



Handbook for Licensed Lay Ministers Diocese of Bristol



Diocese of Bristol

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1. From Bishop Neil

To the many and varied Licensed Lay Ministers in Bristol Diocese,

There are 160 LLMs in Bristol Diocese. There are 8 000 LLMs in England and Wales. That's a movement of people for the Gospel! Thanks be to God.

In the New Testament Church, there was no one way of doing ministry. Various patterns of church emerged according to local context, and many were experimental – nobody had done 'church' before. What they had in common was God's calling, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a role in the building up of Christ's Body.

Licensed Lay Ministry has often been a response to the needs of the church in a unique place and time. Lay Ministers encouraged faith in people who would otherwise never hear about Jesus - they were missionaries into their local communities. Lay Ministers also led in local churches, particularly if there were no clergy present. We see the same two strands continue into present LLM ministry as they preach, offer pastoral ministry, represent Jesus in their workplaces and communities, and develop Fresh Expressions of Church. LLM's are part of the lifeblood of the church.

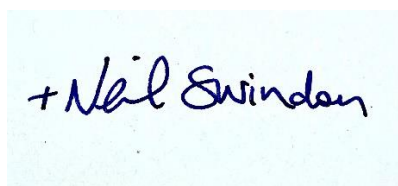
The calling of LLMs to serve in a unique place and time is reflected in the affirmation they make when they are licensed, to uphold a faith '*uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds*' within a Church '*called upon to proclaim [it] afresh in each generation.*' LLMs are key to this proclamation.

Therefore, in Bristol Diocese, we trust and we value the local. The '*superpower*' of the Church of England is having a Christian presence in every community. Our mission programme, *Transforming Church. Together*, recognizes this breadth. We cherish the churches by the harbourside, in the centre of Bristol and Swindon, on estates, in the suburbs and the rural countryside. We delight in our presence in market towns, small villages and the occasional church in the middle of a field! We span the majesty of Bristol Cathedral and the variety of Fresh Expressions of Church.

We also notice that many people and communities remain untouched by Christian faith, and see it as irrelevant to their lives. This fact compels us to an imaginative exploring of new patterns of ministry. That's where LLMs have a special vocation to speak aloud to this generation about the Bible and Christian faith. LLMs are Christians who are present, they are spiritual leaders in the surgery and the supermarket, in the garage and the gym, in the classroom and the café - in all their communities of work and families.

As your Bishop, I thank you for your commitment and willingness to serve. Let us deepen our faith. Let us share God's Kingdom wherever you go, living for Christ, seven days a week, at work, rest and play. And as we do so, I pray we may know the height, breadth, length and depth of God's love for us.

Yours



+ Neil Swindon



2. Nature of Licensed Lay Ministry

Licensed Lay Ministry is a wide-ranging ministry. LLMs are ‘theologically educated lay people who are authorised to preach and teach’. They have a depth of faith and spirituality, a knowledge of the Bible and a trust in God which causes others to recognise them as Christian leaders who can be imitated and trusted. However, they are also rooted in the everyday world of work, family and / or community so they understand the issues of everyday life and have personal experience of trying to live out their faith as everyday Christians. (In this way, they hold a role which is complementary to the clergy who hold a more visible and representative role but are therefore separated from the everyday experience of lay Christians and less able to speak about it.)

The traditional description of LLMs are those who ‘preach, teach and lead worship in a pastoral context’. Although this is true for many LLMs, it was recognised that LLMs also live out their faith outside the church. Therefore in 2018, LLMs were defined as:

- Teachers of the faith
- Enablers of Mission
- Leaders in Church and Society.

Different LLMs will have a focus in different areas. Some may focus on their church role where they teach the faith to baptismal candidates, preach regularly across a benefice, or lead their church to become more eco-friendly. Others will work on the fringe of the church, leading a Fresh Expression or attending a coffee morning where they informally share their faith. Yet others will be living as Christians in the wider world, working within trade unions to seek justice or offering pastoral care in their workplace. All will be encouraging other Christians to grow more deeply in their faith and practice and spreading the Kingdom in the wider world. Underpinning all their ministry is the practice of theological reflection which allows faith and daily life to interact.

3. Becoming a Licensed Lay Minister

LLMs are ‘theologically educated lay people...’ so the foundation for being licensed as an LLM is to be lay (not ordained) and to have studied the Bible and theology in appropriate depth. Currently, LLMs usually complete this study through the diocesan course ‘Exploring Christianity’ although other forms of accredited study are accepted. This is followed by a one year ‘Formation course’ which focuses on skills needed by LLMs such as preaching, sharing the faith, leading worship, pastoral care as well as theological reflection and collaborative skills. Towards the end of the year, the trainee LLMs attend a placement in a church which is ‘different’ from their home church in some way. The decision whether to ‘authorise a person to preach and teach’ remains with the bishop but is made in consultation with the Formation tutors and relevant incumbents.

