



SAFEGUARDING & VULNERABILITY

POLICY & PROCEDURES

This policy reflects the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults: 'Promoting a Safer Church'.

Statement of the parish's policy on children, young people and vulnerable adults in church

This statement was adopted by the Parochial Church Council on the 16th July 2012, reviewed at its meeting on 16th September 2012. It was revisited in January 2015, and additions and amendments added July 2015 and July 2022.

Generic comments on children and young people are taken from "Promoting a Safer Church".

A separate document on practical advice for volunteer and youth workers has been produced.

Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Church of England:

The Church of England, its Archbishops, Bishops, clergy and leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church.

Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

The Church of England affirms the 'whole church' approach to safeguarding. This encompasses a commitment to consistent policy and practice across all church bodies, church officers and maintains that everyone associated with the church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults, has a role to play.

The church will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all in order to practice fully and positively its ministry amongst children, young people and adults, and to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

FOUNDATIONS

In developing and implementing the Safeguarding Policy, the Church of England is guided by the following foundations:

1. Gospel

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

2. Human Rights and the Law

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice.

3. Core Principles

The following key principles underpin the Church's approach to safeguarding practice:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount;
- Integrity, respect and listening to all;
- Transparency and openness;

- Accountability;
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners;
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the church;
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse;
- The active management of risk;
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance;
- Regular evaluation to ensure best practice.

4. Good Safeguarding Practice

The following key features will help Church bodies promote and maintain a safer culture that protects and promotes the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

These features are :

- A leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- A safeguarding policy available to Church Officers;
- A clear line of accountability within the Church for work on safeguarding;
- Clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- Clear roles for Church Officers;
- Practice and services informed by on- going learning, review and by the views of children, young people, families and vulnerable adults;
- Safer recruitment procedures in place;
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision;
- Safeguarding training for all Church Officers working with or in contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- Effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners;
- Publicly advertised arrangements for children, young people and vulnerable adults to be able to speak to an independent person, as required;
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures that are well publicised;
- Effective information sharing;
- Good record keeping.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

Based on the foundations outlined above the Church of England commits to:

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture.

- All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being.
- The Church will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes.
- The Church will strive to support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

2. Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church

- The Church will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church, in accordance with the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.
- It will train and equip Church Officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll-out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

3. Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

- Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.
- All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the House of Bishops safeguarding practice guidance.
- All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.
- All Church Officers will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.
- In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

4. Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

- The Church will endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- The Church is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse.
- Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Church will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support - according to the agreed need.
- An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order will be considered, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

5. Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

- The Church in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of an accused Church Officer including the clergy. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.
- The church will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any church officer is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement.

- Church officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. The church will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, parishes and congregations affected by the church officers in such situations.

6. Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

- The Church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community who may present a known risk.
- The Church will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law.

GENERAL

- This Policy will be reviewed by the PCC at least once a year, and implementation progress will be consistently monitored.
- As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people, and to the House of Bishops motto of **'informed vigilance.'**
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual emotional and spiritual abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. Children must be as safe from harm as they can possibly be.
- We recognise our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
- Our church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people and to providing supervision.
- Our church is committed to following the guidelines and procedures published by the Church of England.
- The parish will adopt good practice guidelines.
- Each worker with children and young people must know the guidelines and undertake to follow them. Each shall be given a copy of the Parish's agreed procedures and Good Practice guidelines.

Putting the policy into action

All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of this policy statement within their own safeguarding policy. The policy statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice. All church bodies should ensure that:

- All Church Officers have access to this Policy Statement;
- The Policy Statement is promoted and publicised;
- The Church's safeguarding message is communicated as reflected in the policy;
- They have a "Promoting a Safer Church" action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly.

Defining abuse

We do not expect to see any form of abuse taking place in our community. That makes it all the more necessary for us to be aware of the danger signs that abuse may be taking place.

Abuse and neglect are defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2010.

- **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development
- **Physical abuse:** hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- **Sexual abuse:** this involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including physical penetration and non-penetrative sexual acts.
- **Spiritual Harm:** Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically.
- **Domestic Abuse:** It must be recognized that children and young people may be harmed in homes where there is domestic abuse. The Archbishops Council has produced guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility "Responding to domestic abuse" Archbishops' Council (2006).

