

Guidelines for those working in chaplaincy with vulnerable adults and children

All volunteers who are official Chaplaincy volunteers with a pastoral role are to carry identification for their role. ID badges will be provided. They will be issued with honorary contracts by the University's Human Resources department and DBS checks will be carried out as appropriate and/or risk assessments will be carried out.

They will be expected to complete the University's online Safeguarding Training module prior to commencing their volunteering/work.

Chaplaincy staff and associate staff have a clear duty when abuse is suspected or discovered.

Their duty is:

- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life threatening situation
- To then report to the Chaplain or contact a University Safeguarding Officer.
- To report suspected acts of abuse
- To be alert to what abuse means and take seriously what they are told
- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice
- To work strictly in accordance with The University of Cumbria's policies on equality and diversity
- To ensure the safety of the person suspected of being mistreated as well as their own safety
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully rather than question directly
- Be sympathetic
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed

Tell the person that:

- They did the right thing by telling you

- You are treating this information seriously
- It was not their fault

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events as they may not tell you again
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential, i.e. information will only be passed to those people who have “a need to know”
- Make promises that you cannot keep (such as “This will not happen to you again”)
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental (e.g. “Why didn’t you run away?”)
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn’t have a “need to know” i.e. do not gossip

Recording

At the first opportunity make a note of the disclosure and date and time and sign your record.

You should aim to:

- Note what the people actually said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Record only factual information. **DO NOT** write your opinions.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink, so that the report can be photocopied.
- Be aware that your report will may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.