

## Cross-boundary placements

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### 1 Introduction

On occasions, whilst allegations relating to children and adults at risk are investigated or addressed, it may be necessary to move Diocesan Clergy or members of Religious Congregations from their diocese or religious house of origin within England and Wales and locate them elsewhere. They may also be placed from Scotland, Ireland or any other country, in which case this policy equally applies.

The move may be temporary (e.g. at the outset of an investigation) or permanent (e.g. at the conclusion when a decision has been reached by the Bishop or Congregation Leader as to the on-going level of risk.)

This document sets out required processes in these situations to ensure that:

- Placements are approved in advance;
- Risk is identified and managed appropriately;
- Children, young people and adults are safeguarded;
- Written agreements are monitored and reviewed (**see Safeguarding Plans – Management of Risk within the Church policy and procedure**)

### 2 Initial Decision-Making

Where placements are required for a member of the clergy/religious who has been accused of abuse this is likely to be a matter of urgency. Where an allegation of abuse has been referred to the statutory authorities an inter-agency strategy discussion will take place, possibly by telephone. This will agree, amongst other issues, whether and when temporary withdrawal from ministry/post will occur. Where agreed, temporary withdrawal from ministry/post will occur to:

- Protect children (Paramountcy Principle);
- Protect adults;
- Safeguard the course of justice;
- Protect the freedom of witnesses;

- Prevent scandal.

Safeguarding Commissions should identify a small number of potential short-term placements which are fully risk assessed, which will be available should the need arise. The receiving Bishop or Congregation Leader must be consulted at the outset of the search for a placement.

### **3 Choosing the Placement**

Decisions about all placements of Clergy and religious regarding temporary withdrawal from ministry/post following allegations or concerns must be taken by the Bishop or Congregation Leader. This should be in full consultation with the Safeguarding Coordinator and if need be with the Safeguarding Commission.

- All such placement arrangements should be progressed without undue delay, and suitable timescales should be agreed in writing among all parties;
- The needs of the individual and the suitability of the proposed location will be considered though the primary consideration is the safety and welfare of the public, especially of children, young people and adults. (Presbyteries are not normally a suitable location.)

The Safeguarding Coordinator of the originating Diocese or acting on behalf of a religious congregation will always discuss the proposed location with the Safeguarding Coordinator of the receiving Diocese or religious house, and following this, with those in charge of the proposed placement.

All relevant details regarding the allegations, concerns and history must be shared in writing with the receiving Ordinary and Safeguarding Coordinator. This enables a risk assessment to be undertaken with regard to the specific location.

### **4 Assessing the Risk of a Chosen Placement**

1. A risk assessment will be undertaken by those in charge of the proposed location along with the relevant Safeguarding Coordinator. This will consider all information about the circumstances of the case, and any existing written agreements/Safeguarding Plans regarding restrictions in force. The timescale of such a risk assessment should be agreed by the parties and undertaken as quickly as possible. In religious congregations it will be the responsibility of the Safeguarding Coordinator to undertake a risk assessment of a placement with assistance from the appropriate Safeguarding Lead in the Congregation;
2. The results of the risk assessment should be presented to the receiving Safeguarding Commission. They will make a recommendation to the receiving Bishop or Congregation Leader, including all restrictions and written agreements/Safeguarding Plans;
3. Particular care should be taken where a proposed placement is suggested by the subject of the allegation themselves and/or is a placement in a family context (parents, relatives or friends). Risks must be fully identified and comprehensive information shared, both verbally

and in writing. Copies of any written agreements/Safeguarding Plans in place should be provided to the Ordinary and the Safeguarding Coordinator;

4. Where an individual who is deemed to present a risk to children or adults is moving to a placement, e.g. in their own home, it is necessary to ensure that the local statutory authorities are informed and that a monitoring plan is agreed;

### **Communication**

5. The subject of the allegations or concerns will be informed of the process being undertaken and of the contents of this policy;
6. Once all concerned are satisfied that the proposed placement is suitable this should be confirmed in writing by the Safeguarding Coordinator of the receiving Diocese or Religious Congregation.

## **5 Placement Arrangements**

A Safeguarding Plan will be developed and will be shared with the Safeguarding Commissions involved and with the subject. This will address:

- Roles and responsibilities of the originating diocese or religious congregation;
- Roles and responsibilities of those in charge of the proposed placement;
- Identification of those within the church who need to be informed to ensure the safety of the public (e.g. Parish Priest, Safeguarding Representative);
- The circumstances in which the placement may be terminated.

Any existing Safeguarding Plan should be adapted to the new situation in consultation with the local Safeguarding Commission and where appropriate, with Police, Probation or Social Care Services. All Safeguarding Plans must provide for a support person and clear monitoring arrangements in the new placement.

The subject of the allegation or concern will be informed of the decision in writing and provided with copies of all written agreements applying to the placement.

All changes of placement or temporary stays away from the placement must be agreed in writing in advance by the Safeguarding Coordinators in the originating diocese or religious congregation and in the receiving diocese/religious congregation.

Written agreements must include arrangements for their review at agreed intervals and it is the Safeguarding Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that such reviews take place in line with the Safeguarding Plans – Management of risk within the Church policy and procedure.

## **6 Missing and absconding clergy/religious**

The proper Ordinary or Major Superior should take appropriate canonical steps to recall such persons to their diocese or community and, if this fails, to secure their dismissal from the clerical state or religious life. The Church cannot be responsible for those who have been dismissed from the



clerical state or religious life. In such cases, wherever possible, Safeguarding Commissions should inform the Church and statutory authorities in the relevant area(s) in writing of the circumstances and the (potential) risk posed by the individual.