

CASE STUDY

The Jackson family have been worshipping at St Somewhere for fifteen years. John Jackson, father, is an able musician and has significantly contributed to the development of worship in the church. He leads the music group, a lively team of adults and teenagers. Sandra his wife runs the crèche and helps lead the monthly Messy Church. They have three children, Sonia 20, James 18 and Yvonne 16.

Sonia has just returned home from a gap year and will start university to study law in a few months.

James is doing A levels and Yvonne her GCSE's. Both James and Yvonne are active participants in the church youth group. Yvonne plays the flute in the music group and James is a junior leader in the young teens group.

St Somewhere's has a priest in charge, the Reverend Tom Evans, a curate Reverend Lynda Gray, and a Parish Safeguarding Officer, Sue James who has been in post for 7 years.

Sandra had arrived at curate Lynda's home and seemed very distressed. With great difficulty she confided in Lynda that Sonia had told her that John had been having sex with her. This started when she was thirteen and stopped when she was fifteen. Sonia is disgusted with herself and ashamed about what had happened. During her year out she has had the opportunity to tell her secret to another volunteer and now knows she can't keep this to herself any longer.

*What should Lynda do with this information?
What should she tell Sandra at this stage?*

Lynda comforts Sandra, and explains that what she has disclosed must be confidentially passed on, and she would talk to vicar Tom about the next steps and get back to Sandra.

Lynda rings Tom. He plays down the situation, saying that Sonia is a confused teenager going through lots of change in her life, and can't be relied on. He also insists that he has known and trusted John for many years, and knows that John would never do such things.

*What should Lynda do next, and what process should be followed?
Who else should be involved?*