

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CASEWORK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Guiding Principles for using MyConcern



Contents

Introduction	3
System Administration.....	4
User administration	4
Master Configuration Data	4
Record Keeping	5
What to record.....	5
Triage	5
Casework.....	6
Chronologies	7
Supporting documentation.....	7
Safeguarding agreements	7
Referrals.....	7
Tasks.....	7
Closing cases	7
Conclusion.....	8

Introduction

The Church of England are implementing a National Safeguarding Case Management System (NSCMS) throughout the National Safeguarding Team (NST), Dioceses, Cathedrals and Palaces across the UK and Europe. One of the key benefits of the system is that it enables a standardised approach to recording, storing, accessing, sharing, and managing data related to safeguarding cases. To achieve this outcome, these guiding principles have been produced to provide clarity on the way in which information should be recorded on the system.

These principles have been produced by the NSCMS project as part of the Safeguarding Programme in collaboration with the National Safeguarding Team, Development Team, and current users. This document sets out those principles to be followed by all users of the National Casework Management System, MyConcern, from January 2023. There is no expectation that these principles should be applied retrospectively but should be adhered to for all new record keeping.

These principles are focussed on standardising data input and managing the MyConcern system in a way that enables consistent National Level Reporting and safeguarding record keeping. They are not designed to adjust current safeguarding casework policy but do seek to align good practice with Safeguarding Standards set out in the Quality Assurance Framework.

In summary, the guiding principles described in this document are:

- GP1: Designate an appropriate person to administer the system
- GP2: Maintain user access to appropriate levels
- GP3: Leave configuration data as set within the Master Configuration List
- GP4: Record all information you have at the point of awareness
- GP5: Assign one Primary Reporting case category to all safeguarding cases
- GP6: Close concerns relating to one off pieces of advice or guidance during triage
- GP7: Record information accurately with due care and attention to detail and purpose
- GP8: Summarise only key relevant information within the chronology function
- GP9: Attach supporting documentation to the chronology with appropriate filenames
- GP10: Manage the review of Safeguarding Agreements from within the system
- GP11: Record all referrals, allocate an appropriate referral agency, and record the outcome
- GP12: Allocate all actions as tasks to be managed and followed up within the system
- GP13: Assign a Concern Filed Reason against a concern at the point that the case is closed
- GP14: Complete the Decision/ Rationale field to summarise why the case is being closed

It is likely that, following a period of use and in line with revised policy, further guidance will be provided to users during 2023.

System Administration

User administration

The following guiding principles apply to the way in which each diocese, cathedral or Palace considers who has access to the safeguarding data, when and for what purpose. As the data owners it is entirely the responsibility and legal obligation of each participating body to ensure the security and integrity of their own data. These principles are offered as a good practice guide to managing users on the MyConcern system:

- **GP1:** Each instance of the system should have one designated person responsible for the administration of the system. A user with Account Admin access will be able to see all the details of users set up in the system including their last log in time. Careful consideration should be given to who is designated as the system administrator and whether it is appropriate to have a second person to deputise in their absence.
- **GP2:** The access granted to the system should be carefully monitored and kept current. To assist with this, it is recommended that:
 - users should only be granted access to the data that is appropriate to, and necessary for, the purpose of undertaking their role;
 - leavers should be removed from the system as soon as possible after their last working day or a change in their role; and
 - users allocated to specific concerns as team members should be removed once the relevant concern is closed.

Master Configuration Data

The configuration data (i.e., category lists) for each live instance of MyConcern is standardised and has been set identically for all participating bodies according to a Master Configuration List. This has been agreed at the NSCMS User Group and signed off by the project team with the provider to support consistency of practice and future reporting.

- **GP3:** Although Admin Users have access to configuration within the admin functionality, they should not change or add categories themselves. Any proposal for change should be raised with the User Group in the first instance. The configuration sets this applies to are:
 - Case Category
 - Origin for Concern
 - Involvement Type
 - Sub-Involvement Type
 - Concern Filing Reason
 - Profile Flag
 - Referral Agency
 - Referral Outcome

Record Keeping

What to record

For completeness of information, tracking cases, caseloads and individuals, the principle of what to record on MyConcern is described below:

- **GP4:** All information, from any source (phone, email, DBS, etc.) should be entered onto MyConcern, even where the information is incomplete. Profiles for any available names should also be created. This can include, but is not limited to:
 - a request for information about an individual (even if anonymous);
 - an allegation of abuse or neglect;
 - a report of dereliction of duty;
 - a concern about an individual; and
 - an inherited or known risk.

Recording the information in this way helps to ensure that valuable pieces of the jigsaw are not overlooked if needed and means that the subsequent risk assessment of the information is noted. Every effort should be made to include as much information as possible, even where the input field is not mandatory within the system. e.g., addresses, DOB etc.

Triage

At the point of triage, an evaluation can then be made as to whether the information recorded is taken forward as a case. A case has been defined as:

A referral or concern which relates to a potential or actual risk of harm to others (current or non-recent) by an individual associated with the church in any capacity; or where a person is identified as vulnerable and in need of additional care or support to keep themselves and others safe. **And** where the response required by the DSA/CSA is more than providing a one-off piece of advice or guidance. This can include, but is not limited to:

- A concern relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult;
- An enquiry from an external body about a member of a parish congregation or a church officer e.g., police, LADO, Social Care, another denomination;
- A concern raised by a parish in relation to a congregant or church officer;
- A self-referral by a victim or survivor;
- A referral or disclosure from any source which meets the criteria for a response under the Practice Guidance: *Responding to, assessing, and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers (2017)*.
- Those who are required to be subject to a safeguarding agreement in order to worship.
- Concern that a church officer has failed to have due regard for House of Bishop's practice guidance and in doing so has placed others at potential or actual risk of harm.

