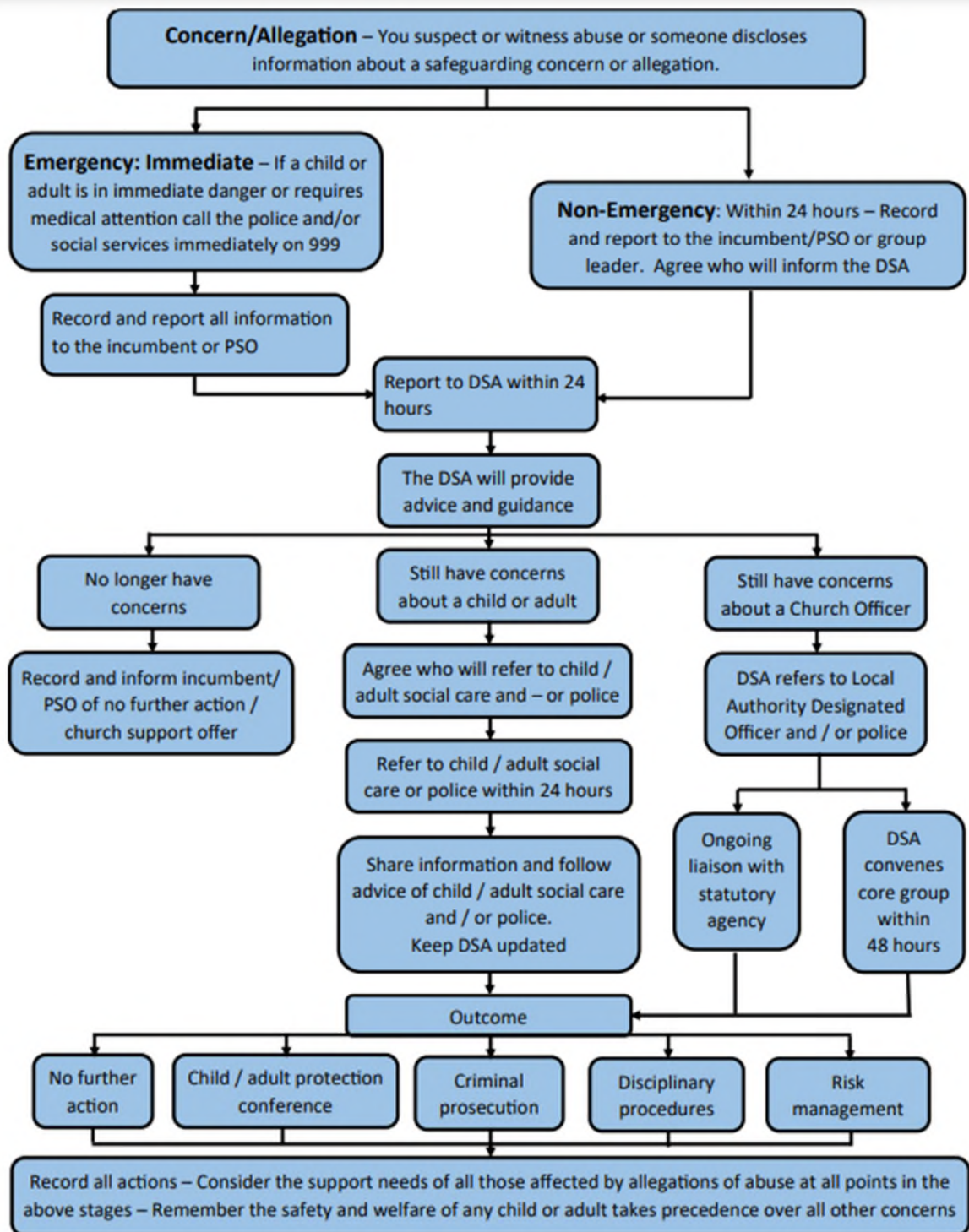


Responding to Safeguarding Allegations or Concerns Procedure

St Peter’s Soberton PCC undertakes to follow;

- The guidance set out in Section 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook when responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations, including those against church officers. Click on the following link to open and read in full. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>
- The requirement for an annual procedural review.
- The process in the Diocese of Portsmouth ‘Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern Flowchart’.



St Peter's Soberton PCC recognises that;

- In all matters involving a concern or allegation that someone has, or may have, caused harm to a child, young person or adult, the welfare of the alleged victim is the paramount concern. No other consideration, however important, can outweigh this primary responsibility;
- Anyone who brings a safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current abuse or something that happened in the past to our notice must be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner;
- It is not our responsibility to investigate, our responsibility is to pass concerns and allegations on. In the first instance this will, unless the allegation is about one of them, involve informing the parish safeguarding officer, ministry team member or a church warden.
- Information can be shared lawfully without consent if it is to keep a child, young person or adult safe from harm, or protect them from the risk of harm.
- All safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations will be reported, in line with Diocesan procedures, to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or where an out of hours service, and we commit to implementing the advice received or any outcome arising from the above process;
- A transparent, fair and accountable process that is consistently applied is in the best interest of all involved, including those against whom allegations are made.

Guidelines for Initial Response to a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Recognise

We might find by:

- A child, young person or adult telling us what has happened.
- A child, young person or adult telling us about their own behaviour towards another child, young person or adult.
- Witnessing abuse directly.
- Noticing concerning behaviour, signs or indicators of potential abuse of a child, young person or adult.
- A disclosure made by someone else who knows the child, young person or adult.
- Anonymous sources tell of abuse.

Respond

- Listen and take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to report what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- At the end check that you have understood everything correctly and clarify if necessary to clear up any ambiguities.
- Ascertain what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Explain that information will need to be shared with the appropriate people.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Respond

- Do NOT make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).
- Do NOT share with anyone other than the appropriate people.
- Do NOT make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Do NOT investigate.
- Do NOT contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do NOT carry out a physical or medical examination

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, or as soon as practicable after the disclosure.
- Always sign and date the record.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the Diocese Safeguarding Team or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report

- Always follow the Responding Promptly to every Safeguarding Concern Flowchart and contact the PSO as soon as possible.
- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the emergency services by calling 999.

Lucie Jones, Parish Safeguarding Officer

September 2023