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### What if harm or abuse has not happened but the person is at risk of harm?

Again follow the Church's key safeguarding message: immediately report your concern to your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager.

**Note for CrossReach staff and volunteers:** for suspected or reported harm, or risk of harm, you must report it to your line manager.



### What to do if it is known, or suspected, that there is a sex offender in your congregation.

Immediately report this information to your Safeguarding Coordinator and minister. The Safeguarding Coordinator must then contact the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service for advice and support. The Church has rigorous procedures for ensuring the safe inclusion of those who pose a risk.



### Where to get more information.

For more information about what you need to know and do to protect children and adults at risk see **Safeguarding Handbook I, 2011**. For more information about adult protection, see CrossReach's, **Adult Protection Policy, Procedure and Guidance**. Both booklets are available from the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service and can be downloaded from the Church of Scotland's Safeguarding Service web pages.



### How to contact the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service.

The service is available 9am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday. You can leave a telephone or email message outwith this time. But if you suspect or witness serious harm or abuse, or it is reported to you, first contact your local police or social work service.

For details about all safeguarding activity, publications and guidance see:  
[www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about\\_us/safeguarding\\_service](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding_service)

## Safeguarding children and adults at risk

key information for  
volunteers and staff  
2014



The Church of Scotland  
Safeguarding Service

Harm or abuse of children or adults at risk can happen, or be disclosed, anywhere - even in church communities and services.

### The Church's key safeguarding message:

If you suspect or witness harm or abuse, or it is reported to you, you must immediately report it to your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager.

Then the Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager must contact the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service for advice.



### Who is a child and who is an adult at risk?

A child is a person under the age of 16 years. An adult at risk is defined in the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. But in everyday language, it includes a person affected by physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health difficulties, dementia or long term illness, that you suspect or know is being harmed by another person, or is harming themselves, *and* who is unable to protect themselves.



### What is meant by harm or abuse?

Abuse, or harm, includes physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It can also mean neglect. Children or adults at risk can also be at risk of harm or abuse that has not actually happened. See also guidance for responding to the needs of survivors of historical abuse that happened in a Church setting.



### Not too sure if it is harm or abuse?

If it looks, sounds or feels wrong, then it probably is wrong. Trust your gut feeling. This is only the starting point - don't jump to conclusions about the outcome.



### What to do if you suspect or witness harm or abuse, or it is reported to you.

If serious harm or sexual abuse has happened, a crime has occurred or the person is in immediate physical danger, **first** contact the police.

For all other types of harm, follow the key safeguarding message. Then the Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager must contact the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service for advice and support.



## How to respond when a child or adult at risk tells you about a harmful situation.

- **Recognising:** listen and take what they say seriously. If appropriate you can ask who, what, when and where questions to establish the basic facts. But do not ask 'why' questions. Do not investigate – where needed that is the role of the police or social work services.
- **Reporting:** tell the person that you will have to share this information with your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager.
- **Recording:** as soon as possible write down everything the child or adult at risk has told you.

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about\\_us/safeguarding\\_service](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding_service)