

## Vulnerable Groups - Whistleblowing Policy

This guidance is written for all persons, whether employed or volunteers working with any vulnerable group in a church based setting within the diocese and should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policies and procedures.

(Available on the website at [www.cofesuffolk.org/go/safeguarding](http://www.cofesuffolk.org/go/safeguarding))

All such persons must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring safeguarding matters of concern to the attention of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer or Assistant Safeguarding Officer, (unless either of them are implicated) and/or relevant agencies (Police/Social Care Services) without delay. Although this may be challenging it is particularly important where the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concern out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or vulnerable person being placed at a continuing risk of significant harm. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable people who are targeted. They need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

We fully endorse the principal that the welfare of children and young people or vulnerable adults over rides any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. Under "whistleblowing" where there is a safeguarding concern that any person does not feel confident of an appropriate response, for example where incumbents or persons in leadership positions are implicated, anyone may refer direct to Suffolk County Council, Customer First or the Police if they are concerned that anyone from a vulnerable group at risk of harm or Safeguarding Policy is not being adhered to.

*Don't think: "What if I am wrong?" – think – "What if I am right?"*

### **Reasons for "whistleblowing"**

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- Doing the right thing.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

### **What stops people from "whistleblowing?"**

- Starting a chain of events, which spirals.
- Disrupting work or impeding progress.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging relationships.
- Fear of not being believed.
- Not wishing to be perceived as a "whistleblower".
- Lack of confidence.
- Not understanding whistleblowing policy.

**How to raise a concern**

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken.
- Try to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why.
- Record your concerns in writing.
- Discuss your concerns with the Bishop’s Safeguarding Officer or Assistant.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response—don't let matters rest.
- Remember you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation or suspicion, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for your concern and commit to your views.
- The Safeguarding Officer or Assistant will undertake to deal with your referral appropriately and to offer you the necessary support.

**People to contact**

- Bishop’s Safeguarding Officer - 01473 298522 or 07917 385843
- Assistant Safeguarding Officer – 01638 718939 or 07785 621319
- Suffolk County Council Customer First – 0808 800 4005
- Suffolk Police – 101 or 999 in the case of risk of ‘immediate harm’.

Owner:	Gavin Stone		Published:	Website	
Created:	March 2014	Last amended:	March 2016	Last approved:	March 2016