

Improving the Church of England's responses to survivors of abuse and people at risk of harm

Take part in an independent, confidential survey

1. Introduction

Background and aim

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)¹ has been commissioned by the Church of England (C of E or 'the Church') to help improve how the Church treats people who have been abused or are at risk of harm. We are seeking the views of people with first-hand experience to find out what a good response from the Church should look like. The results of this survey will complement learning from an independent audit by SCIE of safeguarding arrangements in all 42 dioceses across England.

The Church has an obvious responsibility for anyone who has been abused by people who work for the Church, whether clergy, lay officers or volunteers. The Church also has a wider commitment to keep everyone involved in Church activities safe, including people who have been abused outside Church settings and turn to the clergy for pastoral support, and those who feel unsafe for any other reason.

The aim of this survey is to learn from survivors and victims of abuse and neglect, as well as from people who may be particularly vulnerable to harm. We want to help the Church of England to treat people who have been abused, or who need help to keep safe, in a way that works best for those individuals.

Can you help?

Can you think of a time when the Church helped, or should have helped, either when you reported experiencing abuse or when you felt unsafe for any reason?

Can you think of a time when you were worried about the safety or welfare of a family member or friend, and the Church helped, or should have helped them?

¹ SCIE is an agency working to improve people's lives. Established in 2004, we are a well-respected, independent charity with UK-wide reach. We have a national reputation for supporting the safeguarding of children and adults. For more information see www.scie.org.uk

You, or your family member or friend, might have been:

- a) Abused, mistreated or bullied by any member of the clergy, including bishops, or other persons related to the Church such as a music director, someone working in church administration or a volunteer such as a PCC member or youth worker. **We refer to this as 'ecclesiastical abuse'.**
- b) Abused, mistreated or neglected by someone not related to the Church such as a relative, work colleague, carer or friend, in other settings such as at home, at school or in hospital. Alternatively, you may have needed help to keep safe because of difficulties in life circumstances that led you to seek pastoral support from the Church, or because of the presence of a known perpetrator of abuse in the Church community.

If you have experienced a time when the Church helped or should have helped in any of these situations, please take part in this survey.

Note: We are only focusing on responses and support in the Church of England context.

What you tell us will be confidential and anonymised so no one will know who you are.

Self-care and support

Please think about self-care during and after the process of answering the survey questions and what support you might need from family, friends and professionals.

Support is available from numerous survivors' organisations and specialist charities. Information on these organisations and how to contact them can be found at:

http://www.svox.co.uk/Survivors_Support.html

Acknowledgements

The framework we have used for this survey was created by Dr Josephine Anne Stein², an independent researcher and policy analyst, and a survivor, with whom we discussed the survey design.

We also thank Jo Kind and Phil Johnson from Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS) for providing feedback on the survey design.

Please share information about the survey widely

The more people with first-hand experience that take part, the stronger the picture will be of what is needed from the Church. We encourage you to inform others about the survey who may be interested in participating.

Findings from submissions received by the 30 June 2018 will be published later in the summer.
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We thank you sincerely in advance for your participation.

² Stein, J. A. (2016). "Surviving the Crucible of Ecclesiastical Abuse." Crucible: The Journal of Christian Social Ethics July: 23–35.

2. Further information

The position of the Church of England

The Church of England is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church, through its leaders (archbishops, bishops, archdeacons), its institutions (including General Synod, Church House Westminster and all 42 dioceses) and members of parish clergy and other clergy such as chaplains.

According to the Church of England's safeguarding policy³:

“Safeguarding” means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused.

The C of E Faith and Order Commission produced two notable reports on the theology of safeguarding and on forgiveness and reconciliation following abuse⁴.

Safeguarding failures do occur, however, and the Church of England is one of thirteen institutions that are currently being investigated by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)⁵.

This survey builds upon prior research, including a major study by MACSAS⁶, a recent compilation of the views of survivors of ecclesiastical abuse⁷ and evidence given to IICSA in March 2018. We are seeking the views of people with first-hand experience of how the Church responded to abuse, neglect or safeguarding concerns. The purpose is to improve understanding of what should happen in order to meet people's needs. Key questions include:

- What are the ingredients of a good Church response?
- What does a respectful and timely response to concerns or allegations about abuse, neglect or vulnerability look like?
- What does it take to achieve a compassionate, supportive and healing response?

