



Survivors' Care Strategy

May 2020

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Presented by the PCR2 Project Team and Survivors' Consultative Group

Authorised by the PCR2 Reference Group on 26 May 2020

Adopted by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel on 8 July 2020

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In May 2007, the House of Bishops recognised the need for a review of past cases of child abuse. This followed court appearances by several clergy and church officers, charged with sexual offences against children. The Past Cases Review 2007-2009 (PCR) was a large scale review of the handling by the Church of child protection cases over many years. It involved a scrutiny of clergy and church officers' files to identify persons presenting on-going risks to children, but whose cases had not been acted on appropriately. The PCR was carried out during 2008 and 2009 across all 44 diocese and for both provinces.
- 1.2 In 2015 concerns were expressed to the newly appointed National Safeguarding Adviser about how well the PCR had been conducted. An independent assessment of the adequacy of the PCR was undertaken by Sir Roger Singleton and a full report, was published and submitted to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) on 22 June 2018. The report set out that there had been some limitations to the PCR's execution and the public statements that were issued. A number of recommendations were made to address the shortcomings of the PCR and to 'help the Church build on the strong policy, procedures and training foundations which have now been laid'.
- 1.3 PCR2 has been designed to enable dioceses to take a proactive approach to identifying cases of concern and to evaluating safeguarding responses. It is the aspiration of the Archbishops' Council that:
"By the end of the PCR2 process, independent review work will have been carried out in every diocese and church institution within both the letter and the spirit of the protocol and practice guidance (issued in July 2019). Any file that could contain information regarding a concern, allegation or conviction in relation to abusive behaviour by a living member of the clergy or church officer, (whether still in that position or not) will have been **identified, read and analysed by independent safeguarding professionals**.
- At the completion of the review process it will be possible to state that:
- all known safeguarding cases have been appropriately managed and reported to statutory agencies or the police where appropriate
 - that the needs of any known victims have been considered and that sources of support have been identified and offered where this is appropriate
 - that all identified risks have been assessed and mitigated as far as is reasonably possible".
- 1.4 The scope of PCR2 has been expanded from that of the original PCR to include harm to children and adults and will include all church officers referring to anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to an office, post or role, whether they be ordained or lay, paid or unpaid. PCR2 is a central part of the Church's proactive approach to identifying where abuse allegations have not been managed appropriately or safely or with the needs of the vulnerable at the centre of its decision making. **The welfare of children or of adults at risk of abuse must be of paramount importance in the planning and execution of PCR2.**

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Diocese of Blackburn is responding to the Past Case Review 2 (PCR2) guidance fully. The Diocese of Blackburn is aware that regardless of PCR2 there is a requirement of the Church, as part of its safeguarding practice, to ensure that those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously.

- 2.2 As part of the PCR2 process local Adult and Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board managers and police leads for the three local authority areas have been notified that the PCR is taking place and have been provided with a copy of the practice guidance for information.
- 2.3 A dedicated telephone helpline operated, independently from the Church, by the NSPCC, has been set up for those affected by issues which may arise as a result of PCR2. This information is on the Diocese of Blackburn and National Safeguarding Team's website. The telephone helpline number and details of how to make contact directly with the diocesan safeguarding team has been promoted locally by the Diocese.
- 2.4 This Strategy should be read alongside 'Responding well to those who have been sexually abused practice guidance (2011), and any subsequent revisions.

