

The Parish of St. Andrew Corbridge with Halton and Newton Hall

PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH



PARISH SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES 2025 edition

Further guidance can be found on the Diocesan website:

www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding

or

The Church of England website

www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding

This Church takes the safety of everyone very seriously and expects that we will all work within the Church Safeguarding policy. In particular, this Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of abuse, to immediately raise this with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mandy Norton

07831136505

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Incumbent

Revd Canon Dr David Kennedy

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Parish Safer Recruitment Officer

Richard Adams

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Safeguarding Team Member (policies and procedures)

Revd Linda E Hunter

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Diocesan Safeguarding Caseworker:

Jill Thirlaway,; safeguarding@newcastle.anglican.org

All of the information in this set of guidelines is taken directly from the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

Parish Safeguarding Policy

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on **20th November 2024**

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.

- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Mrs Mandy Norton as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Parish Domestic Abuse Policy

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on **20th November 2024**

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one, please contact Mrs Mandy Norton Parish Safeguarding Adviser

Social Media Policy

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on **20th November 2024**

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy guidelines for use of social media our church is committed to:

- **Be safe.** The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, **ask a diocesan safeguarding adviser.**
- **Be respectful.** Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.
- **Be kind.** Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just *whether* you would say it in person, but the tone you would use.
- **Be honest.** Don't mislead people about who you are.
- **Take responsibility.** You are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If you're not sure, don't post it.
- **Be a good ambassador.** Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.
- **Disagree well.** Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.
- **Credit others.** Acknowledge the work of others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be

careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering using.

- **Follow the rules.** Abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

The Church of England Digital Charter

This church has signed up to the Church of England Digital Charter (outlined below) to demonstrate that we are committed to ensuring that social media and the web are positive places for conversations to happen.

- **Truth** - we should hold ourselves to high ideals of checking that what we post online is fair and factual.
- **Kindness** - we are all different and that makes the world an interesting place – and at times a challenging one. Think the best of people, whether they share our views or are speaking against them and aim to be constructive in the way we engage.
- **Welcome** - in the language we use and the way we interact. It's easy for Christians to speak in another

language using words that those outside the Church might not relate to.

- **Inspiration** - we are called to be witnesses of our faith and to use social media in a way that genuinely engages others
- **Togetherness** - we are one Church and other members of this Church are our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is crucial we treat those around us in this way.
- **Safeguarding** - if you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults, please contact our Parish Safe Guarding Officer: Mrs Mandy Norton
- Agree to the Church's and Archbishops' social media guidelines.

Code of Safer Working Practice

In the context of these guidelines a Church Officer is anyone volunteering in any capacity in roles within and on behalf of this parish.

Must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice, and body language is respectful.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern.
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Sign and date the record.
- Obtain written consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored
- Administer any First Aid with others around.

In addition, for children and young people you must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around. Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and its nature before the activity takes place

Must not:

- Invade an individual's privacy whilst washing and toileting.
- Use any form of physical punishment.

- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g., initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking.
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults that may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group.
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

In addition, for children and young people, you must not;

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g., in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity).
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people.
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include adult family members/carers) outside organised group occasions

Acceptable Touch

- Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and

adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate.

The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

Always ask permission.

- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the church officer's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child or the adult, not the church officer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Ensure that church officers at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Accidents

Please record all accidents on an accident form which are kept next to the first aid kit on the shelf near the clergy vestry and inform a churchwarden.

What to do if you are told about or suspect abuse

It can take a great deal of courage for someone to talk to another adult about their abuse, because they are 'telling on' someone who is more powerful. People learn to be very good at covering up the abuse and are able to give plausible explanations for what has happened.

If a child talks to you about abuse it is because the child feels able to trust you. The child has spoken to you about an issue that is important. Children have confidence that adults can change things. If a child discloses abuse, remember that this may be the beginning of a legal process, as well as of a process of recovery for the child. Legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child has been led in any way

It is important to reassure a child or adult that it is right to talk about it, and that you will take everything they say seriously.

However, you cannot promise confidentiality.