We want views on what should be done by people with roles in the Church that give them certain responsibilities for safeguarding. We also want to understand what fellow Christians / church goers can best do to help.

³ For full details see <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>

⁴ *The Gospel, Sexual Abuse and The Church: A Theological Resource for the Local Church and Forgiveness and Reconciliation in The Aftermath Of Abuse*, available from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/faith-and-order-commission>

⁵ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigations/investigation-into-failings-by-the-anglican-church>

⁶ Anne Lawrence. *The Stones Cry Out: Report on the MACSAS Survey 2010*. http://www.macsas.org.uk/MACSAS_SurveyReportMay2011.pdf

⁷ Andrew Graystone *We asked for bread and you gave us stones. Victims of abuse address the church in their own words*. <http://abuselaw.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Stones-not-Bread.pdf>

The survey results will allow the Church of England to improve how it supports survivors and victims of abuse and neglect, as well as protecting people who need help from the Church to keep safe.

Who can take part?

1. Survivors and victims of ecclesiastical abuse
2. People who
 - a. have needed help to keep safe because of vulnerabilities due to difficulties in personal circumstances (such as abuse unrelated to the Church, bereavement, crime, relationship breakdown, redundancy, occupational stress, physical or mental ill health, drug or alcohol dependencies, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, old age, emotional fragility or distress); or
 - b. have had safeguarding concerns over potentially hazardous church activities or the presence of known perpetrators of abuse taking part in church services or activities.
3. Close friends and family members of people with experiences of categories (1) and/or (2) above.

We are interested in hearing from clergy as well as lay Church officers who fall into either of the above categories.

Engaging directly with children and young people is important but beyond the scope of this project. However, we hope to hear from adults who were abused as children. We are also keen to hear from parents or carers of children and young people who have been abused, neglected or been vulnerable in a Church context.

Which Church of England bodies are we interested in?

The survey covers abuse and concerns experienced in parishes, dioceses, cathedrals, religious communities and other Church bodies, e.g. youth groups and theological colleges; and responses to disclosures of any kind of abuse or risk in any of these areas (e.g. from parish safeguarding officers and diocesan safeguarding offices).

Confidentiality

What you tell us will be confidential. Your responses will not be shared the Church nor published individually. We will pull everybody's responses together in an anonymised report to summarise what we learn through the survey.

You can choose whether or not to have your name included in a list acknowledging and thanking those who have contributed.

We will also ask whether you would be happy for us to contact you if we need to clarify anything you have written in your survey responses. We will use your email address only for the purposes of this survey and will delete it after the results are written up, unless you give us permission to keep it in order that we can contact you if SCIE conducts further research on this topic.

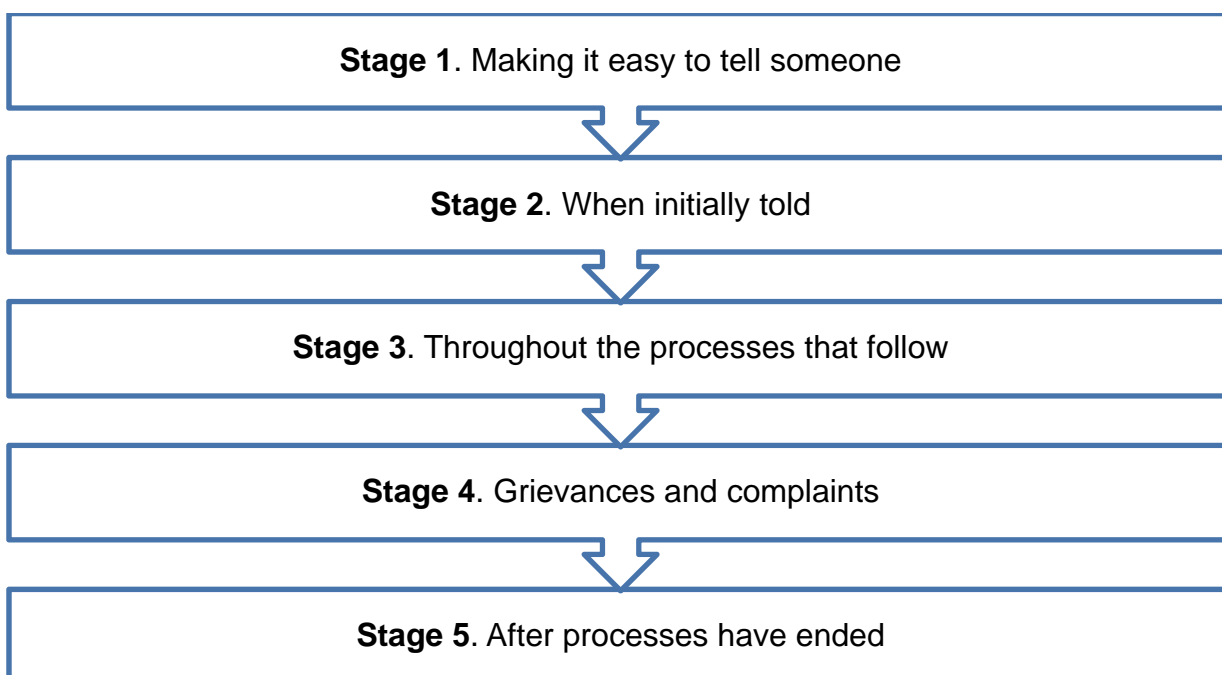
How is the survey going to help?

