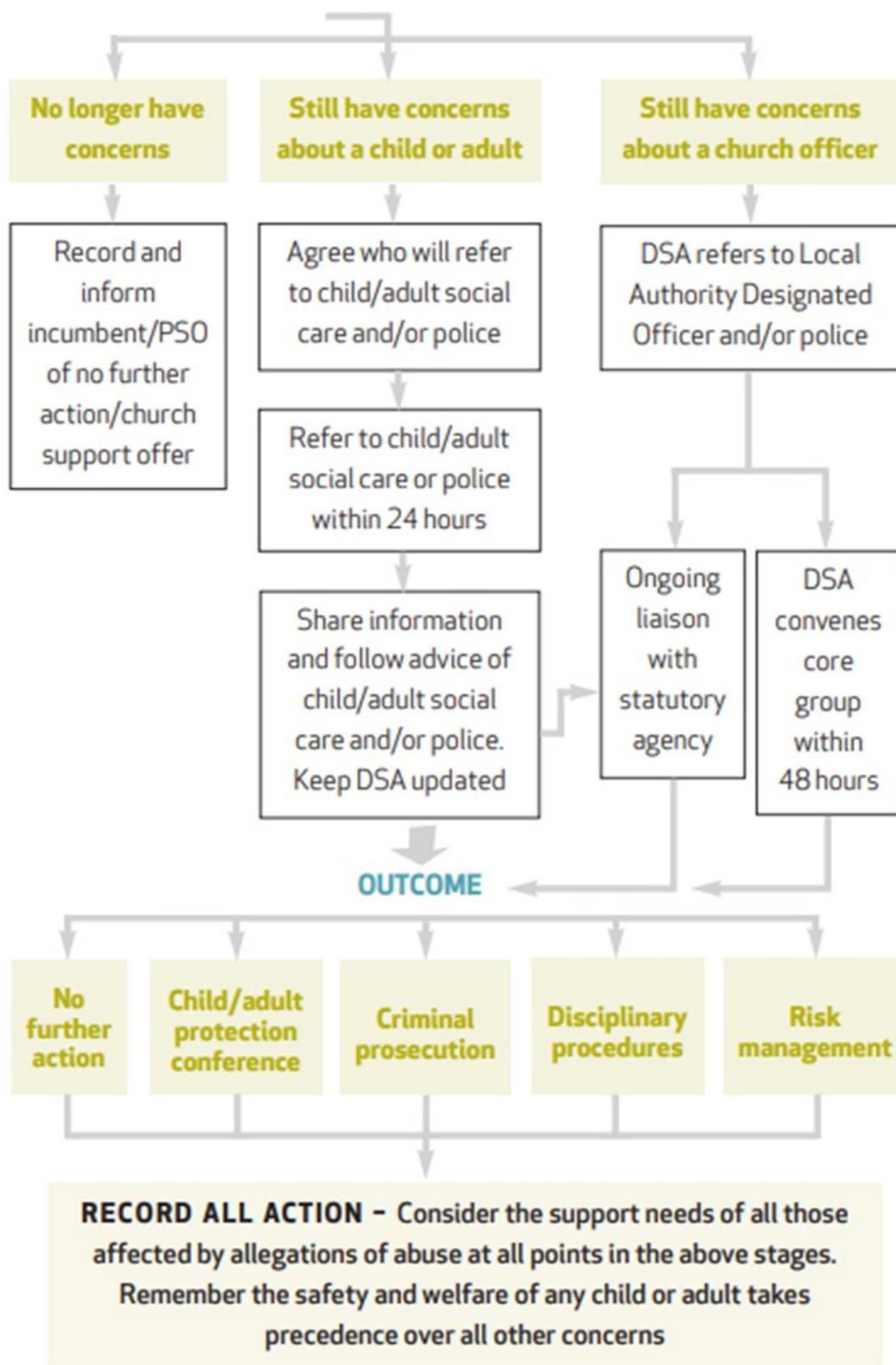
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