3. AIM

- 3.1 This Strategy has been developed for victims and survivors of church related abuse, those affected by abuse and those close to them. In making provision for survivors to access support, advice and care the Strategy is part of our commitment to ensure that those hurt by abuse find compassion, and people ready to travel patiently alongside them.
- 3.2 The Survivor Care Strategy will underpin safeguarding practice in Blackburn Diocese and will be used by the Safeguarding Team, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) members, the Bishop's Leadership Team, the PCR2 Reference Group and Project Team and clergy and Church officers responding to allegations of abuse within the Church. To guide them in supporting any victims or survivors of abuse that are identified by the PCR2 process and via safeguarding referrals.
- 3.3 The Strategy does not cover support to respondents of abuse or their families. The House of Bishops Practice Guidance, Responding to Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations Against Church Officers (2016), states that a link person will be offered to all respondents (those who have had allegations made against them) who are Church officers and that guidance should be used in relation to support of respondents and their families.
- 3.4 'Responding well' guidance states that: 'For many years survivors of sexual abuse have been coming to churches in the hope of finding not only the Christian message being lived out, but also a place where they might unburden themselves of their terrible secrets, of the shattering, shaming and isolating experiences of sexual abuse. Too often they have been disappointed. For too long some church communities have tried to silence their complaints and minimize their experiences through fear, ignorance and self-protective denial.

It is important to acknowledge that abuse is perpetrated by some clergy and others in positions of responsibility, and to recognise that survivors have often found an inadequate response from our churches. In doing so, we seek to open the way for creating communities that are safe enough for all to belong, and where survivors can relate their experiences, confident that they will be heard and receive pastoral care and support'.

4. Diocesan Approach

- 4.1 In every case where engaging with those with lived experience of abuse is considered, their well-being will be the paramount consideration. It is very important that time is taken to consider the current circumstances of the individual and whether they have previously indicated their willingness to be contacted by the diocese in this way.

- 4.2 Planning the approach to any individual will involve a gentle, non-intrusive contact to see if further discussion or involvement would be welcomed. Independent sources of support will be available through the PCR2 advocate for survivor care. Communication with the advocate will be immediately available to anyone that the diocese seeks to engage with in this way.
- 4.3 Blackburn Diocese has established a Survivor Consultative Group and it is this group that has advised on and recommend this strategy. This Group includes people with lived experience of abuse and is providing the advocacy role as set out in the PCR2 Protocol and Practice Guidance (Appendix C). It is this Group that will keep the Strategy under review and will continue as a sub group of the DSAP to advise and guide the Panel on matters relating to support and care offered to victims and survivors of abuse.
- 4.4 Where someone makes contact seeking to make representations to the PCR2 process, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) will liaise with DSP Chair and the Independent Reviewer (IR) to plan how best to receive the representations.
- 4.5 Where safeguarding professionals or diocesan clergy are in current contact with victims and survivors, who have experienced abuse by clergy or church officers, an invitation should be extended to victims and survivors to have contact with the IR if they so wish. Any such approach will be planned by the DSA with the advocate on the PCR reference group who has oversight for survivor support and well-being:
- Consideration will be given as to how approaches may appropriately be made to parents or guardians of people under the age of 18.
 - Consideration will also be given to approaching those with advocacy or support roles for individuals with diminished capacity.
 - Any contact with an individual inviting them to express their views to the IR should make them aware that the IR is not able to pursue any personal concerns or issues which individuals may have.
- 4.6 If there are unmet support needs or unmitigated risk identified, then the IR will pass these to the DSA. The DSA will address these as per the usual work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in line with House of Bishops' current practice guidance.
- 4.7 Anyone seeking support via the DSA or IR or any member of the Safeguarding Team can be confident that their case file and any sensitive information relating to them will be kept strictly confidential. Anyone breaching this confidentiality will be dealt with to the fullest extent of the policies held by the Diocese, which may result in them being dismissed.
- 4.8 Those survivors who, after consideration of their needs, are approached, should be made aware that the purpose of their invitation to engage with the IR is to generate information about how victims and survivors have been responded to by the church. They should be invited to:
- Comment on how helpful they found the response.
 - What could have been done differently to assist them more.
 - Any survivor engaging with the PCR2 process will be assured of support and of anonymity and that any sensitive information shared will be protected.
 - These insights will be utilised to assist the dioceses and the NST to improve their responses to victims and survivors.

5. SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- 5.1 Where contact with named individuals is deemed necessary because the PCR2 has identified previously recorded incidents of abuse where risk mitigation, statutory reporting, criminal investigation or survivor support has been inadequate; then a clear survivor focussed plan needs to be put in place.
- 5.2 This will continue to be the case once the PCR2 process is complete and access to support services will be in exactly the same way as detailed in this strategy, via the DSA.
- 5.3 In all such cases planning should be in partnership with the police and/or the local authority who will be responsible for carrying out statutory investigations of a criminal or safeguarding nature.
- 5.4 It is the role of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to ensure that there is a broad spectrum of support options available to meet the needs of those who may be seeking to support. Provision of support will be discussed with the advocate for survivor care and with statutory agencies where there is police or local authority involvement, so there can be a coordinated response with the survivor at the centre.
- 5.5 The establishing or cementing of effective local partnerships (e.g. with Lancashire Victim Services, Rape Crisis, local counselling providers etc.) will be undertaken by the DSA, with support from the PCR reference group and the advocate for survivor care.
- 5.6 No survivor should be contacted by the DSA, police or the local authority without a plan in place to offer them immediate care and support.
There should be:
- Planned pastoral care available within a church context for those that want this.
 - Access to support and care that is provided independently from the church context for those that need it. Some people may need both pastoral and psychological support and one should not be offered at the exclusion of the other.
 - From the outset the individual needing support should be asked what would best meet their needs.
 - Any survivor engaging with the PCR2 process will be assured of support and of anonymity and that any sensitive information shared will be protected.
- 5.7 When survivors of abuse are approached and contacted by the church, the communication and the type of language which is used and the formality of how the communication is set out, is not always understood. Church terms and jargon should be avoided and if it is necessary there should be a clear explanation included. During every communication with a survivor they must be asked if they have enough support available.

6. COMMISSIONED SUPPORT, ADVICE AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

- 6.1 For individuals and their families affected by abuse and who are known to the DSA, and not currently involved in a police investigation or judicial process, the Diocese can provide access to both support, advice and therapeutic services.
- 6.2 These services will be commissioned by the DSA based on the need of the individual. The service provider will be as close to the person's home as is possible, but travel costs will be covered by the Diocese. Any services that are commissioned will have the appropriate accreditations,

qualifications and credentials which will have been checked by the DSA before approving the commissioning of the service.

- 6.3 While the service providers will not necessarily be Christian faith specific, it is helpful if they understand faith. One of the things that the Church has learned from listening to survivors of abuse is that churches do not always feel like 'safe enough' places for them and therefore they may seek support away from the Church. The routine language, smells and imagery of church services, and some of the accepted practices, such as the expectation to kneel at the altar rail, may themselves trigger painful levels of emotional disturbance
- 6.4 The resources to ensure that services can be commissioned for survivors of abuse in a church context will be provided by Blackburn Diocese and in agreeing this strategy the Diocesan Bishop has agreed to establishing a budget of £30,000 for 2020/2021 and this will be reviewed annually by the DSAP and a report made to the Bishop and the Diocesan Board of Finance to continue to ensure the level of funding available is being used appropriately and is sufficient to meet the agreed plans.

7. DIOCESAN PASTORAL SUPPORT

- 7.1 There is an inter-diocesan counselling service for clergy or family of clergy but there is a wider need for those who are harmed by abuse within the Church, for informed pastoral care and support. The psychological damage of ecclesiastical abuse cannot be underestimated and can lead to loss of faith. Survivors remain vulnerable for a very long time and can be easily re-traumatised. Some of the psychological and emotional damage done by abuse is common to everyone that has suffered abuse but abuse at the hands of clergy and Church officers carries the additional dimension of spiritual trauma as it can affect the human-divine relationship.
- 7.2 The Diocese are looking to establish a pastoral offer for survivors who have been abused in the Church, whose faith may have been damaged but still wish to receive support from someone who understands the issues, can journey with survivors, is theologically trained, able to deal with spiritual damage. but also appropriately qualified to understand the impact of abuse on a child or vulnerable adult and knows how to respond well to them.

Some survivors may need pastoral support to allow them to work through such questions as 'Why has God let this happen?' and 'How can I forgive the person who abused me?' This process may take a long time and will vary with each individual. It is a costly, journey, and requires patient companionship, walking through dark places with the survivor, on the normal, painful, process to healing.

8. SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- 8.1 Access to national agencies offering support and advice to survivors will be signposted by the DSA and includes the national helpline set up by the NSPCC and advertised widely on the Diocesan website and other agencies such as:
- NAPAC – National Association for People Abused in Childhood: www.napac.org.uk. Providing support to adults who have been abused in any way as children. Telephone 0808 801 0331 or support@napac.org.uk. They also provide some freely-accessible reading on various topics for survivors here: <https://napac.org.uk/resources>.

- The Survivors' Trust www.thesurvivorstrust.org. Providing support to men who have experienced sexual abuse, adult sexual assault or rape. Telephone 01788 550554 or info@thesurvivorstrust.org
- MACSAS – Minster and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors www.macsas.org.uk. Providing support to both men and women who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church. Telephone 08088 010340 (Wednesday 7 p.m. – 9.30 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.).
- Mosac www.mosac.org.uk. Providing support for all non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused. Telephone 0800 980 1958.
- The Samaritans Helpline – 08457 90 90 90 (open 24 hours). Providing support to anyone who is struggling to cope and needs someone to talk to.
- One-in-four provide a page full of resources focusing on support and self-care for survivors to download and work through at their own pace here: <http://www.oneinfour.org.uk/support-self-care/>

8.2 There are also a number of available resources that survivors can access directly themselves and include:

- Help for Adult Victims of Child Abuse provide a number of resources, many of which are freely available and written by survivors for survivors. They are available here: <https://www.havoca.org/resources/>
- Rape Crisis provide online advice for many issues and concerns experienced by survivors. Much of their advice is suitable for adult victims of child abuse, not just for adult victims of rape. Further information is available here: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-tools-to-help-you-cope/>
- One-in-four provide a page full of resources focusing on support and self-care for survivors to download and work through at their own pace here: <http://www.oneinfour.org.uk/support-self-care/>
- From Report to Court is a downloadable handbook for adult survivors of sexual abuse and violence. It is produced by the organisation Rights of Women, but as the handbook focuses on the process of reporting sexual abuse all the way through to a criminal trial, it is usable by both men and women, and is available here: <https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/From-Report-to-Court-2018.pdf>

8.3 Access to local agencies offering support and advice to survivors will be signposted by the DSA and includes:

- Lancashire Victim Services is an independent charity which supports victims of crime across the Lancashire area. With four hubs across Lancashire they are locally focused in their approach. Any victim of crime can access the services and they are not time sensitive. Anyone accessing the service is made aware that there does not need to be police involvement, and that referral into the service is done with the victim's consent. <https://lancashirevictimservices.org/> Tel: 0300 323 0085
- The Wish Centre www.bddwa.org.uk is often the first point of contact for people in Blackburn with Darwen who are experiencing domestic abuse. Fully qualified and specialist staff are available to discuss choices and options in a non-judgemental way, providing emotional and practical support. Telephone 01254 260465 or email info@bddwa.org.uk
- Trust House, Lancashire. Providing specialist support to men, women and children affected by rape and sexual abuse. Telephone 01772 825288 or email support@trushouselancs.org

- Rape Crisis England and Wales www.rapecrisis.org.uk. Providing support to women and girls who have experienced sexual trauma. Telephone 0808 802 9999 (12noon to 2.30pm and 7pm to 9.30pm)
- The Lantern Project www.lanternproject.org.uk. Providing help and support for survivors of sexual abuse. The organisation was set up to provide care, support and information for victims of childhood sexual abuse, in Wirral, Merseyside and the surrounding regions, to help improve their lives and the lives of their families. It is currently only able to respond to emails and provide literature in response.

9. REFERENCES

9.1 In compiling this strategy, the following documents have been used:

1. The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and the Church A theological resource for the local church, The Faith and Order Commission
2. Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Abuse, The Faith and order Commission
3. The journal of Christian Ethics, the Crucible, July 2016
4. Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused, House of Bishops Practice Guidance, July 2011.