The Church of England's National Safeguarding Team (NST) has overall responsibility for safeguarding in line with policies and guidelines drawn up by the House of Bishops of the Church's General Synod. The NST commissioned the first independent safeguarding audits of all dioceses of the Church of England by SCIE and this survey/research project. The findings of this research and the overview of the audits will form part of the final report, which is a core part of the institution's own improvement agenda.

The project takes place at an important time in the history of the Church when there is unprecedented focus on what improvements are needed to safeguarding work within the Church of England. The General Synod of the Church of England has asked for a briefing on the preliminary results of the survey at its next session in July. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has requested the results of this project. The NST will take the final report to the Church's National Safeguarding Steering Group. The final report will be published on the NST and SCIE websites.

3. Completing the survey

The survey is structured to reflect each of the different stages of the Church response to allegations of abuse and safeguarding concerns as shown below:



There is one final, over-arching question.

Please be as specific as possible in your answers to the survey questions. Your answers will not be attributed to you, and SCIE will anonymise your answers if necessary to protect you and others who might otherwise be recognisable.

Getting hold of the questionnaire

To complete the survey please download the form and save to your computer or device.

The form is available from these websites:

- SCIE
www.scie.org.uk
- MACSAS (Ministry and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors)
<http://www.macsas.org.uk/>
- The Church of England's website
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding>

If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask a trusted friend or family member, or contact the person with a safeguarding role in your diocese or parish.

If you have any trouble accessing the questionnaire, please email:
learningtogether@scie.org.uk

Completing the questionnaire

Please type your answers into the form so that we can be confident of the accuracy of our research and reporting.

You need not answer every question, just those that are relevant to your experience. You can answer as briefly or as fully as you would like to.

We encourage you to take good care of yourself and to get support from family, friends and/or professionals if you feel the need. You may:

- Complete the survey at a time, place and pace that works for you.
- Complete as much or as little as you want.
- Draw upon all the support that you may need, such as:
 - have a trusted friend with you as you think about and complete the form
 - involve any therapist or counsellor who works with you
 - contact your Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser if you wish.

Returning the questionnaire

Please email your completed form to learningtogether@scie.org.uk clearly stating in the subject line: C of E survey.

Alternatively you can return the survey by post to:

SCIE Learning Together: Improving Church Responses
54 Baker Street
London W1U 7EX

Findings from submissions received by **30 June 2018** will be published later in the summer.

The survey

PART ONE: About you and your experiences

You may have experienced abuse at different times and under different circumstances. Therefore, we encourage you to complete Part One of the survey as many times as necessary to capture details of different scenarios. We expect you to draw on all your experiences in completing Part Two, so there is no need to complete Part Two more than once.