The following guidance should be followed as far as possible:

Respond

Do

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell Mandy Norton (the Parish Safeguarding Officer) the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check out what the person hopes to result from the disclosure.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Helpful things to say

- "Thank you for telling me this"
- "I will have to share this with someone else who can help"
- "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me"
- "I am glad you have told me; it is not your fault; I will help you"

Concluding the conversation

- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing to tell you
- You are taking what has been said very seriously
- You will tell someone who can help, straight away
- They are to try not to worry or feel they've done anything wrong

It is helpful to note if the person has told anyone else. The point of the conversation is to establish the barest account of the allegation. You do not have to believe it or disbelieve it, just note it accurately, and then refer the case onwards correctly.

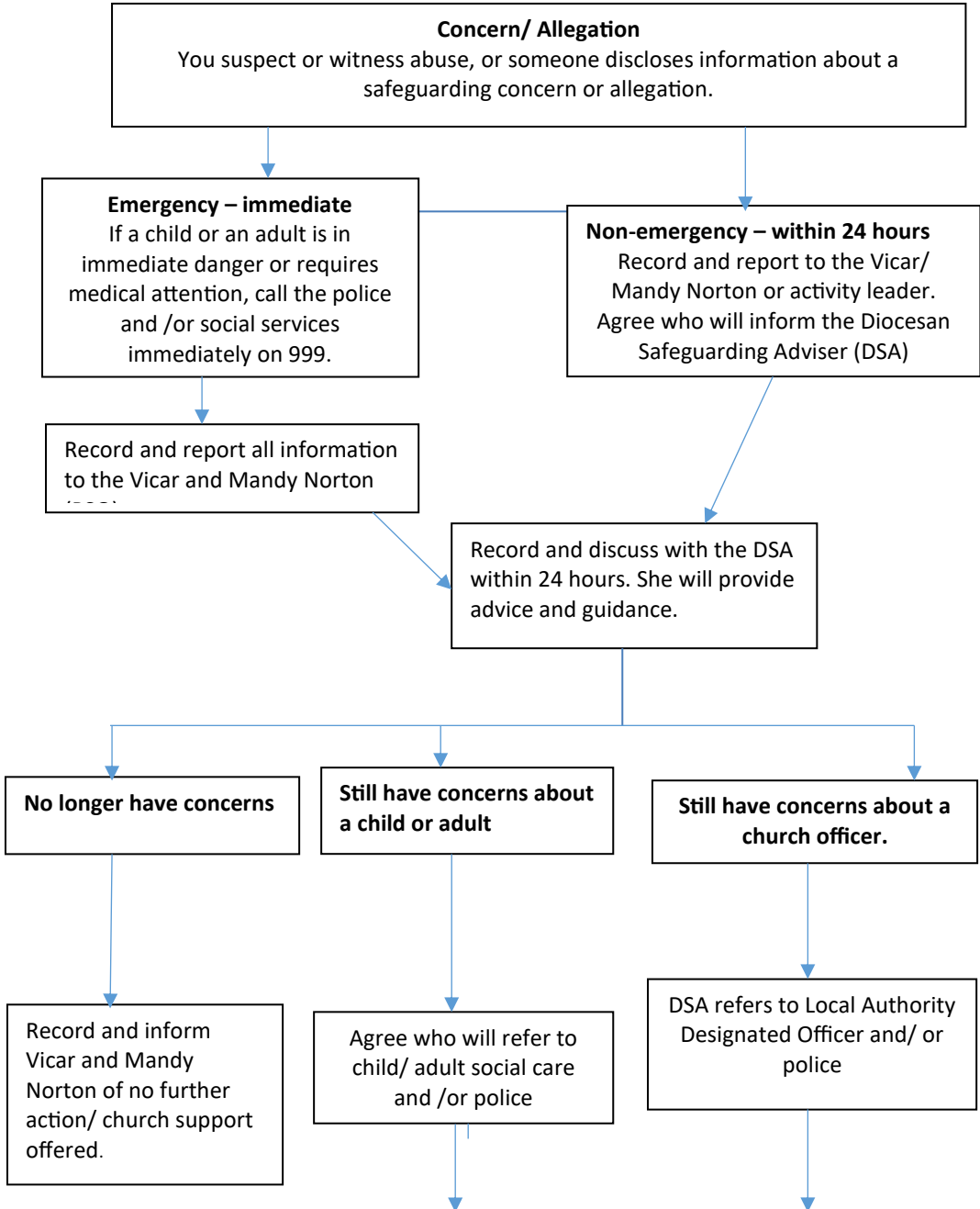
Do Not

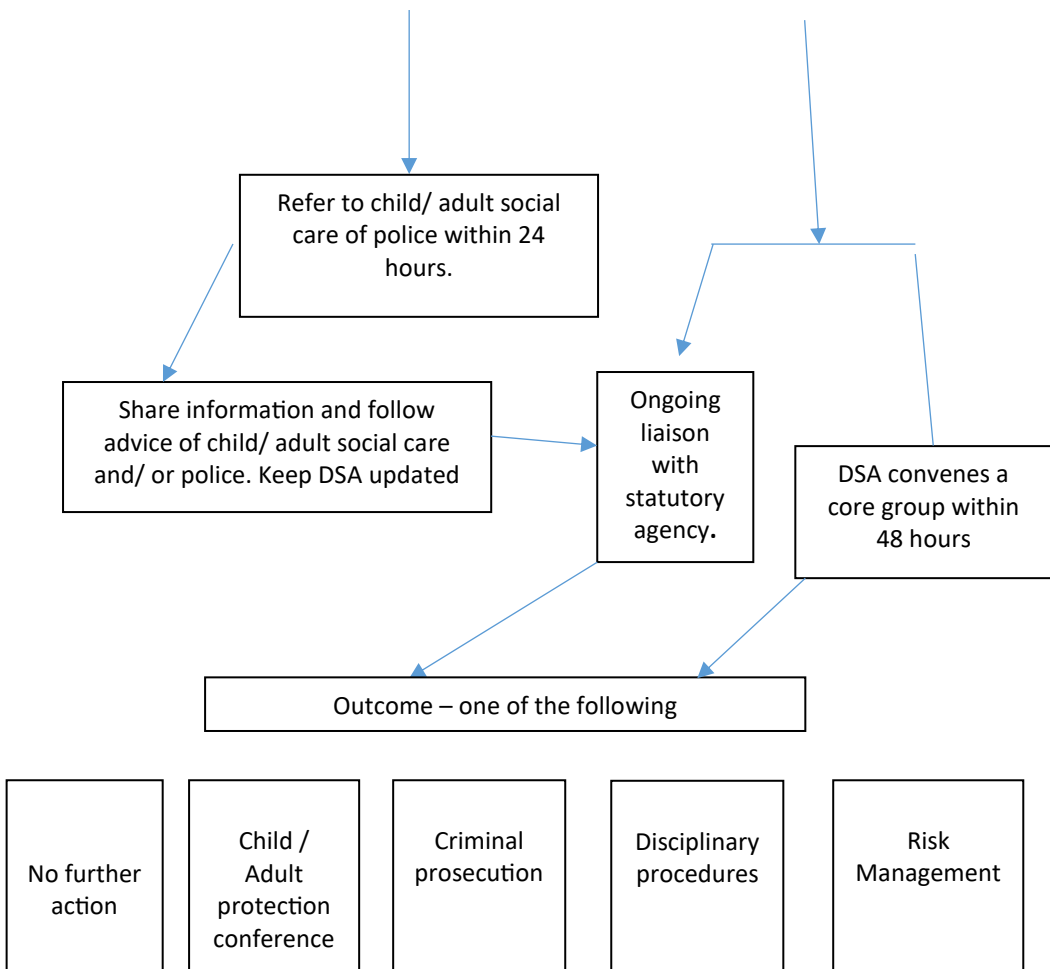
- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g., that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do a physical or medical examination.

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place, words used and how they appeared to you. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions

Quick Guide to Responding Promptly to Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations.





Record all action – Consider the support needs of all those affected by allegations of abuse at all points in the above stages.

Remember the safety and welfare of any child or adult takes precedence over all other concerns.

Once you have passed this information on to the relevant people, you may have no further involvement.

Lone working

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers including youth workers, children's workers and parish visitors. Home working, working alone in an office, work travel and working at remote locations, such as home visits, could all constitute lone working.

Lone worker includes:

Those working at their main place of work where:

- Only one person is working on the premises
- People work separately from each other, e.g., in different locations
- People working outside normal hours.

Those working away from their fixed base where:

- One person is visiting another premises or meeting venue
- One person is making a home visit to an individual
- One person is working from their own home.

The Parochial Church Council should show that "reasonably foreseeable risks" have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them.

