**ROLE OF SUPPORT PERSON**

The role of the support person is described within the following support, section 1.4.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/Responding%20PG%20V2.pdf>

1. Support Person

A support person will be offered to **all** victims/survivors

The support person may be specifically trained to hold this role. A member of clergy or a holder of the bishop’s licence may be among those able to undertake this role as they are already trained in pastoral care – they will however, still be required to undertake further specific training to hold this role. No-one directly involved in the management of the case, or who may be required to give evidence in any court proceedings, should be directly supporting the victim/survivor, since their roles or their status may be compromised.

Victims/survivors who are children or young people will require specialist support; under advice from Children’s Services, the child or young person should be referred to a professional agency qualified to provide such support.

1. The Role

The particular role the support person plays must be agreed in consultation with the victim/survivor. The support person, provided the victim/survivor agrees, could be responsible for the following matters:

* Liaising (which could include attending any meetings) with the statutory agencies to provide support to the victim/survivor, the support person is not the victim/survivors advocate at any meeting they attend;
* Listening to and representing the victim/survivor’s pastoral needs;
* Identifying any therapeutic or other needs the victim/survivor may have, and offering choices as how these may be best met;
* Listening to and representing the victim/survivor’s views during the management of the safeguarding concern or allegation;
* Recording any meetings or contact they have with the victim/survivor and passing on relevant information (e.g. to prevent/protect others from harm, any further information supplied in relation to the safeguarding concern or allegation) to the DSA as appropriate, this should be made clear from the outset of the relationship. *Records of meetings would include dates, times, locations and an overview of the meeting rather than a specific and detailed account.*

The support person will not be responsible for managing the case and will pass on written records to the DSA.

The support person is NOT the confidant of the victim/survivor. They must be bound by a responsibility to disclose to the appropriate authorities (e.g. the Police, DSA etc.) where:

* Others are at risk of harm;
* The victim/survivor makes disclosures of intentions to hurt themselves;
* Safeguarding information is shared to assist in the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime.

It is important to recognise and to acknowledge where others may still be at risk, the Police (and possibly Children’s / Adult’s Services or the Local Authority) will need to be informed.

If the support person is unsure whether to share information they should seek advice from the DSA and/or diocesan registrar.

1. Clarity about the Role

The support person is not:

* A counsellor for the victim / survivor and should not act in that role;
* A spiritual guide for the victim / survivor;
* An advocate for the victim / survivor;
* A core group member.

The support person will NOT attend core group meetings. The support person does not manage the case file and will not have access to it. All support persons must attend a national training programme which introduces and explains their role.

Where the victim/survivor accepts the offer of a support person a written description of the support person’s role and responsibilities should be provided to the victim/survivor at the commencement of such an arrangement. This may be a copy of the role as described in this guidance or may be a specifically written description based upon what is agreed between them and the support person.

1. Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of contacts/meetings should be agreed between the victim/survivor and the support person.

1. Storage of Records

Information regarding meetings between the support person and the victim/survivor must be stored safely and securely in accordance with Safeguarding Records Practice Guidance 2015 (item 5). Records of the meetings that have taken place and any relevant safeguarding issues that have arisen must be forwarded to the DSA for placing in the safeguarding file.

1. Support and Supervision

Regular contact, as determined between the support person and the DSA, should take place to enable the DSA to keep up to date with the needs and requests of the victim/survivor. The DSA should offer the support person access to appropriate welfare support to ensure their wellbeing and pastoral needs are met and supervision to allow the support person to receive feedback on their role. If necessary, external welfare support for the support person should be used if appropriate