

A photograph of a street scene. In the foreground, a dense cluster of small, bright purple flowers with yellow centers grows over a stone wall. The background is slightly blurred, showing a street with a few people walking, a street lamp, and a church building with a dark, tiled roof. The sky is overcast.

Supporting survivors in our churches

Diocese of Derby Safeguarding Team

Supporting Survivors in Our Churches

Every church should be a place of safety, compassion, and hope. When someone shares an experience of abuse — whether recent or historic, whether connected to church or not — our calling is to respond with care, humility, and respect.

The Diocese of Derby is committed to ensuring that survivors are listened to, taken seriously, and supported in ways that honour their dignity and lived experience. As the diocesan strategy states, “talking about painful experiences can be extremely difficult... choosing to share such experiences requires trust and courage.”

This leaflet offers simple guidance for parishes on how to respond well, where to find support, and how survivors’ voices help shape safer church practice.

How to Respond Well in Your Parish

Listen with care

Survivors tell us that being heard — calmly, respectfully, and without judgement — is one of the most important parts of responding well. The diocesan strategy commits that survivors will be “listened to with care, respect, and seriousness.”

Believe and take seriously

You do not need to investigate or ask for proof. Your role is to acknowledge what has been shared and ensure the person is supported.

Be calm, kind, and non-judgemental

Avoid shock, minimising, or rushing someone to take action. Many survivors come forward years after the abuse; the pace should be theirs.

Explain what will happen next

If there is any safeguarding risk to them or others, you may need to share information with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team — but always explain this clearly and gently.

Offer support options

Survivors may or may not wish to speak to the Diocese directly. The strategy recognises that “some people may not wish to approach the Diocese... information about independent sources of advice and support is available.”

You can help by offering choices, not pressure.

What the Diocese Provides

Trauma-informed support

The Safeguarding Team works in a “caring, sensitive and trauma-informed way,” recognising that each survivor’s journey is individual.

Clear information and guidance

Survivors will be given honest information about processes, options, and next steps — always at their own pace.

Pastoral support

Where appropriate, survivors can be offered pastoral care through a trained pastoral lead.

Respect for confidentiality

Information is kept confidential unless there is a safeguarding risk. Wherever possible, the team will explain in advance if information needs to be shared more widely.

Commitment to learning

Feedback from survivors is welcomed and used to improve diocesan and parish practice. As the strategy states, “listening to and learning from this feedback enables us to improve our practice.”

Practical Steps and Contact Information

If someone discloses abuse in your parish

- Stay calm and listen
- Thank them for telling you
- Avoid asking detailed questions
- Explain what you may need to do next
- Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for advice
- Offer ongoing pastoral support if appropriate

Independent support options

Some survivors prefer to speak to independent organisations. Parishes should be ready to signpost national helplines, counselling services, or specialist charities.

Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Derby Church House, Full Street, Derby DE1 3DR

Email: safeguarding@derby.anglican.org

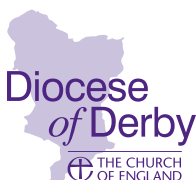
Phone: 01332 388678

Website: derby.anglican.org/safeguarding

Privacy & Data Protection

The Diocese complies with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring personal information is handled lawfully and securely.

See the Diocesan Privacy Notice at derby.anglican.org/en/privacy-policy



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