

## **It's Not Just Policy, It's Personal: Barriers to Reporting Article**

### ***3-minute read***

**The short version:** Reporting a safeguarding concern can feel complicated. This article names some of the most common reasons church officers hesitate, and why the [Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Code](#) is there to support you through all of them.

Reporting a safeguarding concern should be straightforward. And yet, for many Church Officers, something gets in the way. More often it is doubt. A worry about getting it wrong, causing harm, or overstepping. These hesitations are understandable. They are also worth naming, because they are some of the most common reasons concerns go unreported.

- **What if it feels like interfering?**

When someone shares a concern with you, it is often because they want help. They are trusting you to do something with what they have shared. A safeguarding concern is never just a private matter, and you are not being asked to take sides or make a judgement. You are being asked to pass the concern on so that someone trained to help can take it from there. Keeping people safe and supported is at the heart of what we are called to do. That is not interference. That is care.

- **What if someone told you something in confidence, or asked you to keep it a secret?**

It takes courage for someone to share something difficult, and that matters. But a request for confidentiality cannot come before someone's safety. Referring is not a betrayal of trust. In many cases, it is the most caring thing you can do.

- **What if it happened a long time ago?**

Non-recent concerns are still concerns. Time does not change the obligation to refer, and it does not make what happened any less important to the person who experienced it. If someone shares something that happened in the past, they may have questions about what happens next and what will be shared. Where you can, be honest with them about the process. Your DSO can help you navigate this conversation and make sure the person disclosing knows what to expect.

- **What if it involves someone senior?**

This is often the hardest barrier of all. The [\*Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Code\*](#) exists precisely for moments like this. Seniority does not change the process, and you will not be left to handle it on your own.

- **What if you are not sure it is serious enough?**

The code does not ask you to investigate or to be certain. It asks you to refer, and to let the right people take it forward. If you are unsure, speak to your DSO. They are there to help you work through it.

**The [\*Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Code\*](#) is there to guide you.  
Recognise. Respond. Record. Refer.**