



# Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle

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DEPARTMENT FOR SAFEGUARDING

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## Commitment to Survivors – November 2022

### **Introduction:**

The Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle acknowledges that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and has a zero tolerance approach to abuse and every complaint made to us will be thoroughly examined, recorded and investigated.

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

Deciding how and why to speak out is a personal matter, whatever the reasons we want Survivors to be heard, we will take their complaints seriously and be they will be supported.

### **The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is committed to:**

- helping and supporting you as a Survivor through the process of reporting your experience.
- As soon as you make contact with the Safeguarding Team, you will be offered a conversation at a time, place / medium to suit you.
- An initial letter will be sent to you explaining what you can expect of the Safeguarding team.
- You will be advised that all allegations of abuse have to be reported to the Statutory authorities which include the police, social services and the local authority, depending on the nature of the complaint, although some can be reported anonymously.
- We will discuss with you the information we need to share and with who, during the safeguarding process. You need to be aware that the Diocese has obligations under data protection legislation to other individuals involved in the safeguarding process. It also has a responsibility to share information with statutory agencies, with diocesan insurers and legal advisers, and with the Charity Commission. These obligations and responsibilities will be fully explained to you.
- If you are raising concern about a Religious Order, you will be informed as to the nature of the relationship between the Religious Order and the Diocese in order for roles and responsibilities to be clear.
- The Diocese will consider independent funding for counselling on an individual, case by case basis.

- As part of their ongoing casework oversight, reports to our Safeguarding Committee will include details of the support offered to you.
- You will be invited to comment on the support you have received from the safeguarding service at the conclusion of your involvement. This information will be used to help us to improve.
- Any issues raised by you about concerns in relation to national policies will be raised with The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) so they can examine their practices.
- The issue of ongoing contact with you at the conclusion of an investigation and assessment will be agreed with you prior to the closing of the case.
- You will be informed of the Complaints procedure should you be dissatisfied with any element of the service you receive.

To be reviewed November 2024