



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF
WORCESTER

The Rt Revd Dr John Inge
THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER

March 2020

Dear Colleague

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND PAST CASES REVIEW – ACTION NEEDED *and*
HAVING ‘DUE REGARD’ TO SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE**

You will appreciate that Safeguarding is of the utmost importance. I should be grateful if you would read this letter carefully and respond appropriately.

I wrote in September explaining that the Archbishop’s Council has asked all dioceses to undertake a review of past safeguarding cases. The purpose of the review is to ensure that all known safeguarding cases have been appropriately managed, that all identified risks have been assessed and mitigated, and that the needs of any known victims have been addressed. Its objectives are as follows:

- To identify all cases of concern relating to clergy or church officers causing harm to children or adults and to ensure that they have been independently reviewed.
- To ensure that all identifiable safeguarding concerns relating to living clergy or church officers have been referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- To ensure that any allegation made since the original past cases review has been handled appropriately and proportionately to the level of risk identified and that the support needs of survivors have been considered.
- To ensure that cases meeting the relevant threshold have been referred to statutory agencies and that all cases have been managed in line with current safeguarding practice guidance.

Unlike the previous review, all safeguarding concerns relating to church officers at a parish level in regard to behaviour towards children and adults should be included. In order to undertake this review as comprehensively as possible, we need to be confident that ALL parishes have engaged with the process and passed on any information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Hilary Highton (or confirmed that no information exists).

It is recognised that parishes do not, typically, maintain a great many files. But where they are kept, those in scope need to be reviewed. Perhaps of greater relevance will be the checking of the parish collective memory for any safeguarding concerns. All such concerns should be reported to Hilary, whether about a church officer in scope or not. Once reported, Hilary can assist in the decision as to whether the individual about whom a report has been made falls within the scope of PCR2.

The deputy lead bishop for safeguarding, Mark Sowerby has written:

The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. [John 1.5]

The Bishop’s Office, The Old Palace, Deansway, Worcester WR1 2JE
+44 (0) 1905 731599 (phone); 739382 (fax) - email: bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk

Through the Past Cases Review, we are asking you to help shine a revealing light on any instances of abuse that have occurred in your benefice and to help ensure that everything that ought to be brought into the light has been. Shining a light on what has hurt or frightened someone is a matter of justice for those who have been victims; sometimes it may also prevent further harm and sometimes it may be the first step towards healing. With that in mind, we thank you for your cooperation in working towards a safer Church.

Please would you confirm with Hilary as soon as possible, and definitely **by the end of March**, that your parish has engaged with this process and either pass on any relevant information or state that you have nothing to share. We have included a form below to make this as straightforward as possible. Please note that we need a response from all parishes. Bishop Martin has now taken the lead for Safeguarding in the Diocese and will be monitoring responses to check all parishes have replied.

If a victim or survivor of abuse wishes to speak to the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), this is something that can be facilitated through Hilary. Whilst the IRO would not be able to pursue any personal concerns or issues they may have, we are keen to engage with survivors and learn from them as to how they feel they have been responded to by the Church – if it was helpful or what could have been done differently to assist them more.

If there are those in your parish who wish to make a representation, but are not comfortable speaking to a diocesan officer, they can make contact through a dedicated telephone helpline - 0800 80 20 20 - operated by the NSPCC, independently from the Church. Anyone can use this helpline to provide information or to raise concerns regarding abuse within the Church of England context; whether they are reporting issues relating to children, adults or seeking to whistleblow about poor safeguarding practice.

Separately, we have also received the enclosed explanatory note on the importance of church officers having 'due regard' to safeguarding issues, which has been produced by the legal office of the National Church Institutions, in consultation with the National Safeguarding Team.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in its investigation report *Anglican Church Case Studies: Chichester/Peter Ball (May 2019)* suggested that the requirement for relevant persons to "have due regard" to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to Safeguarding was misunderstood by many. This note is the first step in addressing this issue. Please read the note and be aware that this statutory duty applies to all clergy, readers, lay workers, LLMs, churchwardens and parochial church councils.

Having 'due regard' means following all safeguarding guidance and requests to the letter; I hope you will make it a priority to return the form below.

With thanks for your continued support in ensuring the Church of England is a safe place for all,

And my warmest good wishes,

Yours,



Dr John Inge

PAST CASES REVIEW – PARISH RESPONSE

Please return this form to hhigton@cofe-worcester.org.uk or post it to Hilary Higton at the diocesan office. Please mark the post or email Confidential and only give the initials of people related to the safeguarding concern [The Safeguarding team should be able to work out who they are referring to by what the concern was and the approximate date of the referral. If not they will contact you].

_____ Parish(s) _____ Incumbent _____ Date
 (Please list all parishes if covering more than one)

**Please delete the paragraph below as appropriate and fill in the table if required.*

I confirm that as of today, all known instances of concern of which I and the Parish Safeguarding Representative are aware which relate to any abusive behaviour of clergy or church officers towards children or adults, both historically and currently, have been reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and listed in the table below.

Or

I confirm that as of today there are no instances of concern of which I and the Parish Safeguarding Representative are aware which relate to any abusive behaviour of clergy or church officers towards children or adults, both historically and currently.

Signed Incumbent:

Parish Past Case Review Record for DSA

Name of individual [NB: Please only refer to individuals by their initials]	Safeguarding concern	Approx date referred to Diocese	Are you as a parish satisfied with the response of the DSA (yes or no)? If no, there will be a follow up to the parish made through the PCR reference group	Are you satisfied that there is no current risk (yes or no)? If no, the DSA will be in touch