The licensing service is usually held in October and is a service of authorisation and celebration. A Bible is given to the new LLMs as a symbol of their authorisation to preach and teach the Word. Robes (cassock, surplice and plain blue scarf) are worn by the LLMs. Although we describe the service as a ‘licensing service’, there are two steps within the service. The LLM is ‘admitted to the Order of Reader’ and the LLM is licensed to a particular area and incumbent. Admission to the Order of Reader is permanent¹ but licensing must be renewed every three years to remain active.

¹ Unless the individual ceases to be part of the laity i.e., they are ordained to the clergy, or they give up their licence, or it is removed from them due to some serious charge.



After licensing, LLMs are expected to continue their learning and growth: licensing is not the end point! During the two years after licensing, there is a tailored course called Formation Plus. This course is less intense than Formation but aims to support the LLM as they grow into licensed ministry and continue their learning. Some sessions are compulsory (e.g. interfaith) but the LLM will also be invited to wider Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) sessions which are optional. Some events will be aimed at the particular cohort but many will include another cohort so relationships start to be formed across different years. The current Formation Plus checklist is given as Appendix A. After Formation Plus, there continue to be opportunities to join in wider diocesan CMD with other LLMs and clergy, such as the annual Preaching Day or the LLM conference.

4. Serving as a Licensed Lay Minister

Key to Licensed Lay Ministry are the relationships between the LLM, incumbent and ministry team, the LLM's deepening faith and theological understanding, and relationships outside the church.

4.1 Relationships

Every year, the LLM will be asked to complete a new work agreement with their incumbent. Part of the reason for this request is to ensure that they both make time to sit and discuss their ongoing roles. If LLMs would like to have a conversation about their work or working relationship with another person, the Deanery Subwarden may be willing to help or direct the LLM to a suitable person.

Each deanery has a 'Chapter' which consists of the clergy within the deanery. Many deaneries offer occasional 'wider Chapter' meetings which are also open to LLMs. These are usually during the day so may not be accessible to all LLMs. However, if LLMs can attend, it encourages a deeper building of relationships across the deanery as well as between ordained and lay ministers.

Each deanery also has regular deanery synods. Any LLM can stand to be a lay member of their deanery synod, and deanery lay chairs are often LLMs. However, any LLMs can attend deanery synod (or diocesan synod) as an observer. Although observers cannot vote, it is another opportunity to build relationships and have a better perspective of the hopes, struggles and joys across neighbouring parishes.

4.2 Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)

It is expected that LLMs continue to grow in their faith. Each LLM is unique so what will support one may be less attractive to another. However, there are varied opportunities throughout the year to meet with other LLMs and / or clergy. For the first two years after licensing, the newly licensed LLMs are expected to attend Formation Plus sessions and other activities as detailed on the Formation Plus checklist (Appendix A) which are aimed to encourage them in the growth of their ministry.

4.3 PTO and Emeritus Status

When an LLM reaches the age of 70, their licence changes to become 'Permission to Officiate' or 'PTO'. This makes no difference to their ministry but allows LLMs to consider their future work patterns. If an LLM wants to retire, they need to inform their incumbent and the Warden of LLMs (Readers). Their licence should be returned to the diocesan office and they may take the title 'Reader Emeritus'. They may still offer occasional ministry but only that open to any unlicensed person (clergy or lay).

4.4 Renewal of licence

Every three years, the LLM's licence needs to be renewed. They need a new DBS, to undertake safeguarding training through the diocese at the appropriate level, and a new work agreement. The



PCC also need to show their desire for the LLM to continue in ministry. Once these have been completed and returned to the diocesan office, the licence can be renewed and returned. The PCC consent and work agreement template can be found on the diocesan website.

4.5 Safeguarding

The Diocese of Bristol takes its commitment to safeguarding very seriously. All clergy and LLMs (plus churchwardens and some other parish officers) are required to undertake training to an appropriate level. For most LLMs, this means the Safeguarding Leadership training (previously C2). The Church of England also requires LLMs to complete the online course 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse'². Both courses can be found from links on [Safeguarding training - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/safeguarding-training) .

If you are concerned about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, the webpage [Safeguarding concern - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org/safeguarding-concern) offers guidance. Flowcharts in Appendix D give guidance about reporting safeguarding concerns and sharing confidential information.

