

Policy, Standards and Procedures of St. Paul's Church, Dosthill  
Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy and Procedure

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy and Procedure  
of  
St. Paul's Church, Dosthill

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# Policy, Standards and Procedures of St. Paul’s Church, Dosthill Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy and Procedure

On behalf of St. Paul’s Parochial Church Council

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## Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Policy and Procedure

### 1. AIM

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of the PCC, Vicar, Church Wardens, volunteers and staff (if any) working on behalf of the organisation in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children.

All adults and children have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

*"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or person's"*

Kent and Medway Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (2010)

### 2. OBJECTIVES

To explain the responsibilities of the Church in respect of its PCC, Vicar, Church Wardens, volunteers and staff (if any) for vulnerable adult and child protection matters.

To provide everyone with an overview of vulnerable adult and child protection matters.

To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult or child protection issues arise.

### 3. CONTEXT

For the purpose of this policy 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over. 'Child' means a person aged under 18 years.

#### **What do we mean by abuse?**

Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

Concerns about abuse may be raised and reported to the social services agency as a result of a single incident or repeated incidents of abuse. However for some clients the issues of abuse relate to neglect and poor standards of care. They are ongoing and if ignored may result in a severe deterioration in both physical and mental health and even death.

Anyone who has concerns about poor care standards and neglect in a care setting may raise these within the service, with the regulatory body and/or with the social services agency.

Where these concerns relate to a vulnerable adult living in their own home, with family or with informal carers they must be reported to the social services agency. These reports must be

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addressed through the adult protection process and a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine an appropriate response to reduce or remove the risk.

### **Who is included under the heading 'vulnerable adult?'**

An Adult (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 him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. (*Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health*)

This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment or chronic illness. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.

*It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti social abuse behaviour.* The persons' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

Many vulnerable adults and children may not realise that they are being abused. For instance an elderly person, accepting that they are dependent on their family, may feel that they must tolerate losing control of their finances or their physical environment. They may be reluctant to assert themselves for fear of upsetting their carers or making the situation worse.

It is important to consider the meaning of 'Significant Harm'. The Law Commission, in it's consultation document 'Who Decides,' issued in Dec 1997 suggested that; 'harm' must be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also 'the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development'.

## **4. THE ROLE OF ST. PAUL'S**

The PCC, Vicar, Church Wardens, volunteers and staff (if any) working on behalf of St. Paul's Church have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults and children. We may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults and children who are at risk. This policy will enable us to make informed and confident responses to specific adult and child protection issues.

A leaflet is provided to all volunteers who may be working with vulnerable adults and children in activities organised by the church that gives guidance on safe practice. Training is provided at the outset and we are aware that professional advice from the Diocese may have altered over recent years. It is important to bear in mind these differences and that respect for people's own personal space should be paramount. Systems in operation at St. Paul's are designed to protect both our members and our volunteers from potential risk and it is important to avoid misunderstandings that can arise from naïve, inappropriate or complacent practices, eg. cuddling, safe handling, taking photographs, emotional situations etc.

People are appointed to specific roles that carry responsibilities as outlined below. Key personnel are identified on posters at the Church and on the website.

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### **PCC**

- Ensure that Safeguarding policy and procedures are in place and are owned and implemented to ensure consistent safe practice.
- Appoint Lead Co-ordinator(s) who will support the Vicar and Church Wardens in overseeing implementation of this policy.
- Adequately insure and risk assess all activities with vulnerable groups.

### **VICAR**

- Ensure all those working directly with vulnerable groups and/or those who hold a position of trust and responsibility know how to respond well to disclosures.
- Ensure all those working directly with vulnerable groups and/or those who hold a position of trust and responsibility know how to recognise and challenge abuse and unsafe practice.
- Ensure that everyone understands what information they need to share and who they need to share it with.
- Provide opportunities for the voices of vulnerable groups to be listened to and heard.
- Keep confidential records securely.
- Ensure all safeguarding information is recorded and kept in perpetuity.
- Ensure everyone who volunteers or works for the Church with vulnerable groups is safely recruited and receives safeguarding training.
- Provide appropriate supervision and support for all those who volunteer or work with vulnerable groups.
- Regularly review all activities with vulnerable groups.
- Ensure that safe practice is being exercised at all times.
- Organise DBS checks, via the most appropriate agency, in accordance with the recommendations and requirements of the agreed roles for employees and volunteers.
- Keep a record of the applicant's disclosure certificate number and the date of issue, together with a record of the date the disclosure is due for renewal.
- Send a reminder to the applicant three months before their disclosure is due for renewal.

### **PARISH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S CO-ORDINATOR**

- Provide support, advice and take action where necessary on concerns about a child or adult.
- Report allegations and concerns about a child or adult to the agency detailed in Section 8.
- Ensure those directly involved in an allegation of abuse receive appropriate pastoral support where requested.
- Be notified, and share in the management of, any volunteer whose DBS check results are not satisfactory.
- Ensure safeguarding records are being maintained and kept securely.
- Ensure everyone who works directly with vulnerable groups has been safely recruited and has attended safeguarding induction.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedure is in place and being implemented.
- Ensure that all safeguarding information is treated sensitively and confidentiality is maintained.

The role of the Co-ordinator is to deal with all instances involving safeguarding protection matters that arise within the organisation. They will respond to all vulnerable person concerns and enquiries.

Should you have any suspicions or concerns relating to Safeguarding issues, make contact on  
**Tel: 07950537717 John Restall**

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### PARISH LEAD PERSON FOR ADULTS

- Be an advocate with regards to the concerns and views of those who are vulnerable.
- Alert the Vicar and/or the Church Wardens on any safeguarding matters that need reviewing or revising, offering suggestions for improvements if appropriate.
- Support the safeguarding training organised by the Church and encourage all volunteers to attend.

## 5. TYPES OF ABUSE

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 an 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 it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' 2000 report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

**Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent 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, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a persons disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment, hate crime.

**Institutional abuse** - Institutional abuse although not a separate category of abuse in itself, requires specific mention simply to highlight that persons placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level as detailed in the contract specification.

**Multiple forms of abuse** - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

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### **Domestic abuse**

Home Office Definition 2004

'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'

Most research suggests that domestic violence occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or educational level.

It is important to recognise that Vulnerable Adults may be the victims of Domestic Abuse themselves or be affected by it occurring within their household. This is likely to have a serious effect on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Where Vulnerable Adults are victims of Domestic Abuse, they may need extra support to plan their future. The violence or threat of violence may continue after a victim has separated from the abuser. It is important to ensure that all the vulnerable people in this situation have appropriate support to enable them to maintain their personal safety.

## **6. CHILDREN**

It is essential that the needs of any children within an abusive or domestic violence situation where there is a vulnerable adult involved are considered and acted upon. Please contact the Parish Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the Vicar to request referral to the local social services Safeguarding Children's team.

## **7. PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

It is important that vulnerable persons are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable person has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the person who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

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### 8. RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for the Church immediately.

**If not able to make immediate contact please leave a message and your full contact details asking for a priority response to your Safeguarding Report. You will need to report your concern if you do not get a reply.**

The Parish Safeguarding Children's Co-ordinator should report the matter to the Diocesan Officer in Birmingham.

**Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser**

**STAFFORDSHIRE SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH**

<http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/concerns/> (link from Diocese Guidance)

First Response Service: 0800 1313 126 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday

Emergency Duty Service: 0845 6042886 Or contact the police: 0300 123 44 55

**NB VERIFY INFORMATION ABOVE IS CORRECT as taken from 2011 guidance**

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported.

### 9. RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

#### DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

#### DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions

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- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the Parish Safeguarding Children's Co-ordinator.

### **10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.

The PCC, Vicar, Church Wardens, volunteers and staff (if any) have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable persons with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable person will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines.

If a person confides in you and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the person sensitively that you have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the person must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent must be obtained from the person before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable person is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff (if any, or their representative) must let the person know the position regarding their role and must assure the person that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The persons' involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.