

Confidentiality

When a report is made about risks of harm to a child or an adult the person making the allegation or raising the concern is often concerned to do so 'in confidence'. It needs to be made clear that full confidentiality can never be promised.

It is important to explain why as well as how the information that is about to be shared will be managed. Reassurance that the information will be shared only with people who need to know in order to take action to intervene and protect the child or adult should be given. Reassurance about the security of records and the security of the information sharing process and record keeping should be given with a clear explanation that the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018 will be observed. A privacy notice should be issued to any person making contact with CSAS or other safeguarding offices across England and Wales, explaining what they can expect to be done with their personal information when they make or use safeguarding services.

Giving reassurance about the timing of interventions and feedback to the person raising a concern will assist in managing the process.

Confidentiality is often confused with secrecy and remaining anonymous in reporting and referring. Anonymity can be agreed where the report is coming from a parishioner or member of a congregation and is being passed to the public agencies through the Safeguarding Representative, Religious Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Coordinator, but only with their agreement and in agreement with the public agency e.g. the Police or Children's Social Care Services /Adult Social Care Services. Total anonymity cannot be agreed as the circumstances may develop into a criminal process.

If there are concerns about the safety of the person reporting, this must be clearly recorded and taken into full account when reaching an agreement with the Social Care Services and the Police.

Where a person in a formal role within the Church raises a concern or reports an allegation they cannot do so anonymously.