1. Are you – please tick the main one

- a survivor or victim of ecclesiastical abuse perpetrated by clergy and others with a specific role with the Church (e.g. safeguarding advisor, archdeacon, bishop, administrative officer, musician, volunteer)
- a survivor of abuse *not* related to the Church (e.g. at home, school, work or while being cared for e.g. in hospital)
- have you had vulnerabilities due to difficulties in personal circumstances that led you to seek help from the Church about your safety or welfare (e.g. pastoral support, making facilities accessible, protection from self-harm)?
- have you had safeguarding concerns about participating in Church activities (e.g. due to presence of known perpetrator(s) or other hazardous circumstances?)
- a friend or family member of someone who has experienced any of the above (Note we are not seeking views gained from a person's professional safeguarding role in this survey).

2. If you, or your friend or family member, have been a victim of abuse, what type(s) of abuse did you suffer or risk suffering – tick all that apply

- Sexual abuse
- Neglect or excessive delays
- Physical abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Officiousness or dishonesty
- Emotional abuse
- Manipulative, obstructive or threatening behaviour
- Other. Please specify:

Is there anything you would like to say about the type or types of abuse you suffered or felt at risk of suffering?

Answer here:

Other. Please specify: _____

16. Are you a member of the Church of England clergy?

Yes No

17. How did you hear about this survey?

Please specify.

Answer here:

PART TWO: Designing good Church responses to survivors of abuse and people at risk of harm

We have divided up Church responses according to the diagram on page 5, with each block summarising the stage, followed by a set of similar questions. In the pdf document, the font size gets smaller to fit the space in which to answer. Please use and return separate additional pages if the space provided is not sufficient.

We are using the word 'person' or 'people' in what follows to include survivors, victims, and people who are at risk of harm.

We want your views on what should be done by people with roles in the Church that give them certain responsibilities for safeguarding. We also want to understand what fellow Christians / church goers can best do to help.

Please remember, you need not answer every question, just those that are relevant to your experience. You can answer as briefly or as fully as you would like to.

Stage 1: Making it easy to tell someone

- Enabling everyone involved in Church related activities to identify concerns about abuse and risk of harm, and tell someone in the Church
- Making it as easy as possible for victims of abuse to tell someone.

What are the key things that you think the Church needs to provide for those people who might wish to disclose abuse or share personal difficulties or worries about the safety of someone else?

Answer here please:

What is most important in order to enable people to tell someone?

Answer here please:

From the perspective of the people who are considering coming forward, what needs to be avoided at this stage?

Answer here please:

Are there particular situations that need to be recognised in determining how to make it easy for people to tell someone? Thinking of your own experience, was there anything about the identity of your abuser or a known perpetrator of abuse, any particular features of your experience, personal circumstances or anything else that the Church needs to pay special attention to at this stage?

Answer here please:

**Stage 2:
When initially told**

- Immediate responses and support to the person when someone in the Church is initially told about abuse or worries about a person's safety and welfare.

What are the key things that you think need to happen in the initial Church response to people disclosing abuse or raising/sharing concerns?

Answer here please:

What is most important in the Church's treatment of people coming forward or identified as needing help to keep safe?

Answer here please:

What needs to be avoided from the perspective of the survivor, the person raising safeguarding concerns or person at risk of harm?

Answer here please:

Are there particular situations that need to be recognised in determining the response and help once they've been told? Thinking of your own experience, was there anything about the identity of the abuser or known perpetrator of abuse; any particular features of your experience or personal circumstances; or anything else that the Church needs to pay special attention to in responding to at this stage?

Answer here please:

Stage 3: Throughout processes that follow, both formal and informal

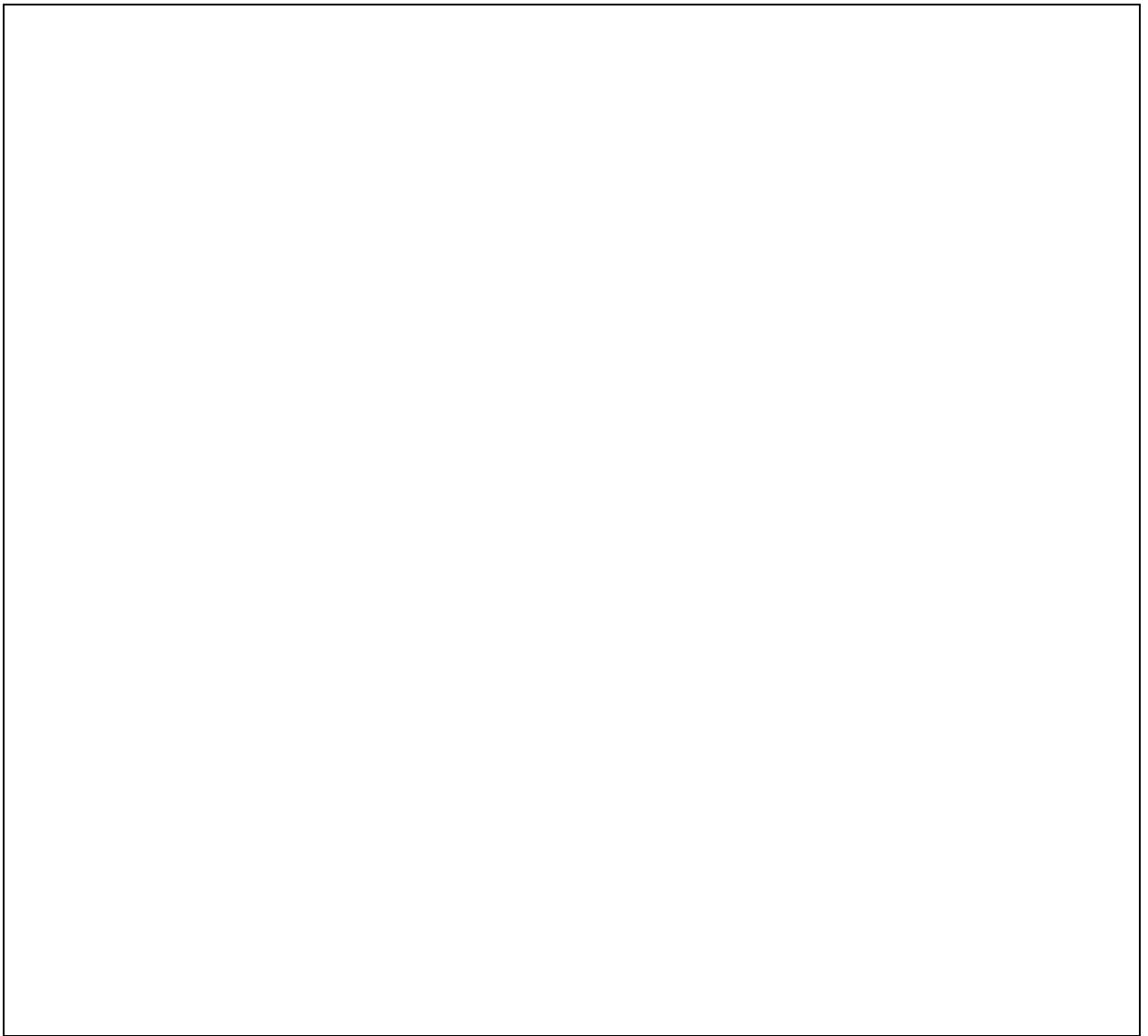
- Communication and support to victims of abuse during the Church's own and/or police investigations, criminal proceedings, civil claims, compensation processes etc. and direct negotiations with the Church;
- Communication and support to people during interventions to address the source of people's vulnerability.

What are the key things that you think need to happen in the Church's response at this stage?

Answer here please:

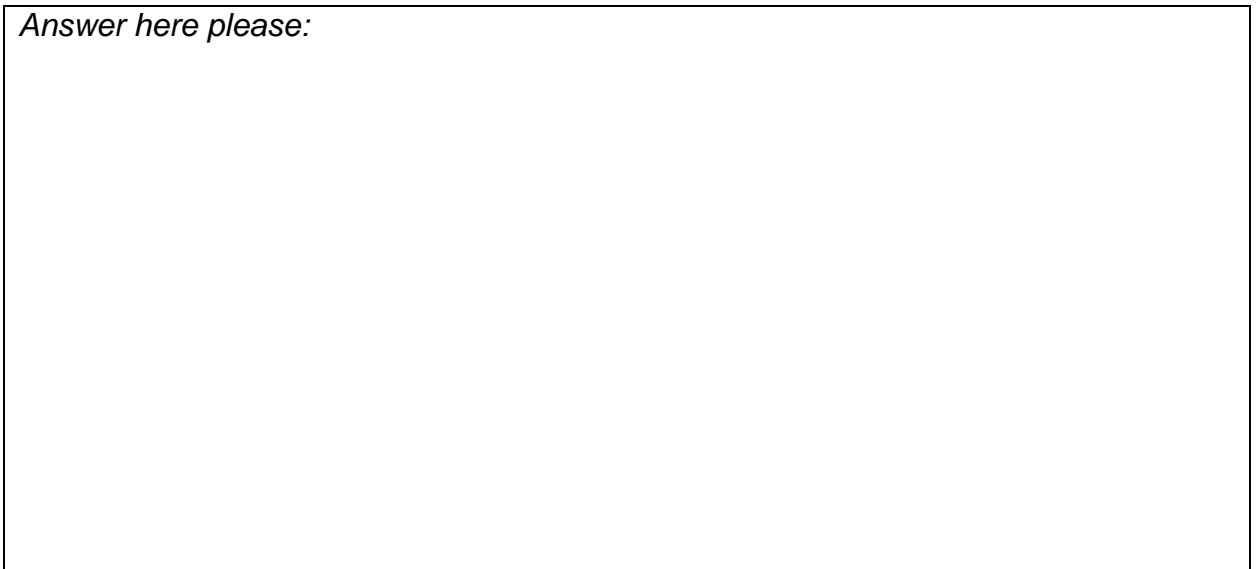
What is most important in the Church's treatment of people who have disclosed abuse, come forward with concerns or need help to keep safe due to personal circumstances?

Answer here please:



From the perspective of the people who have come forward, what needs to be avoided?

Answer here please:



Are there particular situations that need to be recognised in determining the response to people while processes are on-going? Thinking of your own experience, was there anything about the identity of your abuser or a known perpetrator of abuse; any particular features of your experience or personal circumstances; or anything else that the Church needs to pay special attention to at this stage?

Answer here please:

Do you have anything to add about:

What is needed from fellow Christians/ church goers while these processes are on-going?

What part can other clergy (those independent of the situation) usefully play at this stage?

Answer here please:

Do you have anything to add about:

Whether and how a person who comes forward is informed about key aspects of how the case is being handled, including

- a) communication and support the Church is providing to the alleged offender about the allegation and**
- b) what precautions are being taken to protect the person and other people at potential risk of harm?**

Answer here please:

**Stage 4:
Grievances and
complaints**

- Reactions to people when they tell someone in the Church that their previous disclosures of ecclesiastical abuse or safeguarding concerns have not been acted upon adequately.

If this stage was not part of your experience please continue to Stage 5.

What are the key things that you think need to happen in the Church's response to people at this stage?

Answer here please:

What is most important in the Church's treatment of people feeling re-abused by the lack of appropriate Church response(s)?

Answer here please:

From the perspective of the people who complain or who instigate formal proceedings, what needs to be avoided at this stage?

Answer here please:

Are there particular situations that need to be recognised in determining the response and help at this stage? Thinking of your own experience, was there anything about the identity of your abuser, your re-abuser or a known perpetrator of abuse; any particular features of your experience or personal circumstances; or anything else that the Church needs to pay special attention to in responding to grievances and complaints?

Answer here please:

Stage 5: After processes have ended and longer term

- Responses and engagement with individuals when processes of disclosure, investigation, and where appropriate, prosecution and/or compensation, have concluded
- Responses and engagement after the person has given up and gone away without a satisfactory conclusion.

What are the key things that you think need to happen in the Church's response to survivors, re-abused people and those who need help to keep safe over the longer term?

Answer here please:

What is most important in the Church's treatment of people over the longer term?

Answer here please:

From the perspective of these individuals themselves, what needs to be avoided by the Church?

Answer here please:

Are there particular situations that need to be recognised in determining the response and engagement with people over the longer term? Thinking of your own experience, was there anything about the identity of your abuser, your re-abuser or a known perpetrator of abuse; any particular features of your experience or personal circumstances; or anything else that the Church needs to pay special attention to at this stage?