4.6 Theological Reflection

Theological reflection is a vital part of LLM ministry. It is when we link the Bible to daily life in ways which are fruitful. Many LLMs will do this through prayer, Bible reading or journalling. A spiritual director or your incumbent may also help you to look at a situation from a faith perspective. However, it sometimes helps to have a process which can be used when we are struggling with a difficult issue. Appendix B offers one possibility.

4.7 Complaints / Problems

If an LLM experiences problems in their ministry, their incumbent will often be the first line of support. If it is inappropriate to speak with the incumbent (for whatever reason³), then please contact the LLM Deanery Subwarden, the Area Dean, or the Warden of LLMs / Readers for a confidential chat.

5. In a vacancy

An LLM is often a vital person in a vacancy. They understand the parish and can offer a theological viewpoint as the PCC seek a new incumbent; they can lead services which reduces the pressure to find someone to cover each week; they can listen to concerns and pray. However, they should not be expected to step into the ex-incumbent's shoes! Any duties over and above their normal work should only be by agreement. During the vacancy, the LLM's licence is 'held' by the Area Dean who is a contact person if there are problems or the licence needs renewing, but the LLM can continue to minister as agreed. The *LLMs in a Vacancy Policy* is found on the website and should be read in conjunction with *Flourishing in a Time of Transition* (also on the website).

6. Expenses

An LLM (or clergy) should not find themselves funding their own ministry. Legitimate expenses can be claimed from the parish. The *LLM Expenses Policy* can be found on the website.

² Please note that the content of safeguarding training can be distressing for some people. If you have started a module and find the material sufficiently upsetting that you struggle to continue, please speak to the tutor (if delivered live) or your PSO, incumbent or Warden of Readers (if online) to discuss alternatives.

³ Possibly because they are unwell, or the issue is a disagreement between you both.



7. Funeral Ministry

LLMs are licensed to do funerals. If they wish to grow in this ministry, they should speak first with their incumbent. The *Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry* state that an LLM should have completed a diocesan course, and be appropriately trained before they take funerals alone. In Bristol Diocese, a day training course is run annually. The content varies so an LLM may wish to attend more than one. Training by more experienced ministers is also vital so the LLM should 'shadow' their incumbent as they do funeral visits and take the funeral. Taking funerals is a ministry which demands flexibility, pastoral care skills and self-awareness. It is not for every LLM but can be a rewarding and fruitful expression of love, faith and hope.

8. Wellbeing

Jesus regularly took his disciples away for a while, especially when they had been busy. He took time to pray, particularly before important decisions or actions. The fourth commandment is to honour the Sabbath – one day in the week where we do not work. Often we know this, but putting it into practice is harder. What helps each LLM will be different, but it is important that we are taking regular time with God, and regular time when we are enjoying God's creation and not 'ministering'. If this is a struggle for you, talk to your spiritual director, incumbent, LLM Subwarden or friend.

Retreats can be vital to our wellbeing. They allow us to slow down and gain perspective. Again, your incumbent, spiritual director, fellow LLMs or other mature Christians in your congregation may be able to recommend places. Websites to help are [Home | The Retreat Association \(retreats.org.uk\)](http://Home | The Retreat Association (retreats.org.uk)) and The Association for Promoting Retreats – Promoting prayer, spirituality and retreats. The webpage [Resources for ministers - Diocese of Bristol \(anglican.org\)](http://Resources for ministers - Diocese of Bristol (anglican.org)) also offers some suggestions.

For many LLMs, study is also a source of energy and wellbeing. Although the diocesan CMD provides various training, you may wish to study more deeply. A first step is to consider theological college websites since they often provide short courses. Longer courses are more expensive but there are a few sources of funding (see Appendix C), and your PCC may be willing to offer some support. Note that the expenses policy for LLMs indicates that the PCC will contribute to certain expenses such as retreats, LLM conference, and books.

Wellbeing is not just rest and staying in touch with God, but ensuring that we eat well, have contact with friends, and have appropriate exercise. The Christian faith has never been just an intellectual endeavour, but a faith where God became flesh and lived among us. Our bodies and actions are important to God!

9. Deployment and working outside the Benefice

LLMs usually have a wider view of the world than just their local parish. Since their role is a 'bridge' role, they can help their local church to be connected to the diocese as well as the community or workplace. As part of this, some LLMs may be willing to preach in other churches to cover rotas, or even move to another church to help in a vacancy or more permanently. Some LLMs may find that chaplaincy is an appropriate route for their ministry. The LLM licence allows LLMs to minister anywhere in the diocese with the permission of their incumbent (and receiving incumbent if appropriate). If this interests you, please speak with your incumbent. General offers to help in other churches should then be made to the Area Dean.