They have the responsibility to ensure that Lone Worker procedures are implemented in order to ensure that all church volunteers and staff:

- think how to undertake lone working safely,
- assess the risks of situations where a threat to personal safety could occur
- reduce those risks through appropriate procedures and control measure

Risk assessments should be undertaken where appropriate.

Who does this affect?

- Vicar / Curates
- Treasurer and Parish Administrator
- Other volunteers who come into church to sort out, the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services
- Those locking the church
- Those doing maintenance in church
- Someone doing a solo pastoral visit to people's homes
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank

The Risks

This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

- Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary)
- Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm
- Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor
- Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening
- Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses
- Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

Some Good Practice Guidelines - Procedures When Working Alone

People should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on.

When working alone volunteers and staff should be alert to possible dangers and minimise them:

1. Tell someone where they are working. Get them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm.
2. Carry a mobile phone if possible.
3. If working in church after dark and it is appropriate, lock the doors
4. Carry keys so they can leave by another exit if necessary.
5. Report any defects to the building i.e., trip hazards etc. to the Churchwardens
6. Report any incidents to the Vicar / Churchwardens.
7. Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone, use safety guards on power tools – and do not use them when in the building alone.
8. Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
9. Inform the Church Wardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made.

Using your own home for Activities

Where activities are formally organised by the parish, the following guidance should be noted. If, however informal groups are organised by parents / other members of the congregation (e.g., baby-sitting circles) the responsibility remains with those organizing the group to ensure that the activity and those leading it are safe.

Activities for at risk groups will normally take place on church premises however if meetings are to be held in a leader's own home the following points need to be considered:

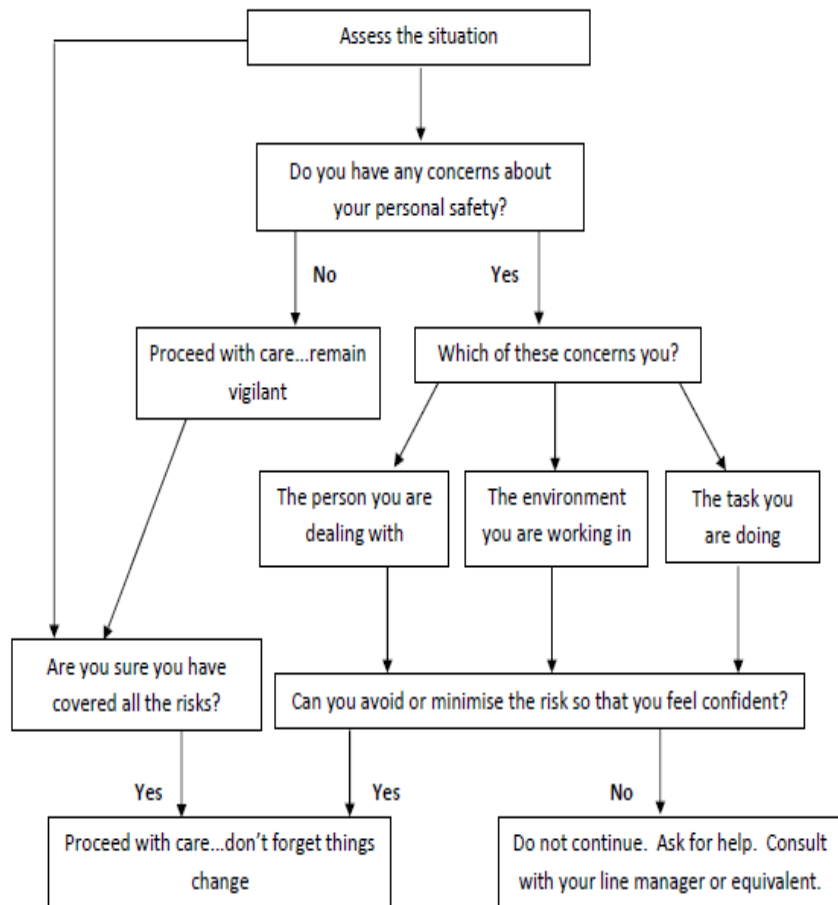
- Ensure you have the consent of the Vicar and PCC for the activity to take place.
- Ensure that a risk assessment of the room(s) to be used has been carried out
- Never use inappropriate rooms i.e., bedrooms
- Ensure that the Diocesan and parish policies for at risk groups are followed.

Personal Safety Risk Assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.

Risk assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



From Personal Safety at Work, Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2006, revised 2008