Commitment to Survivors – July 2026

"Abuse prevention is not a blanket to be spread over emergencies, but one of the foundations on which to build communities faithful to the Gospel…wherever a child or vulnerable person is safe, there you serve and honor Christ" – Pope Francis, March 2025.

Sharing your lived experience with a member of the Church community, whether it is a Priest, volunteer, staff or congregation member will be a daunting and possibly frightening experience. We want you to be heard, we will record your shared lived experience and listen to with compassion, respect and support you on your healing journey.

We are committed to your safety, dignity, work in an environment of transparency and always respect the choices that you make.

In line with the gospel values and Catholic social teaching, The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle acknowledge that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and has zero tolerance approach to abuse.

People who are found to have committed acts of abuse within the Church will be dealt with robustly and held to account. If your abuse has occurred outside the Church, we will support you.

If you require spiritual guidance and/or support, we will assist you in your journey. We have spiritual directors and accompaniers if you would like their help.

The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Safeguarding Team commitment to you.

- As soon as you make contact with the Safeguarding Team, we will arrange a conversation at a time/place/medium (such as online video call) to suit you.
- We will help and support you through the process of reporting your experience. We will provide you with a copy of a useful leaflet called 'The Isaiah Journey', which will explain next steps.
- We can signpost you to specialist support services, depending upon your needs. We are victim focused and have a trauma-informed response. We will seek to help you find what you need.
- In some circumstances, where you tell us a crime has been committed, we may need to pass your information on to police, social services and the local authority, although sometimes this can be reported without passing on your details. If the police are involved, they may direct us not to undertake any enquiries until their investigations have concluded. If this is the case, we will let you know.
- We have obligations under data protection legislation to others involved in the safeguarding process such as diocesan insurers, legal advisers, the Charity Commission and the Safeguarding Committee who oversee our work. These obligations and responsibilities will be fully explained to you. We will

share with you our guide to how we process your personal information.

- Depending on the nature of the abuse suffered, we will consider funding for counselling on a case-by-case basis.

- We will send you a copy of our safeguarding service complaints procedure, if you find we have not supported you as well as we should or have failed to deliver on our commitment.

- We will invite you 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 improve the service and ministry we provide.

- If you suffered abuse by a member of a religious order or religious life group, roles and responsibilities will be clearly explained to you.

- If you raise issues that need to be considered nationally, we will forward them to The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), so they can examine their practices.

- Please remember we will always be available for guidance and support, even after all enquiries and investigations have concluded.