Action for Dealing with Reports of Abuse

The following procedures are designed to support you in dealing with a disclosure of abuse that may arise in the course of your work with children and young people. For the purposes of this work a child is a person under the age of 18 years. The parish's designated Safeguarding Officers will advise you.

DO

- Make it clear to the child that you cannot be asked to keep a secret.
- Listen to the child or young person, let them express their views and feelings without interruption, accept what they are saying.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Explain that you must pass this information on.
- Make notes of what was said using the child or young person's words whenever possible.
- Speak to the Vicar, Parish Safeguarding Officer or line manager.
- Refer to the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser.
- If the subject of the allegation is the Vicar, contact the Archdeacon or Diocesan Child Protection Adviser (the Bishop cannot be involved as per Clergy Discipline Measure).

DO NOT INVESTIGATE ANY ALLEGATION

DO NOT

- Show shock or disbelief.
- Agree to keep the disclosure a secret.
- Make a promise or suggestion that you can stop the abuse.
- Ask questions seeking further detail - you risk contaminating evidence.
- Investigate any allegation - specially trained professionals undertake this role.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator.
- Make any statement or comment to the press.

In emergency, and if the risk to the child is deemed to be urgent, the Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted on 0151 666 4582, out of hours: Emergency Duty Team 0151 677 6557, or telephone the police.

CONTACTS

- Designated Parish Safeguarding Officer, Coral Greenwood..... 0771 085 1201
- Incumbent: Chris Slater..... 07899 807 507
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor..... 01928 718834 Ext. 221
- If immediate risk contact the police on 999

Appendix 1.

ADULTS AT RISK

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over: *"Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation."*

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines a vulnerable adult (adult at risk) as: 'a person is vulnerable in the context of their setting or the service they receive:

- Those in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing in receipt of domiciliary care services;
- Those receiving health care;
- Those in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer;
- Those receiving welfare services of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority;
- Those receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of their age or state of health;
- Those who need assistance in the conduct of their affairs.

A person's vulnerability level may increase or decrease according to the circumstances they experience at any given time. Adults at risk could include people with:

- A learning or physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Mental health needs
- Who are HIV positive
- Substance misuse needs
- Dementia

'Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by another person or persons'
(No Secrets DoH 2000)

"Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or to exploitation of the person subjected to it."

A consensus has emerged identifying the following main types of abuse, whether deliberate, through negligence or ignorance:

- *Physical abuse*
- *Sexual abuse*
- *Psychological abuse*
- *Emotional abuse*
- *Financial or material abuse*
- *Neglect and acts of omission*
- *Discriminatory abuse*

REFERRAL PROCEDURE FOR ADULTS

In December 2013 Adults at Risk replaced Vulnerable Adults in line with national developments of good practice and in line with the Law Commission Report into Adult Social Care. If any person reasonably suspects or is told that an adult at risk is being, has been or is likely to be abused they must take action. Some actions may constitute a criminal offence.

Under no circumstances must an alleged abuser be alerted, directly or indirectly, as important evidence may be lost. Formal investigation will be carried out by the Police or Adult Social Care Services.

If a concern is actually raised by the adult at risk the following may help you to respond appropriately:

- Listen and acknowledge what is being said.
- Be reassuring and calm.
- Be aware that the person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend upon age, culture, language, and communication skills and disability.
- Do not promise full confidentiality.
- Ask their consent to take up their concerns.
- Explain what you will do next.
- If they do not agree, consult with your Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.
- Try to encourage and support them to share their information.
- Give them your contact details and those of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.
- Give them a timescale for when and how you and/or the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator will contact them again. Never leave an adult at risk to wait to hear from someone without any idea of timescale or place.
- Do not contact the adult about whom an allegation or concerns are being raised to tell them about the information. You could be putting an adult at risk in serious danger, e.g., where there is domestic violence taking place.
- Where the concerns or allegation are about another adult in a position of trust within the Church do not inform the person in question as you might prejudice any police investigation.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor is available to consult about how to proceed, see 'contacts' above

If the information about abuse towards an adult at risk is given by the abuser himself or herself to a member of the church (clergy or laity) the person who receives the information must make it clear to the person that the information has to be passed on.

REMEMBER: YOU DO NOT INVESTIGATE