- **GP5:** During Triage, all cases must be allocated a Primary Reporting case category. The first category allocated should be from one of the following Primary Reporting Categories:
 - Child Protection – Emotional Abuse
 - Child Protection – Physical Abuse
 - Child Protection – Sexual Abuse
 - Child Protection – Neglect
 - Adult Safeguarding – Physical Abuse
 - Adult Safeguarding – Sexual Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Discriminatory Abuse
 - Financial/Economic or Material Abuse
 - Psychological Abuse
 - Spiritual Abuse
 - Modern Slavery
 - Organisational Abuse
 - Self-Neglect

It is recognised that one case can involve various elements of abuse, and this can be recorded by selecting other case categories during entry. However, the first case category allocated should be one of these Primary Reporting Categories. Please **do not** allocate two from the list above. The allocation of a Primary Reporting Category is essential for national reporting. Further developments to the software are anticipated that will make this process easier and more regulated.

- **GP6:** One off pieces of advice, guidance, or direction, relating to an individual or a concern should be recorded on the case management system, but would not be recorded as a case of on-going case work. These concerns will need to be closed at the point of triage and a closure reason code allocated.

Further guidance on closing concerns is provided on Page 7 of this document.

Casework

It is important that all data input for the purposes of recording the casework should be of high-quality regarding grammar, spelling, presentation, and punctuation. Users must also be aware when recording data that future Subject Access Requests could be submitted in relation to specific case data and casework could be used for legal purposes. Full names should be used for all people referred to and not just initials, as they become meaningless and difficult to identify over time and are difficult to redact if this is needed.

- **GP7:** All data entered should be accurately and carefully recorded using full names, appropriate language, and content.

Specific consideration must also be given to the following aspects of casework:

Chronologies

- **GP8:** The chronology of a case must summarise the key relevant information such as key events, decisions, outcomes, and actions which then refer to relevant supporting documentation including digitalised documents. They should not contain the complete story of the main case record and entire emails; reports and minutes should not be pasted into the body of the of the chronology.

Supporting documentation

- **GP9:** When attached to the chronology, supporting documents should be given appropriate filenames that refer to the nature of the attachment. e.g., core group, risk assessment, activity description, meeting, etc. The filename should comply with wider NCI's file name guidance and should be in the format of 'name_nature_ date(yearmonthday)' followed by any other relevant detail. E.g., JenningsA_Coregroup_20221203_ Farnham

Safeguarding agreements

- **GP10:** All safeguarding agreements should be set up within the system as concerns and allocated against a profile. Tasks should be set up to prompt for set review periods to ensure these are not overlooked.

Referrals

A full audit trail of safeguarding casework and the ability to track and report on activity must be available within the system so that it can be managed properly, and outstanding actions can be followed up. The following guidance applies to referrals:

- **GP11:** Any situation where someone is being asked to undertake an action on a case should be recorded as a referral within MyConcern and allocated to the appropriate referral agency. The outcome of the referral should then be recorded, with appropriate actions added as tasks where needed.

Tasks

The task function within MyConcern provides a way of recording workflow to ensure that all actions are undertaken in a timely fashion. The allocation of tasks enables individual's workloads to be managed through the dashboard and provides an audit trail of actions for each case.

- **GP12:** The task function within MyConcern should be used routinely to log actions and work allocated to individuals to provide an audit trail showing that tasks are completed.

Closing cases

Once all matters relating to a safeguarding concern or allegation against a church officer have been completed, the core group should consider how best to identify and learn lessons from the case. In most other cases, it is also good practice for some form of reflection to be undertaken and brief lessons learnt to be attached to the case as a file. Once this is done, the case can be closed using the filing functionality and assigning a Concern Filed Reason.

- **GP13:** A Concern Filed Reason should be allocated against a concern at the point that the case is filed and considered closed.
- **GP14:** The Decision/rationale for filing should be completed at the point that the case is filed and considered closed. (Note that the system says this is optional but is mandatory under these Guiding Principles for Church of England Users).

Conclusion

Whilst there are many instances of good record keeping across the Church of England, both the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and the national Past Cases Review (2) included within their recommendations the need for improvements in the form of more consistent and effective record keeping, standardised recording and effective case management. The introduction of a National Case Management System alone will not deliver the change needed to deliver these improvements unless there is a commitment by all participating bodies to use it in a standardised way that adheres to common National Safeguarding Standards set out within the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework. Committing to work together in this way will mean that the use of My Concern through the church will contribute to enabling the following benefits to be realised:

- embedding excellent safeguarding practice;
- reducing the risk of recurring abuse; and
- supporting those affected by abuse as they seek to rebuild their lives.

These Guiding Principles are a starting point on the Church's journey to achieving the improvements necessary and will undoubtedly be updated by The National Safeguarding Team in future years and developed in line with changes to policy and structures as well as taking account of lessons learnt.