10. Moving Dioceses, Benefices or Parish

The LLM licence is recognised nationally (and internationally). If an LLM wishes to move churches, there is a standard procedure to transfer the licence within the diocese. Incumbents should be informed as well as the Warden of LLMs / Readers. Most dioceses expect a 6 month 'settling-in' period before the licence will be renewed. This 6 month period allows the new incumbent and LLM to get to know one another and create a suitable work agreement. If you wish to transfer your licence, please contact the Warden of Readers through mmsupport@bristoldiocese.org for details of the process.

11. LLM Council and LLM Deanery Subwardens

To help in the oversight of LLM ministry in the diocese, each deanery has a LLM Deanery Subwarden. These meet with the Warden of Readers, a representative of the Formation group, and a representative of the Formation Plus group to form the LLM council which is chaired by the Bishop of Swindon. To learn more about the LLM council, please speak with your Deanery Subwarden. Your incumbent should be the first contact point for concerns about your ministry. However, your Subwarden may also be able to listen or offer advice. If you have suggestions about wider LLM ministry, please also feel free to speak with them.

12. Resources about LLM ministry

The following resources focus on LLM / Reader ministry except *Setting God's People Free* and *Kingdom Calling* which encourage lay ministry and collaborative ministry.

Bishop's Regulations for Reader Ministry – found on [15 Bishops' Regulations For Reader Ministry \(transformingministry.co.uk\)](https://transformingministry.co.uk)

Central Readers' Council, 2019. *Resourcing Sunday to Saturday Faith*. [Online]
Available at: <https://transformingministry.co.uk/publications-handbooks/#resourcing-sunday-to-saturday-faith> .

Central Readers' Council website found at [Home - Transforming Ministry Magazine](https://transformingministry.co.uk)

Hiscox, R., 1991. *Celebrating Reader Ministry*. London: Mowbray.

Renewal and Reform, 2020 *Kingdom Calling* London: Church House Publishing. Also available at [TEXT \(churchofengland.org\)](https://www.churchofengland.org)

Rowling, C. & Gooder, P., 2009. *Reader Ministry Explored*. London: SPCK

The Archbishops' Council, 2017. *Setting God's People Free GS2056*. [Online]
Available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/gs-2056-setting-gods-people-free.pdf>

Tovey, P., Buck, S. & Dodds, G., 2016. *Instruments of Christ's Love*. London: SCM Press.



Appendices

Appendix A- Formation Plus

The Church of England expects LLMs to continue to grow in learning and practice. LLMs should be open to:

- Grow in faith and be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ
- Lead collaboratively as part of a local team within the wider church structure.
- See where God is working in the world and spot opportunities to respond.
- Be adaptable, imaginative and creative.

To help you sustain your ministry, you have relationships with your cohort and the wider LLM community (including your Subwarden). There are also CMD opportunities on a variety of topics.

During the first two years after licensing, you are expected to complete the following. Some training events are run every year so you can attend both years or just one. Some are experiences which you can gain in your local church with the agreement of your incumbent. When you have completed it, please add the date.

Item	Date completed
<p>Deliverance ministry / Safer Boundaries This is run jointly for LLMs and curates. The aim is to guide you when you experience a peculiar ‘spiritual’ or ‘supernatural’ event. This is run once per year.</p>	
<p>Working with Children / Youth / Elderly This is done in your local church (or a nearby church). It can be on Sunday or midweek. The aim is to give you experience in working with young people and / or elderly. However, the depth of the experience is up to you. You may be taking a teaching role or helping with a discussion or craft activity. This could include visiting a care home, taking home communion or attending a coffee morning.</p>	
<p>Preaching – what works After some months of preaching experience, this is an opportunity to meet with others to discuss what you have learned about preaching. This is run once per year.</p>	
<p>Vocations A key part of the LLM role in church is to encourage vocations. What vocations do we notice? This is run once per year.</p>	
<p>Making Peace with Conflict This is based on the Bridge Builders material and help you to understand your own ‘conflict style’ and how to respond to others. There is a Day 1 and a Day 2. Only Day 1 is compulsory but it must be completed before Day 2. Day 1 is run once per year.</p>	



<p>Interfaith / Multifaith Learning about other faiths is a compulsory part of your training. You will be notified about opportunities to hear from other faiths or interfaith workers.</p>	
<p>How's it going? Self-care This is a gentle session held by zoom to consider how you are caring for yourself. This is run once per year.</p>	
<p>Wider church leadership At some point in the first two years, attend a PCC meeting / APCM or a deanery synod or diocesan synod. You have the right to attend any of these as an observer although you can only vote if you fulfil certain criteria.</p>	
<p>Diocesan CMD You will receive information about a wide variety of training opportunities for clergy and LLMs. This includes a book group, a Saturday focusing on the 'Gospel for the Year', specific meetings about climate / racism / chaplaincy. You are expected to attend at least one of these CMD opportunities over the two years. I hope that you will want to attend more. Please write the title of the CMD event below:</p>	
<p>Transforming Ministry magazine The Central Readers' Council (CRC) is the charity which oversees and promotes LLM ministry for the Church of England. You will receive the magazine which contains articles on various themes applicable to LLM ministry. However, I encourage you to investigate the website so that you know what is there. The diocese pays for you to have a subscription so you can access the online courses and back articles of the magazine. Home - Transforming Ministry Magazine</p>	



