Welcome you to the Safeguarding pages of our Diocesan website.

Safeguarding children and the vulnerable is an essential part of the life and ministry of the Church. It is the responsibility of us all to ensure our parishes and institutions are safe for all comers, especially those who are vulnerable. We all have our part to play. Safeguarding is the responsibility of us all.

Abuse has no place in our Diocese. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and I as your Bishop have a zero tolerance to abuse. Abuse is evil. It is destructive. It causes untold suffering to the innocent and causes huge distress to the victim and to others.

The Gospels tell us Jesus welcomed children and he blessed them. “Let the little children come to me and do not stop them. It is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.” (Mark 10: 14) We must minister with Jesus’ love and care for children and the vulnerable. Our mission is to bless people with the presence of Christ and never harm.

Here in the Diocese of, we speak of safe people, safe places, safe practices. These are not mere slogans, they are reminders to us all that safeguarding is our first responsibility. We must be vigilant and willing to learn to ensure best safeguarding practice is always used in our ministries.

Safe people. Those who have responsibilities with children and the vulnerable are properly selected, properly trained and properly monitored.

Safe places. ensuring people know where and when it is appropriate to work with children and the vulnerable. For example, nobody should be away from others working with children unsupervised.

Safe practices. Ensuring best practice is followed always, everywhere by everyone. Regular training is compulsory and we must all be open to learn more about best practice.

Our Diocese is regularly audited to ensure we are a safe charity for all comers. These independent inspections offer people reassurance about our work. You can read our latest audit from the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency on our and their websites. It is a very good report. However, we are not complacent, and we will always be seeking to improve our culture and our practice. That is the work of us all.

For example, recently we have introduced Parish Safeguarding dashboards which allow parishes, our safeguarding team and others to see simply at a glance what is going well and what needs attention, when it comes to safe people, safe places, safe practices. I thank the vast majority of parishes who have adopted this innovation. I ask all of our parishes to do so.

In thanking everyone for their vigilance in ministry, I thank our safeguarding representatives for their invaluable work. They all work alongside our parish clergy to ensure our ministry is safe and can be shown to be safe. Thank you.

If you are ever uncomfortable about what you see in our parishes and catholic institutions. Report it. We should not assume someone else will. Report concerns, even low-level concerns and these safeguarding pages offer the ways we may do so.

As Bishop and as a diocesan family we always seek to listen to those who have suffered abuse. We are committed to accompany and support all victim/survivors of abuse and we seek to learn from them and their representatives about best safeguarding practice. Personally, I am committed to meet and listen to those who have suffered abuse in the Church or elsewhere. I am deeply sorry to all people who have suffered.

In recent years we have seen a change in context. In the past most people I met had suffered abuse in the context of the church or catholic education.

More commonly now people use the Church safeguarding team as a safe place to disclose abuse in other contexts. Very often they suffer domestic abuse, in the home, from partners or ex-partners or relatives. We want to respond to this need.

In our churches you will find a poster advising people who suffer domestic abuse on next steps. Please do use our safeguarding team so that we may accompany you point you to those who can offer better care and reach justice.

The following web pages have reference and guidance documents to assist you as well as details of support organisations for those who have suffered abuse.

In the '*Contact Us*' section, you will find the details of the safeguarding team and what to do if you are aware of abusive behaviour or have any other concerns, including low level concerns.

I wish to thank our safeguarding team and committee, all our parish safeguarding representatives and all our clergy, employees and volunteers for their commitment and dedicated practice to safeguard the vulnerable. I want to thank you all. Everybody is called to safeguard the vulnerable. Nothing less is acceptable. Safe people, safe places, safe practices.

We pray for all who have suffered abuse.