

Re - Safeguarding



Thu 23/03/2023 05:25

I am following up on my previous email and your email of the 20th March (0047hrs) and respond to your safeguarding questions.

One of my safer church priorities includes a safe space for all victims of abuse to disclose and seek support. I have been building trust and confidence in safeguarding over the last 18 months where victims and survivors have belief that they will be heard and supported. Although, there has been significant positive progress, I am under no illusion that there is still more to be done in changing a culture.

You have specifically asked what course of action the diocese/church plan to take to ensure that a space is created for all potential victims of N's abuse to be able to come forward. The police would have been alive to any other potential victims and as part of their hypothesis and investigation would have had a victim strategy. We do not know whether there are any other victims and in respect of privacy, neither should we. There are communication and structures in place across the diocese that provide awareness to report and contact the parish/church safeguarding officer or my diocese safeguarding team. If you personally have any concerns about anyone, then no doubt you would report. There is a plan to do more as part of our practice improvement such as posters in parishes and more safeguarding awareness. I have seen and heard several suggestions you have made. I would not advise the parish to directly ask the question of the congregation if anyone is a victim of his abuse, the police would not, and neither should we as a diocese or the parish.

In terms of your need to publicly share the allegation and that he was summoned to court this was a private matter between you and him and there is no necessity to involve the church in sharing such information. Again, I have advised the parish to resist as it is not the business or role of the church to do so. It is a total matter for you and your confidentiality if you so wish to do so. I would invite you to communicate with the police as they have a duty of care and I do not know if they have concluded their investigation completely. Equally, I would advise you contact the coroners officer to see if they have a view on your next steps whilst the legal coronial investigation continues.

I can only imagine the continued profound effect this is having on you and perhaps associated turmoil, but I hope the police as part of their duty of care has offered to professional expert support. My safeguarding team, or the parish, is not qualified in professional support but a safeguarding advisor can provide advice or signpost you to any further support you need.

I hope this is helpful and I will be sharing my response with the incumbent and Archdeacon.

Kind regards

Martin

| [Head of Safeguarding](#)