Appendix B – Theological Reflection

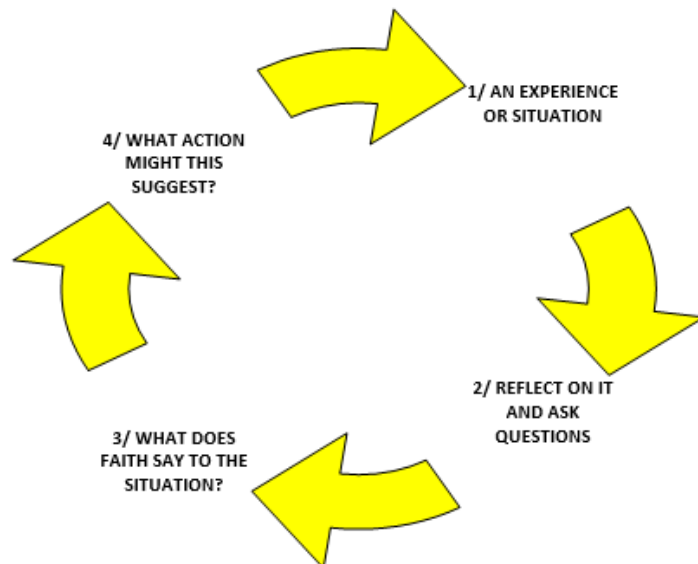
Theological reflection is a vital resource for ministers and many will do it informally as they minister by asking questions like ‘What is God saying?’ or ‘How is this person responding? How am I feeling?’ and praying about an incident. However, sometimes issues are more difficult and need a focused reflection. The cycle below is one format that may be helpful. Spend time at each stage.

Use your own experience to start a theological reflection spiral.

Reflect on the situation, add details, ask questions, try to see from different perspective.

Does it remind you of any aspects of your faith tradition? Any Bible verses or stories?

Do these insights help you to respond well?



Two examples are given below:

David in Psalm 31

David describes a difficult time in Ps 31:1-5. He reflects on it – the motive of others (v6), the truth of God (v7-8), his own feelings (v9-10), his relationships (v11-12) and other contributions to his misery (v13). After this honesty, his faith shows in v14-16 where he chooses to trust in God. However, we can see in v17-22 he moves back and forth between reflection and faith again including v21-22 where he reminds himself of God’s mercy to him previously. (This moving back and forth is normal.). His outward action is to encourage others to trust God (v23-24).

In South Africa

A group of young South Africans, black and white, met together to practise theological reflection. They decided to take the church as their topic. Rather than jump straight into the Biblical passages, they started with their own experience.

Experience: They told stories of their experience of the church, from Sunday school to sermons to fellowship. They expressed their frustration and anger, but also its value to them. They recognised that the church was full of contradictions.

Reflect and Question: They listed the contradictions that they could see: the church’s claim to unity yet obvious disunity; its claims about apartheid yet its lack of action in the matter; divisions between educated and less educated; the power held by certain people; the grand buildings.

Faith Perspective: Some wanted to rush into making their own ‘perfect’ church with none of these contradictions, but others suggested that they look at what a ‘perfect’ church would be like. They



looked at the Bible, starting with the nation of Israel and continuing with the disciples and the early church. They saw the same splits, betrayals and contradictions appearing here. They realised that it was God's Kingdom which was perfect and not the church. The church was a mixture of the perfect Kingdom and imperfect present with struggling people. They then started to be more aware of their own imperfections and contribution to the failures of the church.

More Reflect and Question: To continue the exploration, they asked a specialist in church history to answer certain questions about the development of the church and the SA church in particular. They heard about ideologies through the ages in the church and the world.

More Faith Perspective: The group began to realise that the contradictions within the church were extremely dangerous and destructive of people when hidden from view, but could be creative if faced directly. The historical facts about the church in SA were real but also symbolic of the wider problems in the country. The need was for people who could speak plainly about these contradictions so the church could be more honest and become a visible sign of hope.

Response: They told others about their work and about the reasons for the church being as it was. They invited clergy to hear their work and take it back. Some looked at how Jesus proclaimed his gospel and they specifically worked with the poor who became more hopeful as they learned about Jesus. Others had a more negative experience to their proclamation but that also reflected Jesus' experience.

