

ACTIONS FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF ABUSE

There is no one simple set of rules to follow in responding to these situations. However, the following key points are designed to help when situations arise during

the course of your church's work with children, and young people. They should guide

the actions of anyone who is told of abuse:

Do's

- * Stay calm.
- * **Listen** and hear.
- * Give time to the person to say what they want.
- * **Reassure** that they have done the right thing in telling.
- * **Record in writing** what was said as soon as possible.
- * **Report** to the incumbent (unless they are the alleged abuser) and/or Diocesan Child Protection Officer.
- * **Record** your report.
- * **Inform the parents** unless to do so would be contrary to the child's welfare.

Don'ts

- * Do not panic.
- * Do not promise to keep secrets.
- * Do not enquire into the details of the abuse
- * Do not ask probing, leading or suggestive questions.
- * **Do not investigate** any allegations.
- * Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- * **Do not contact the person the child alleges has abused them.**
- * **If you receive third party information do not contact the person alleged to have been abused.**

Under no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer attempt to deal with the problem alone.

The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously. In the first instance the concern should be reported to the Priest/Churchwarden. The Diocesan Child Protection Officer should then be contacted immediately.

Anyone has the right to contact Children's Services or the police, but the Diocesan Child Protection Officer is always available for consultation and will liaise with Social Services on your behalf.

Failure to observe these guidelines may leave a child unprotected against further abuse.