

What do I do if...?

I have been or am being abused, and want to tell someone about it or get help.

If you have been abused or are being abused now, the first thing to know is that the abuse is not your fault. No-one deserves to be abused, although it is very common for victims of all types of abuse to blame themselves. Sometimes this is because their abuser has made them feel guilty or told them it is their fault. Sometimes it is because the abuse itself feels shameful, or because victims blame themselves for not being able to stop it. Or at times – particularly when the abuser is a close relative or other significant person – it may be more straightforward for a victim to blame him or herself rather than believe that this person is capable of such behaviour.

The second thing for you to know is that there are sources of help available. It is important for you to tell someone what is going on, so that the abuse can stop and you can be safe. There are some situations where this can be very difficult. You may choose to tell a friend or family member, but you may feel that it would be better to talk to a person in a specialist role who is used to dealing with reports such as these, and who will have a good understanding of what to do next.

It is very important for you to know you are not alone – if you have been or are being abused you will very likely feel that you are, but there are many people in specialist roles who have a lot of experience in helping people in your situation, and will not dismiss what you have to say, or be so shocked by it that they won't know how to help. These people work in these roles to help people in your situation; they will be compassionate, but also practical, and talk through with you how best to respond to what you have told them.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team will respond without fail to all enquiries and disclosures. Contact 01522 504079/80 Safeguarding@lincoln.anglican.org

The **police** take reports of abuse very seriously, and you should feel encouraged to report what is happening to them. A report can be made by telephoning either 999 or the non-emergency number, 101, and asking for Lincolnshire Police.

Domestic Abuse

Support is offered specifically regarding domestic abuse on the Local Authority websites, including specific advice on what to do in the event children are involved and how to go about leaving your abuser. The link to this website can be found here:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/domestic-abuse>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/domestic-abuse/>

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/people-health-and-care/worried-about-someone/worried-about-a-relationship/>

There are also specialist organisations across Lincolnshire for people who have been abused. Here are some of the main ones, with a brief description and contact details:

If you live in either West Lindsey, Lincoln, North Kesteven or South Kesteven please call:

West Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Service

Telephone: 01427 61 62 19 / 01522 51 00 41

www.wldas.org.uk

If you live in East Lindsey area please call:

East Lindsey Domestic Abuse Service

Telephone: 01507 60 98 30

www.personalisedsupport.co.uk/ui/content/content.aspx?id=271

If you live in either Boston Borough or South Holland area please call either:

Boston Mayflower

Telephone: 01205 31 86 00

www.bostonmayflower.org.uk/domestic-abuse

Boston Women's Aid

Telephone: 01205 31 12 72

www.bostonwomensaid.org.uk

Childline is a free 24-hour counselling service provided by the NSPCC for children and young people. Childline deals with any issue which causes distress or concern, such as child abuse, bullying, mental illness, neglect, substance abuse and psychological abuse. Childline's intention is to always keep calls confidential. Childline counsellors take action, however the situation, big or small, if they can help.

Helpline: **0800 11 11**

www.childline.org.uk

SARC [Sexual Assault Referral Centre]: provide a safe environment where victims of Rape, Sexual Assault or Sexual Abuse can get support and advice. They also provide the possibility of making a report to the police and undertaking a forensic examination (if this is what you choose). They are open to all victims, regardless of whether they want to report a crime to the police or not. There are often other options available to you that you may not have considered, and pathways to the right kind of help for you.

Email: info@springlodge.org

Website: www.springlodge.org

Mon to Fri (9am–5pm) –**01522 52 44 02** Out of Hours: **01371 81 26 86**

The Blue Door is a specialist service which provides support to anyone that has experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence in North and North East Lincolnshire and those who have experienced rape and serious sexual offences in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire through a variety of advocacy, outreach workers, groups and programmes.

Helpline: 0800 197 47 87 Office: 01724 841 947

<http://www.thebluedoor.org>

Lincolnshire Rape Crisis

Are now open in Lincoln on Melville Street, to support women and girls who have suffered any form of sexual violence at any point in their lives.

To talk to a support worker ring 0800 33 45 50

For opening times and more information please go to:

<http://www.lincolnshirerapecrisis.org.uk>

What do I do if...?

I know or am worried that a child has been or is being abused.

The most important thing to remember if you are worried that a child has been or is being abused, or you know that this is the case, is that **child protection is everyone's responsibility**. Don't think that if you know or are worried, then someone else either knows or is thinking the same thing and hopefully they will be able to deal with it.