As they worked, they gained in knowledge and experience of church which led back to the beginning of the spiral.

adapted from '**Let's Do Theology**' by Laurie Green (2007) p.32-38

There are many other ways to think theologically. *Theological Reflection* by Judith Thompson (with Stephen Pattison and Ross Thompson) offers other ideas, although an online search will offer more. The essential ingredients are facing the situation, linking it to the Bible, prayer, a commitment to seek God within your experience, and a recognition that this is an ongoing process.



Appendix C – Sources for Grants / Bursaries

This appendix is inevitably always a work in progress. Please inform the diocese if the charity does not support lay Christians and let us know if any other charities are suitable sources for funding.

Sources of financial assistance/bursaries for retreats:

- The Edward Storey Foundation (Anglican backgrounds only) www.edwardstorey.org.uk
- The Association for Promoting Retreats www.promotingretreats.org (01395 272243)

For LLMs:

- The Adams Myland Fund for LLMs – support for training [Adams Myland Fund - Transforming Ministry Magazine](#)
- The A S Charitable Trust – supports lay Christians, particularly sympathetic towards projects which combine the advancement of the Christian religion, with Christian lay leadership, with Third World development, with peace making and reconciliation or other areas of social concern [The A S Charitable Trust](#)

Scholarships

- Trinity College (FT or PT) for those who plan to minister in the South West [Scholarships - Trinity College Bristol](#)

Lay Ministries

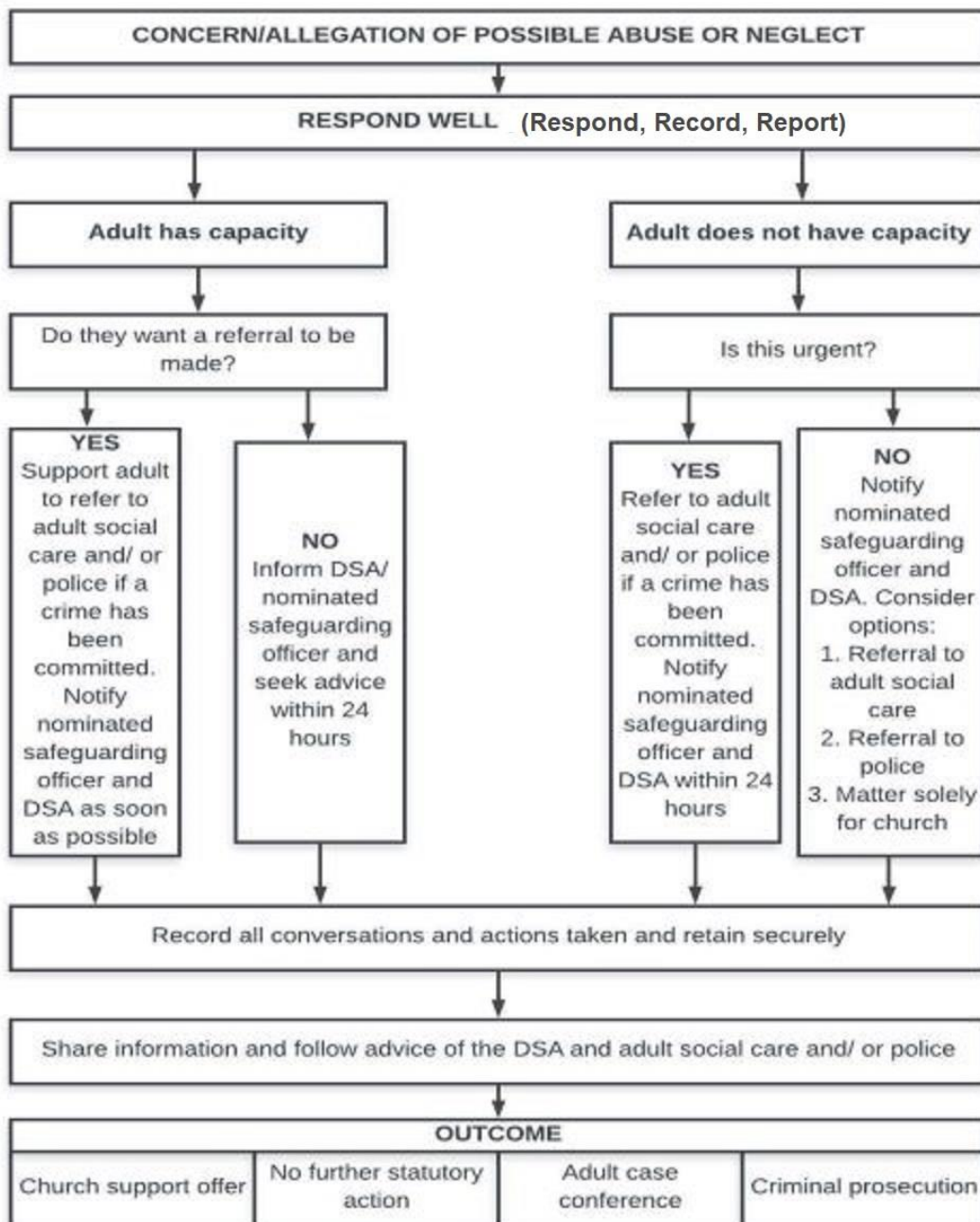
- [Bernard Mizeki Grants - The Fellowship of St John Trust Association \(fsje.org.uk\)](#)
- [Lauderdale Trust](#)
- [Raindance Charitable Trust](#)
- [FiftyFour Two Foundation – Just another WordPress site](#) - supports charities in Bristol which propose to advance the Christian faith



