**Recording a Safeguarding Concern**

**Adapted from “Safeguarding Records joint Practice Guidance**

**for the Church of England and Methodist Church 2015”**

1 Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. Records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise, and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. They should clearly differentiate between facts, opinion, judgements and hypothesis.

2 **Why record?** In the church context, safeguarding records are needed in order to:

* Ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded.
* Provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified.
* Record and justify the action/s of advisers and church workers.
* Promote the exercise of accountability.
* Provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity.
* Allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel.

Example: When a minister moves between Parishes, a youth worker moves to a different post, or there has been a change of Parish/Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, the availability of a safeguarding record is essential so that one can know what has happened in the past.

3 The following approach is helpful in considering what should be written.

* **A written record** of the event or conversation should be made as soon as is practicable (after the event or conversation but always within 24 hours).
* **Who** is it about? (the names of all key people including any actual / potential witnesses).
* **What** happened? (use exact quotes where possible, in quotation marks).
* **How** did it happen? (for example, if someone is alleged to have assaulted a child, did they use an implement? Or was it a kick? Or a hit?).
* **Where** did it take place?
* **When** did it take place?
* **Why** did it happen? (this allows you to record any explanations offered to you by the people involved. It is not the place for your own analysis).
* **What should happen next** (what action will follow, for example, what are you going to do next, what is X going to do next, making sure it is in the diary in Y days time as a reminder).
* **Recording what did happen next and the checks made to ensure effective follow up** (did X do what they said they were going to do?).
* **Include the views / perspective of the child or adult who is vulnerable.**
* **Analysis.** The PSO/CSO should analyse all the information gathered to decide the nature and level of the child’s needs / the needs of the adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing.
* **Records must always be dated and the author identified.**
* **Indexing.** The PSO/CSO should ensure that Parish/Cathedral records are able to be searched or indexed so that previous names and concerns can be easily retrieved.
* **Summary.** The safeguarding adviser should ensure, if a church worker has a separate personnel file, that a summary of any concerns and the outcome is filed on the personnel file.

**NB** Facts and professional judgments (analysis) should always be distinguished in the record and the record must not be disrespectful to the subjects. Always bear in mind they may well be read by the subject(s) who have a right of access to their files –

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/personal-information>

See “Initial and ongoing safeguarding record for Parish and Cathedral” [here](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/safeguarding/toolkit-rrs-2.docx) GKJ/DSA 27/04/2017