The second most important thing to remember is that child protection is about telling the right people, who can help the child, what is going on. It is not your responsibility to intervene, investigate, or make a proper assessment about whether an allegation of abuse is or is not true, or whether or not the allegation amounts to a crime, or whether or not the person alleging the abuse is motivated by malice, money, or anything else. It is simply your responsibility to tell the appropriate people who can effectively intervene.

If the information you have suggests that a child is at immediate risk of being harmed, you should tell the police without delay. This is an emergency and it is appropriate therefore to use the police emergency number – 999 – to make this report.

If you are worried about a child but do not think that there is a risk of immediate harm, you should still speak to someone who can help as soon as possible. Whilst you can contact a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, we are not an emergency service or a replacement for the Local Authority Children's Service teams, and our very clear recommendation is that you should approach your local Children's Services department before approaching the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to seek advice and, depending on the advice you receive, to report your concern.

The contact details for the Children's Service department to report a concern about a child across Lincolnshire are below:

Opening Hours are **8am–6pm, Monday–Friday**

Call the Customer Service Centre on **01522 78 21 11**

Out of Hours Emergency

Monday to Thursday from 5pm to 8.45am and on Fridays from 4.45pm all the way through to 8.45 am on Mondays, with a 24-hour service on Bank Holidays, please call **01522 78 23 33**

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children Board

To report a concern: 01724 29 65 00

Out of Hours: 01724 39 65 55

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LSCB - Local Safeguarding Children Board

To report a concern: 01472 32 61 18

You can also speak to the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000** or help@nspcc.org.uk.
www.nspcc.org

What do I do if...?

I am worried an adult has been or is being abused.

If you're worried about an adult and think they may be a victim of neglect, abuse or cruelty, please call the Customer Service Centre (CSC) on **01522 78 21 55**.

Outside office hours contact the Emergency Duty Team on **01522 78 23 33**.

You do not need to know everything about the situation or what is happening. You may just be worried, or feel that something is not right.

If you believe that a crime has been committed and there is an immediate risk of danger, telephone the police on **999** or **112**. If a crime has been committed but there is no immediate danger, dial **101**.

People who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired can contact the police's typetalk service. The typetalk landline numbers are **01522 55 82 63** and **01522 55 81 40**, the mobile number is **07761 91 12 87**.

If you believe a child or young adult under the age of 18 years might be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm (including any mistreatment or abuse), contact the Children Services CSC on **01522 78 21 11**. If it is outside normal office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty Team on **01522 78 23 33**.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know is experiencing **Domestic Abuse** and you want advice or support:

- If you live in Lincoln, West Lindsey, North Kesteven or South Kesteven, call **01427 61 62 19** or **01522 51 00 41**
- If you live in East Lindsey, call **01507 60 98 30**
- If you live in Boston and South Holland, call **01205 31 86 00** or **01205 31 12 72**

You can do this without giving your name. You should make a note of your concerns, what has happened and anything you have done about it.

If you are concerned about someone you know, try to speak to them, if it is safe to do this. Tell them why you are concerned and ask them what they want you to do about it. Always try to get them to agree to getting help.

If somebody has told you that they have been abused, it is likely to have been one of the most difficult things they have ever said. It may have taken weeks, months or years for that individual to 'open up' about what has happened to them. It is understandable for you to feel unsure about what to do, most people have little experience of helping someone through this kind of thing.

The most important thing is to listen, don't question. Believe what they are saying and tell them this.

Victims of abuse can be confronted with lots of choices. Should they report their assault? Ask for counselling? Get checked out at a clinic? Allow them to be in control and ask how you can help. It is important that they come to their own decision of what the next steps may be. However, you should always be clear that if what they tell you indicates a child may be at risk as well, you will have to report what they say to the relevant authorities.

What do I do if...?

I am concerned that the behaviour of someone in my church towards children may cause them harm.

Firstly, child protection is everyone's responsibility, and the welfare of the child is paramount. These two principles underpin all child protection work and really help in situations like this one. If you are concerned about the behaviour of someone else in church, you may very probably feel conflicted: they may be a friend, or a respected member of the church community. You may find it almost impossible to believe they could ever really mean harm to children, and you may be acutely aware that if you 'accuse' them (of which more in a moment) others in the church won't believe you, and will rally to their defence. You may also be legitimately very concerned about 'false allegations', and may have worried a lot about your concerns, repeatedly asking yourself *"But what if I'm wrong?"*

All of these are important concerns that cannot be dismissed lightly, but the point of quoting the above two principles is that none of those other concerns (or anything else we haven't mentioned here) are more important than the welfare of children, and if you have the concern it is your responsibility to bring it forward to the appropriate people. The answer to the question you may have asked yourself – *"What if I'm wrong?"* – is another question: *"What if you're right?"*

With regard to 'false allegations' against someone, these are far rarer than many people believe, but they are not unheard of. Sometimes people simply misread the signs and believe someone has malicious intent towards children when in fact they do not. Sometimes people make an accusation against the wrong person (a case of mistaken identity, for instance), and, very rarely, someone may make something up about another person out of spite or with intent to discredit them.