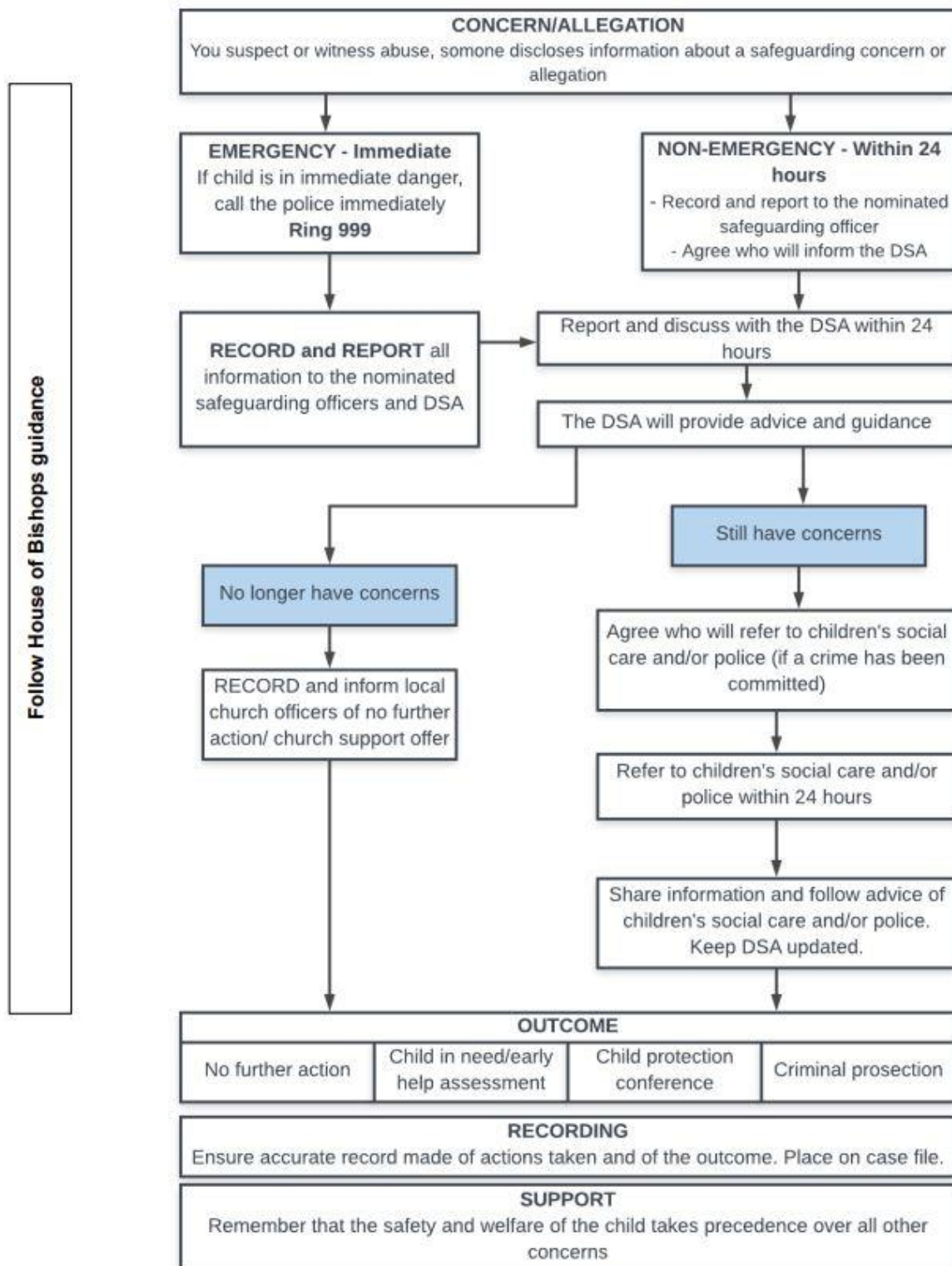
Appendix D- Flowcharts for Safeguarding Concerns and Information Sharing

1. For a safeguarding concern about a vulnerable adult

Please note, if an adult is at risk of immediate harm, take yourself out of danger and call the police. Ring 999.

