

Pastoral care

Let the person know that the Church is committed to helping and supporting them through the process. Here are some of the ways that you can help the person find help:

- **Pastoral Support from the religious order or the diocese and parish:** let the person know that the Haed of Safeguarding can offer time and space in which to speak and they can tell their story. Explain that if information needs to be shared with others, explain who it will be shared with, why and how it will be kept secure
- **Support during the investigation of their case:** let the person know that they will be given the contact details of a person whose role it will be to keep them updated.
- **Signposting to support organisations:** Let the person know what other organisations and services can be contacted for support.

We welcome feedback from those who have been impacted by abuse and have used the Diocese of Westminster Safeguarding Service. We will use the information to find out what we are doing right and what we could do better from our very first point of contact.

Scan the QR code to access the survey:



Sources of support

- **Safe in Faith** Domestic abuse support and counselling that is tailored to their faith. www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/safe-in-faith/get-support.
- **Minster and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACAS)** Supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church. W: macsas.org.uk E: helpline@macsas.org.uk
- **Grief to Grace UK; Healing the wounds of abuse** Specialised 5-day programme of healing E: info@griegtograceuk.org T: 020 8154 2719 W: griegtograceuk.org/about
- **The Survivors Trust** Support, advice and information 0808 801 0818
- **One in Four** Supporting people who have experienced child sexual abuse and trauma. W: oneinfour.org.uk T: 0208 697 2112 E: northlondon@oneinfour.org.uk
- **National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)** 0808 801 0331 10am-9pm Mondays to Thursdays & 10am-6pm on Fridays. Calls will not show on your bill
- **ICAP** offers counselling and psychotherapy for the Irish community in Britain. W: wicap.org.uk T: 020 7272 7906
- **Safe Spaces** Support, advice and Information. Tel: 0300 303 1056 (answerphone available outside of opening times) Email: safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

This leaflet was developed by survivors for survivors.

Revised: April 2025
Review: April 2027

HURT BY ABUSE?

**How to:
Respond
Listen
Support**
Victims and
Survivors of Abuse



Westminster Safeguarding Service

Responding

Prioritising Safeguarding and Survivors

Victims and survivors of abuse need to know that safeguarding is the priority in the after many years of secrecy is very frightening. We want to help and support you.

Listen carefully - Listening to someone disclose their abuse, often can be difficult and overwhelming.

The keys to listening well are:
silence your mobile phone.

- do not interrupt
- look at the person
- be compassionate
- do not question the disclosure
- acknowledge the feelings the person is having
- don't offer solutions
- avoid looking at your watch.

Speaking out about abuse, perhaps after years of silence, can be frightening but also liberating.



Listening

Making Space

Ensure you find a place where the person who wants to talk feels safe.

- If a person wishes to discuss a sensitive matter, always suggest speaking somewhere you will not be interrupted.
- If you have a time limit inform the person gently, early in the conversation.

Let the person know that the abuse is not their fault or responsibility. The blame belongs to the perpetrator.

Reassure the person that speaking out is the right thing to do.

Victims of abuse fear that they will not be believed. They have chosen to speak to you because they trust you. It is important to remember that trauma and memory can affect the way victims remember events; do not expect a perfect account.

Ensure the person knows that confidentiality can never be promised. Explain clearly who you will be passing the information to and that it will be kept secure.

Tell the person that you will be making notes to record an accurate account of what is being said. Explain that you will show these notes to the person at the end, as they will be a written record of the disclosure.

Let the person know that you will follow nationally agreed guidance; keeping them up to date with what is happening.

It is really important that you do not delay in reporting the disclosure.

Do not make promises that cannot be kept.

Do not contact the alleged perpetrator.

Listening to someone telling you about their abuse can be very upsetting. Therefore, it is really important to ask for support for yourself. It is important that you acknowledge your own feelings and emotions about

To report a concern, past or present:

Telephone: **020 7798 9352, Option 1**

Email: safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk

To contact the Safeguarding Service:

Telephone: **020 7798 9352, Option 4**

Email: safeguardingadmin@rcdow.org.uk

Website: rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding