



Parish Policy for  
the Safeguarding  
of Vulnerable  
Adults

March

**2016**

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Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

**THE  
DIOCESE OF  
YORK**

Benefice:

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Incumbent:

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Parish Safeguarding Representative:

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This is a template that can be adopted by parishes in the Diocese of York for their Policy for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

This template may be subject to updates in due course.

The PCC has appointed a Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) to safeguard vulnerable adults entering or using our Church premises who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The PSR will be appointed annually and will ensure the implementation of both this policy and the York Diocesan Safeguarding policy and will report directly to the PCC. This policy will be reviewed, as necessary and annually by the PCC.

## Church Policy Statement

The Church of England is committed to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be at risk for any reason, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety<sup>1</sup>. This church recognizes that there are different levels of vulnerability and that everyone may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in their lives. However, for the purposes of this document, safeguarding duties (as defined in the Care Act 2014) apply to an adult, over the age of 18, who meets the following circumstances:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;

- Is not able to protect himself/ herself from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

*The adult experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect will hereafter be referred to as the vulnerable adult throughout this document.*

The Parochial Church Council takes seriously its safeguarding obligations and responsibilities and is committed to:

1. Promoting the inclusion, empowerment and wellbeing of all adults, recognising that the Church has the care of the souls of all who live in its Parish.
2. Providing respectful pastoral ministry to all, recognising any power imbalance within such a relationship.
3. Safeguarding all adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, ensuring their wellbeing in the life of the church.
4. Equipping church workers and members to be alert to the abuse of adults and aware of their duty report any suspected abuse or neglect.
5. Promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
6. Recruiting with care all church workers involved in any pastoral role and using of the Disclosure and Barring Service when legal or appropriate, in accordance with the Diocese guidelines.
7. Supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be at risk.
8. Adopting the guidelines of the Church of England and the policy of the Diocese of York.
9. Adhering to the guidance and principles of the Care Act 2014 on the Safeguarding of adults (see Appendix I).
10. Complying with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 when it may be appropriate (see Appendix I).
11. Recognising its duty to work together with the local authority, police and local Safeguarding Adults Board and to seek their advice when necessary.
12. Supporting anyone who has suffered abuse by offering or arranging sensitive and informed pastoral care, including support to make a complaint if so desired.

## SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

An adult with care and support needs who may be at risk may be:

- An elderly person;
- A person with a physical disability, a learning difficulty or a sensory impairment;
- Someone with mental health needs, including dementia or a personality disorder;
- A person with a long-term health condition; or
- Someone who misuses substances or alcohol to the extent that it affects their ability to manage day-to-day living.

### Types of Abuse:

- Physical abuse - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions;
- Domestic violence - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence;
- Sexual abuse - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting;
- Psychological abuse - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks;
- Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including

in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

- Modern slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment;
- Discriminatory abuse - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion;
- Organisational abuse - including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation;
- Neglect and acts of omission - including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating;
- Self-neglect - this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding;
- Spiritual Abuse: The church should also be aware that spiritual abuse may occur within and outside faith communities and can arise from the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; the misuse of authority; intrusive healing and deliverance ministries; and the denial of the right of faith or the opportunity to grow in the love of God. The provision of inclusive acts of worship will provide for the spiritual growth and wellbeing of adults with special needs.

## PROCEDURES IF ABUSE OF AN ADULT IS SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED

If a church member or worker suspects that an adult is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected, they must take responsibility to act on their concerns. Not responding may be seen as act of abuse in itself.

1. Adults may find it difficult to disclose abuse and need support to tell their story. They should be listened to without leading questions or suggestions that may influence or confuse the story. The listener should not show shock or judgment.
2. If the person fulfils the criteria for being an adult at risk of abuse or neglect, or if they express suicidal thoughts, they should be informed that the information will have to be passed on as part of our duty of care, preferable with their consent (unless they lack the capacity to give this).
3. Careful notes must be kept, recording factual information and direct quotes where possible. Notes should be signed and dated and kept securely.
4. If the person is at immediate risk of harm or danger, the police and/or City of York Safeguarding Adults team must be contacted. The Safeguarding Coordinator or, in their absence the Incumbent, should be informed as soon as possible.
5. If the person is not at immediate risk, the Safeguarding Coordinator or Incumbent should be informed in the first instance. They will consult with the Diocesan safeguarding officer and may also discuss with and/or make a referral to the City of York Safeguarding Adults Team. If a criminal offence has occurred the police will be informed.
6. Pastoral care and support will be offered to the person who has disclosed the abuse or is at risk or abuse and neglect. All people within the church who work with adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect will agree to read and abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

### Useful Telephone numbers:

- Churches Child Protection Advisory Service Help line: 0845 1204450
- City of York Social Services (ask for Safeguarding Adults Team): 01904 555111
- Local Police: 101

### POLICY ADOPTION

This policy is adopted and will be reviewed annually by the PCC. A signed and dated copy must be sent annually to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Signed by Incumbent:

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Print name:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Churchwarden:

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Print name:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Parish Safeguarding Representative:

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Print name:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I

### STATUTORY PRINCIPLES FOR SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

#### The Care Act 2014

The Care Act is the first piece of legislation that puts Adult Safeguarding on a statutory basis. It came into force on 1 April 2015. Its key principles are:

- Empowerment - people being supported and encouraged to make their own decision and informed consent.
- Prevention - it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality - the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection - support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership - local solutions through services working with their communities.
- Communities (including the church) have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability - accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

#### The Mental Capacity Act 2005

Some adults within the church or served by the church may have “an impairment of the mind or brain, or a disturbance affecting the way their mind or brain works”. If this means that the person is unable to make a decision at the time it needs to be made, they may be said to lack the mental capacity to do so. It must not be assumed that someone lacks mental capacity on the basis of their age, appearance, condition or an aspect of their behaviour. The five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act are:

1. A presumption of capacity: Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise. We cannot assume that someone cannot make a decision for themselves just because they have a particular medical condition or disability.
2. Individuals being supported to make their own decisions: Every effort must be made to encourage and support people to make the decision for themselves.
3. Unwise decisions: People have the right to make what others might regard as an unwise or eccentric decision. We cannot treat them as lacking capacity for that reason.





4. Best interests: Any action taken, or any decision made for, or on behalf of that person, must be made in his or her best interests.

5. Least restrictive option: Any decisions made on behalf of the person must act in a way that would interfere less with the person's rights and freedoms of action, or whether there is a need to decide or act at all.

## APPENDIX II

### SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE: INDICATORS AND PREDICTORS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

#### Possible signs and indicators of abuse

All people in the Church who work with adults who may be at risk should be aware of warning signs and symptoms of abuse. Possible signs and indicators of abuse to be aware of may include (but not exclusively):

#### Physical abuse:

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries;
- Bruising or burns of unusual location or type;
- Finger marks;
- Being excessively withdrawn and/or compliant;
- Appearing frightened of or avoiding physical contact.

#### Emotional or psychological abuse:

- Low self-esteem;
- Person in a state of neglect;
- Difficulty in making choices because the person has never been allowed to make them for themselves;
- Derogatory statements made about a person when they are present;
- Eager to please and subservient;
- Financial or legal abuse;
- Change in living conditions;
- Lack of heating, clothing or food;
- Inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money;

- Unexplained withdrawals from an account;
- Unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents;
- Recent addition of authorised signers on a donor's signature card;
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.

#### Neglect:

- Excessively and inappropriately craving attention;
- A marked change in a relationship between vulnerable adult and others;
- Poor physical state of person and/or their home.

#### Sexual abuse:

- A change in the person's usual behaviour;
- Withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone;
- Overt sexual behaviour/language by the adult;
- Self-inflicted injury;
- Disturbed sleep patterns;
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes;
- Social isolation of the vulnerable person by the caregiver.

#### Domestic Abuse:

- An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality;
- Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, so called 'honour' based violence, Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage etc.;
- The age for this is extended down to 16;
- Domestic abuse can be considered for safeguarding responses in appropriate cases.

Patterns of abuse vary and include:

- Serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and ‘grooms’ individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse;
- Long-term abuse in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse; or
- Opportunistic abuse such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around.

Factors which may lead to abuse:

Abuse and neglect are more likely to occur if a person rejects help; has a communication difficulty; displays challenging behaviour or behaves in an unusual way. They are also more likely if a carer feels lonely or isolated; is under stress due to poor income or housing conditions; has other responsibilities; has physical or mental health problems; is dependent on alcohol or drugs; has had poor long-term family relationships or where family violence is the norm; or where the person who abuses is dependent upon the person they abuse for accommodation, financial or emotional support.

People who abuse may be relatives or other family members; neighbours; friends; carers; professional staff; volunteers; other service users; care practitioners; strangers; and people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive to be vulnerable. Within the church they may include clergy or professional church workers; church members; members of community groups and members of church visiting teams. Organisations may also abuse and cause harm by the way they conduct their day to day practice, and churches and Christian groups must be aware of this.

## APPENDIX III

### THE CHURCH AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

Many survivors of abuse have problems with attending church and it can be that some of those within or on the fringes of the Church include survivors.

The following have been identified as things that can be difficult for survivors:

- Saying the Lord’s Prayer (believing that they must forgive immediately or God will reject them);
- Specific words, such as ‘Father’, ‘sin’, ‘let Jesus come into you’ or ‘overshadow’ can trigger unwanted feelings or images;

- The Peace can frighten survivors because they may not want to be touched or, particularly, hugged;
- The emphasis on sin can be so difficult that some survivors leave the church altogether;
- Anointing and touch can be very difficult for someone whose body boundaries have been violated.

Holy Communion can be difficult:

- The use of words such as ‘blood’ and ‘body’ can trigger memories of abuse;
- Some cannot cope with anyone behind them, so queuing to get to the altar may be difficult;
- Having to get physically close to others might lead to unwelcome smells such as deodorant, aftershave or the smell of alcohol;
- Kneeling to receive communion or a blessing may trigger memories of abuse.

For those who have been ritually or spiritually abused:

- Triggers may include ritual symbols and equipment such as the altar, candles, chalice, crosses and crucifixes, the sacrificial lamb;
- People abused by those in ministry may have been told such things as it was “ordained by God”, “a special service to those who serve the Lord”, “a blessing from God” or “Spirit-led”, making these phrases difficult for them;
- A sense of pollution may be internalised and some survivors feel that if they go to church they will ‘pollute’ the service of others because of their feelings of guilt and shame.

It is important to recognise the vulnerability of survivors, especially when they are in crisis or in the early stages of healing. They may be over-compliant and easily manipulated and the power imbalance within pastoral care should be recognised. Sensitivity, care and informed support may be required to empower people to work through these issues to discover the liberating truth of the Gospel.