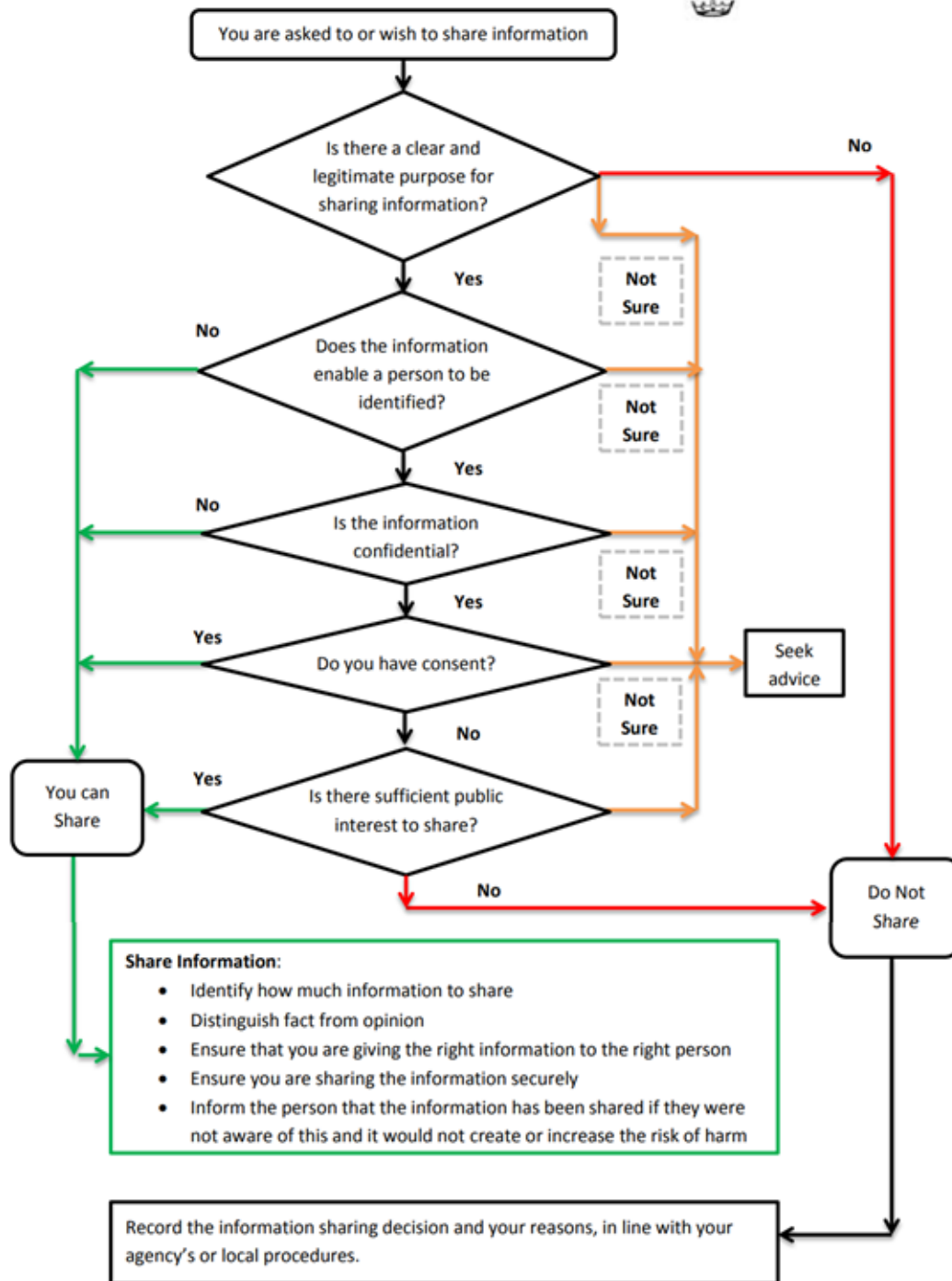


2. For a safeguarding concern about a child or youth.



3. Flowchart for sharing personal information about others

Flowchart for Information Sharing



Based on 'Flowchart of key questions for information sharing in Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners HM Gov. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice> [January 2018]

