

Survivor Care Strategy Diocese of Lincoln

This Strategy should be read alongside 'Responding well to those who have been sexually abused practice guidance' (2011). This practice guidance is currently under review and an updated version will be available in due course.

Role of Advocate for Survivor Care

The Diocese of Lincoln is committed to ensuring that the voices of victims and survivors of church related abuse are heard and responded to in a trauma informed manner. Gemma Marks-Good, our Diocesan Safeguarding Advocate, is a fully accredited ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Adviser). She has many years of experience working within high risk domestic and sexual abuse services and Diocesan/National Safeguarding Teams. Should a referral to Gemma Marks-Good be requested a copy of the below support letter is made available.

I am a Safeguarding Advocate. My role is to provide practical and emotional support and assistance to victims/survivors of violence and abuse within a church context, regardless of whether the assault took place recently or in the past. Whilst I am employed by the Diocese of Lincoln, I have the role of an Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate.

I recognise that it can be extremely difficult to seek support following an assault and that for some, the thought of seeking justice through the courts or any formal process is too much to cope with. Therefore, the support I can offer to you is unconditional. You do not have to be seeking a justice outcome or making a complaint or seeking civil redress to access my support. I can support you in exploring any or all of these options or just by being a listening ear and acting as an advocate to get the right support in place for you. You choose how we work together.

The type of work I can do with you includes:

- *Helping you assess any risk that you and others might be facing and then helping you to develop safety and support plans that are individual to your needs.*
- *Supporting you to report an assault to the police if you choose to do so.*

- *Supporting you in seeking civil redress or in making a complaint through internal mechanisms that address the conduct of the person who harmed you.*
- *Attendance with you at any police interviews, court proceedings or complaints meetings.*
- *Help with accessing other services such as health screening and counselling.*
- *Helping you understand better the criminal justice and court process.*
- *Helping you understand better the church-based complaint route.*
- *Regular and ongoing telephone contact and/or face-to-face meetings*
- *Helping you have your voice heard so that if your aim is to share your experience to better inform church practice or ensure better support of others, you are heard in the right forums and your anonymity and confidentiality are protected.*

I offer confidential and impartial advice. No information you provide will be shared without your consent unless the information you tell me suggests that there continues to be a risk of serious harm. Where there is a Police investigation I am legally obliged to share some factual information. I will discuss this with you in more detail during our first appointment and we can sign an agreement as to how I support you and how your privacy is protected.

Gemma is employed 4 days a week for the Diocese, working on Tuesdays in a similar role for the Church of England National Safeguarding Team. All engagement and support plans will consider individual needs, accessibility and information with the aim to provide the support that is most appropriate. Plans may include risk assessments, referrals and safe exit plans.

Gemma offers advice and support to the Diocesan Bishop and his Senior staff clergy and church officers about all aspects of abuse within a church context. The diocese strives to work in a trauma informed manner. All work with all people affected by abuse and trauma needs to look unlike and be opposite of abuse, otherwise it can inadvertently explicate the dynamics of abuse and cause harm.

Referral Pathway for Survivor Advocate Support

Direct (self referral) or via Diocesan Safeguarding Officers (DSO), Safeguarding Officers (SGO), Lay or Ordained Ministers, Police and external agency.

Gemma Marks-Good is available 4 days a week (non-working day is Tuesday) and can be contacted via Phone: [07487 242910](tel:07487242910) or email: gemma.marks-good@lincoln.anglican.org

Reporting Abuse

The Diocese of Lincoln is fully committed to victim and survivor care and the welfare of children and adults at risk of abuse. The diocesan website provides local and national contact information, guidance and support information to those coming forward disclosing harm. Providing survivors with a range of options of support, alongside or instead of the Survivor Advocate. *The Diocese of Lincoln recognises that for many, the support they seek would need to be external from church structures:*

[From the Diocesan Strategy]

Survivor Strategy

Disclosures of Harm

Ensuring that victims and survivors experience a timely, high quality response to disclosures with individualised, ongoing support in order to best meet their needs through a journey of healing and recovery.

Poor responses can compound the trauma victims and survivors have already experienced, and delay or prevent them from healing and moving forward. Responding well requires a healthy culture marked by love and compassion, where understanding of trauma informs how people respond, and various forms of concrete support are provided in a timely manner.

What does good looks like:

- ❖ *When reporting abuse, victims and survivors are heard, understood, respected, taken seriously, genuinely cared for, and are not judged or met with disbelief.*
- ❖ *The response to safeguarding disclosures is victim and survivor-centered and does not cause further abuse or trauma to those making a disclosure.*
- ❖ *Safeguarding concerns are acted on appropriately, transparently and in a timely manner.*
- ❖ *Victims, survivors and Church officers are made aware of the routes to disclosure and the process that will be followed if someone reports abuse, including how personal information, data, and dignity are protected*
- ❖ *The requirements set out in the “Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse” House of Bishops’ Guidance are fulfilled. This can include, but not be limited to, the offering of a Support Person in the form of a Safeguarding Advocate, therapeutic support,*

- spiritual and pastoral support and, where appropriate, an apology.*
- ❖ *Victims and Survivors of Church based and non-Church based abuse are appropriately supported in accessing relevant support services.*

Survivor/Victim Engagement:

Survivor engagement enables those who have experienced any form of church related abuse to have a say and an active role in making the Diocese of Lincoln a safer place for all.

Survivors' voices and participation are invaluable in protecting others, developing services and assuring quality, working together with church officers and leaders/other survivors, to find solutions and advance changes in the Diocese.

The names of DSAP members will be shared with the Survivor Representatives and a summary of DSAP actions will be shared with them after each meeting and discussed with the Safeguarding Advocate and Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. The Survivor Representatives will meet prior to each DSAP and have their voices heard at each DSAP. The invitation to attend DSAP in person remains open.

What does good look like:

- ❖ *The Diocese of Lincoln is committed to the development and implementation of a survivor engagement framework.*
- ❖ *Victims and survivors are proactively engaged with, and good working partnerships are established in the delivery of safeguarding activities and developments*
- ❖ *Victims and survivors are recognised for their time and commitment as individuals and volunteers in drawing on their personal experiences of abuse to support the Diocese of Lincoln's work.*