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 **Help for those harmed by the Church**

**Introduction**

Safeguarding is simply protecting people from harm. The Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia believes that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone who works in the Church, and that all who worship in our diocese, child or adult, has the right not to be harmed or abused. If, sadly, you have been harmed then you will be listened to and every complaint made to us will be thoroughly examined, recorded and investigated.

People who are found to have committed acts of abuse or harmed others will be dealt with robustly and held to account.

We understand that deciding whether to speak out or not is a difficult and personal matter, whatever the reasons, but if you have been harmed we want you to be heard; we will take your complaint seriously and you will be supported along the way.

**The Diocese of East Anglia would like to:**

* Help and support you, as a person who has been harmed by someone in the Church, throughout the process of reporting your experience.

* Empower you to talk about your complaint with our Safeguarding Team. This team is made up of lay professionals who are experienced at dealing with safeguarding matters. You can contact them in writing, by email, phone or through the diocesan website.

* Hear from you even though you may not have the strength to make contact yourself and you may ask for someone else to contact the Safeguarding Team on your behalf and that’s absolutely fine.
* Talk to you to find out from you what has happened. The Safeguarding Team will make a convenient appointment with you to speak to you about your complaint. This will be arranged around you and may be over the phone, in a conference call or face-to-face.
* Listen to you actively and write down what you say. The Safeguarding Team will explain to you how they will deal with the information that you share with them and what will happen next.

* Reassure you that we respect confidentiality and we will only share the information that you give to us with people who have the right to that information, and we will always tell you who we are sharing the information with. We understand that Church communities can be small and we will not be sharing your information with others in the parish.
* Seek your cooperation in reporting all allegations of adult and child abuse to the statutory authorities which may include the police, social care services and the local authority, depending on the nature of the complaint. We will always discuss this with you before we do this.
* Respect your right to remain anonymous when we report matters to the statutory authorities.
* Support you going forward. The diocese works with ‘Safe Spaces,’ a free and independent support service for victims and survivors over 18 years old, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with the Catholic Church. If you are under the age of 18 then we will work with your local Children’s Social Care services to support you.
* Discuss with you when you feel that you no longer want contact from the Safeguarding Team. This will be agreed with you before we close the case.
* Learn from you, as someone who has asked us for help at a difficult time in your life. You will be invited to comment on the help and support you have received from the safeguarding service at the conclusion of your involvement. We understand that we don’t always get things right and your feedback will be used to help us to improve our service.

* Learn from you and address any issues in relation to problems with our national safeguarding policies and procedures with the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA).

* Treat all persons fairly with dignity and respect; but you will be informed of the Diocese of East Anglia Complaints Policy and Procedure should you be dissatisfied with any part of the service you receive from us.

Please note that if you have a concern about a person from a Religious Order, we will discuss with

you the nature of the relationship between the Religious Order and the Diocese and will make sure

that the complaint is correctly dealt with.

**Thank you**

Thank you for taking the time to read this notice. For those of you that have been harmed, we appreciate how difficult it must have been for you to get this far and we would like to encourage you to take the next step.