The important principle to remember is that the best way of identifying false allegations is to treat all allegations the same. By dealing with each allegation according to the same process, in an open, transparent yet confidential way, those few allegations which are false are more likely to be highlighted early.

If you are concerned about the behaviour or intentions of someone in your church towards children, please do not hesitate to communicate those concerns. You can discuss them locally with your parish priest and/or safeguarding officer (unless the concerns are *about* them, of course), but you should approach the Diocesan Safeguarding Team directly to discuss your concerns.

Concerns are dealt with confidentially, fairly, and in an open-minded way, but we will always place the welfare of children and adults over all other concerns.

The Safeguarding Team can be contacted as follows:

Debbie Johnson

T: 01522 50 40 81

Penny Turner

T: 01522 50 40 80

For training information, please call 01522 50 40 68 or send an email to safeguarding.admin@lincoln.anglican.org

What do I do if...?

I am worried about the mental health of someone in my church.

If you are reading this section, you will probably be concerned that someone is either a risk to themselves or to someone else. You may know someone who is suicidal, or who has an eating disorder, or you may know someone whose behaviour appears to place others at risk.

Mental health problems range from reactions to normal life events, such as bereavement and relationship breakdowns and depression, to more complex conditions such as schizophrenia

Children and young people

Specialist support is available to children and young people with a range of complex mental and emotional health issues, on the **Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust website**.

For more general information and advice, **visit the national NHS website**.

Kooth.com is a free, anonymous, confidential online counselling, advice and support service for young people aged 11–19 years living in Lincolnshire.

YoungMinds also provide information and support regarding on child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

Shine is a Lincolnshire mental health support network.

Adults (18 to 65 years old)

Find services available to adults such as self-help and psychological therapies, crisis resolution, home treatment and acute inpatient care, on the **Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust website**.

For more general information and advice, **visit the national NHS website**.

Services for older people

Older people can suffer from mental health problems, just like anyone else and specific services are available to elderly people.

The national NHS website can provide further advice about **dementia** or **Alzheimer's Disease**.

You can also download the **Lincolnshire Joint Strategy for Dementia 2014-17**

Suicide and self-harm

If you are feeling suicidal, there are people you can talk to who want to help:

- speak to a friend, family member or someone you trust as they may be able to help you calm down and find some breathing space
- call the **Samaritans** 24-hour support service on 116 123
- go to your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department and tell the staff how you are feeling
- contact **NHS 111**
- make an urgent appointment to see your GP

If you are concerned that the person you are worried about is suicidal, you can advise them to contact their GP, to attend their local A&E department, or to contact their local Crisis Mental Health team.

What do I do if...?

I am worried that my church isn't following proper safeguarding practices

Two basic principles help in responding to this concern: **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and **the welfare of the child is paramount**. (Even if your concern is about an adult who may be placed at risk by the practice of the church that has worried you, it is still the case that these concerns must take precedence over any other consideration).

If you are concerned that your church is not following correct safeguarding practice, you must raise these concerns so that they can be addressed. You may choose to raise them initially within the church itself – either to the parish priest, the PCC or (more likely) the Parish Safeguarding Officer. In any of those cases we would expect and encourage those with whom you have raised the concern to speak with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to understand what has happened, what can be learned and what needs to change.

If you 1) have already raised your concerns within your church and failed to receive an adequate answer, or 2) feel you cannot raise these concerns as you are concerned about reprisals, you can and should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team directly.

In this instance, you would effectively be 'whistleblowing' regarding your concerns, and it is important that you know that this is the right thing to do. Your church must have a whistleblowing policy, which is derived from Diocesan Whistleblowing Policy also available on our website. Making whistleblowing possible is an essential element of effective safeguarding and a feature of safe organisations. You can be reassured that any step you have taken in good faith to ensure that children or adults are safe in your church – even if it turns out that your concerns aren't justified – will be respected. The Safeguarding Team will work with your local church to ensure that good practice is in place and that you experience no negative repercussions regarding your decision to express your concerns.