Answer here please:

Do you have anything to add about:

What needs to happen if people move to a new church / congregation?

Answer here please:

What needs to happen for the survivor or person who has raised safeguarding concerns, if the perpetrator of abuse moves to a new church / congregation?

Answer here please:

Concluding thoughts

- What are the three most important ways the Church could improve its responses to:
 - survivors/victims of ecclesiastical abuse or neglect, and/or
 - people needing help to feel safe in church for any other reason
 - people whose personal circumstances mean they need to seek help from the Church about their safety or welfare

Most important improvement.

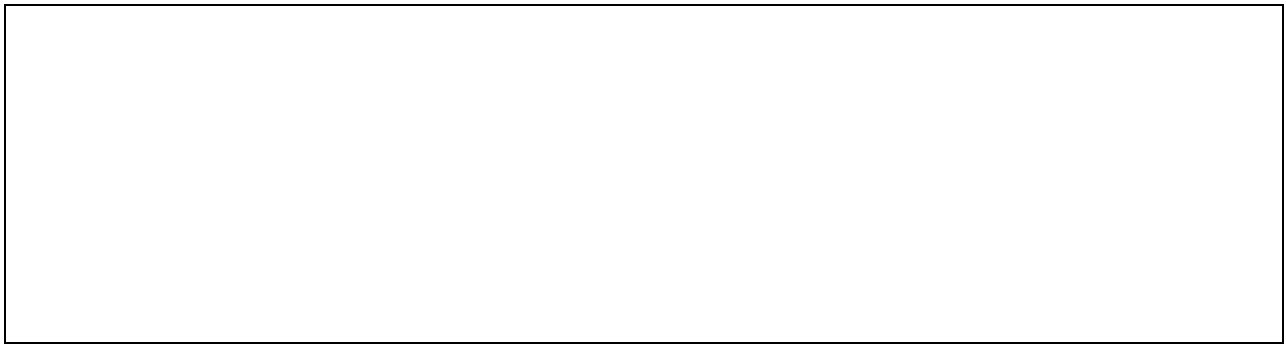
Please specify below:

Next most important improvement.

Please specify below:

Third most important improvement.

Please specify below:



That is the end of the survey.

Thank you very much for your responses.

Privacy statement and contacting you

Please complete this section

By returning this survey, you are giving SCIE your email address alongside personal and sensitive information.

Protecting your privacy is important to us.

The staff who analyse the responses to the survey, will not know who has submitted the response. We will separate your response to the survey, from your contact details.

The only exception is if you give us permission to contact you with any questions about your response (see below). If we do contact you and we resolve the questions, we will then separate out your response from your contact details.

We will never store or use this information for any other reasons, other than those you choose below. If you agree that we can keep your personal details (e.g. your chosen name and email address), we will store your details in a spreadsheet that only SCIE colleagues working on the project with the Church of England will have access to. We will never share your details with anyone else (including the Church of England) and it will not be added to a wider database.

You can ask to amend or remove your details from the list anytime by contacting us at learningtogether@scie.org.uk – and we will remind you of this whenever we contact you.

See SCIE's full Privacy Policy at www.scie.org.uk/about/privacy.asp.

Your contact information and response to the survey

Please tick *all* the options that you agree with.

If you do not tick any options, we will save your survey response and delete the email that you send to us. This means that we will not have access to your email address. It will be removed from our Inbox, we will have no record that you have submitted a response, and we will not be able to contact you.

SCIE's Learning Together team can store and use my contact details in order to:
contact me to clarify something in my survey response

- contact me by email to let me know when the report of this survey is published
- contact me by email about other work relating to the Church of England and survivors of abuse
- name me in a list of people who responded to the survey. (This list will be published in a report but names will **not** be associated with individual's survey responses or comments. The report will be made public.)

If you have ticked *any* of the above options, please provide the following details, which we will store and process as agreed:

Name:

Email:

Telephone *(only provide this if you are happy to be contacted about your survey response, and if this is your preferred form of contact):*

If you have any questions about how we will use your personal information or your response to this survey, please contact learningtogether@scie.org.uk

Thank you.

Details for [returning the survey](#) are on page 6.

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www.scie.org.uk