Safe organisations are learning organisations, and if you raise a concern that is found to be justified, then our normal approach would be to seek to use this as an opportunity for learning and improvement, rather than 'getting someone in trouble'. On occasion it may be necessary to pursue disciplinary action, but the primary concern is for improvement of practice, not targeting of individuals. We hope this reassures you if you are facing the decision about whether or not to express your concerns about your church to this team.

What do I do if...?

I am worried about my own thoughts and behaviour towards children.

You may be aware that you have sexual thoughts, feelings, fantasies or desires that involve children. You may find this extremely disturbing and feel very guilty, but you may also recognise that at times you indulge in these fantasies and spend time thinking about what it would be like to abuse a child. You may be scared of what you might do, or you may already be aware that you have come close to committing an offence against a child or children. Additionally, you may have spent time on the internet looking at indecent images of children.

If this describes you, then this page gives you some clear, straightforward guidance on what you should do.

Firstly, if you have looked at indecent images or videos of children online, **you need to know that you are committing a criminal offence**. The images you are looking at are crime scenes – each one is an image of a child who is being abused. It is imperative that you stop and get help – please see below regarding an organisation that can assist with this.

Secondly, if you are involved in any way in working or volunteering with children, **you are in the wrong line of work**. Please do not convince yourself that your self-control or moral compass will certainly prevent you from ever carrying out in real life your fantasies or desires. If you are fantasising about abusing children, you may have persuaded yourself that these fantasies are sufficient to satisfy your interest and that you will never act on them. In fact, research shows that fantasy acts as rehearsal – you are practising in your head what you may, one day, carry out. If you have your own children, grandchildren, nephews or nieces or any other children with whom you have close contact in your day-to-day life, then it is all the more imperative that you get help before acting on your thoughts and abusing them.

Thirdly, **you should get help as soon as possible**. However bad the consequences of seeking help might appear, they will be as nothing to the consequences of not getting help and acting on your desires. If you offend against a child you will scar that child for life, and when caught you will almost certainly lose everything in your life that you currently value – family, job, friends, reputation. It is probable that you will be sent to prison and be released to lengthy supervision in the community by the National Probation Service, who can return you to prison should you fail to adhere to the strict requirements of your release licence.

Fourthly, if you are reading this page on this site there is a likelihood you are a Christian. If that is the case, please consider the following points. **Praying about this is not enough.** Temptation and sin thrive in secrecy, and many Christians have found that praying about sexual temptation is simply another way of making sure no-one knows what is going on. Accountability to another person is essential, and you will need to speak to someone about this. **Relying purely on the Holy Spirit and on being a ‘new creation’ is not enough.** The New Testament gives no indication whatsoever that the Christian life will be easy, and makes clear that holiness requires significant, concerted effort. In your case, as in many similar situations where people are struggling with temptation, that effort **must** involve speaking to someone who can help. Finally, **keeping this ‘within the church’ is not enough.** You may have spoken to someone in church about this already, but you will need expert help – just as you would do with any medical condition, or with an addiction, or with financial difficulties. Pastoral care from your church is very valuable but please do not use this as a substitute for getting specialist help.

Stop It Now! is a sexual abuse prevention campaign and helpline which exists to provide help and support to people who are struggling with or frightened by their own behaviours or temptations. They also offer advice to any friends and family-members that might have concerns about others, or parents concerned about e.g. their child’s online activity.

Stop It Now! Offers a confidential email service: help@stopitnow.org.uk (your email address will not be displayed)

You can also contact their anonymous and confidential helpline on: **0808 1000 900**

What do I do if...?

A sex offender has asked to join my church

You may have been contacted directly by the offender him or herself, who tells you that they have a conviction for a sexual offence. Or, you may have heard from one of the statutory agencies – most likely Probation or Police in this case – who give you this information.

However you become aware that a sex offender wishes to join your church, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately who will help you with this process. This is not an uncommon situation and in fact many churches throughout the country have welcomed convicted offenders into their fellowship, and have worked with their own safeguarding advisers, the police and the probation service to ensure that the offender's attendance is safe, whilst allowing them to participate as fully as possible in the life of the church community.

If you contact us about this, we will work with you, the offender themselves, probation and police to assess the risks associated with that offender's church attendance, decide whether on that basis this is the right church for them, and draw up an attendance agreement which will make clear to everyone concerned what the offender can do and be involved with in church, and what they should avoid. All involved sign this agreement and it is reviewed regularly.

This is very common practice throughout the country and is recommended in the statutory guidance document for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa--2>