



ST ANDREW THE GREAT
www.stag.org

‘Adults at Risk’ Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Policy aims

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known. To that end, the aims of our safeguarding policy are:

- To uphold the honour of God's Name.
- To keep the gospel from disrepute.
- Designed to be read together with the Church of England's House of Bishops Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Promoting a Safer Church

We do this by:

- Protecting the children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our care.
- Protecting the Leaders who serve in this ministry.

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

The full St Andrew the Great Safeguarding Policy can be found on our website. This policy will deal with safeguarding 'Adults at Risk'

Key Safeguarding Roles

1. **The PCC** has overall responsibility for safeguarding within St Andrew The Great. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and sanctioned by the PCC.
2. **The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** is the PCC member given responsibility for safeguarding within the church family and all its various ministries.

Given the size of our church, it is necessary for the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to delegate some of their responsibilities to Staff Ministry Area Leaders who oversee various ministries. However, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (or in her absence the Deputy Safeguarding officer) will retain the sole right to receive and manage disclosures.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will be responsible in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children and vulnerable adults where their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is blemished or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme. Similarly, the Safeguarding Team are responsible for undertaking a risk assessment if there is information disclosed on a Confidential Declaration.

3. **The Church Safeguarding Committee** is a source of advice and guidance on safeguarding issues. The committee is made up of members who have some understanding of safeguarding and are aware of its importance. They will advise the PCC on any matters relating to safeguarding, making recommendations for changes in policy and procedure, and hold ministry area leaders accountable for policy implementation.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer chairs the Safeguarding Committee which is tasked to oversee the church's safeguarding policies, compliance and audits.

4. **Staff Ministry Area Leaders** have the responsibility to ensure that Leaders within their ministry area are recruited, assessed, and trained according to the safeguarding policy of the church (see Safer Recruitment Policy). In this process they will be assisted by the Leaders Review Team and the administrative team. Their role will be supervised by the Parish Safeguarding Committee, chaired by the Parish safeguarding Officer.

Ministry Area Leaders will escalate any concerns or disclosures to the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours. The Parish Safeguarding Officer retains the sole right to receive and manage disclosures.

5. **Leaders** refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults. In the Recruitment Policy, Leaders are further categorised into two groups, 'Pastoral Leaders' and 'Practical Servers'. All leaders (Pastoral and Practical) who have oversight of children and vulnerable adults are subject to the same DBS checks and safeguarding training (see Recruitment Policy)

All Leaders share a particular responsibility for:

- loving the person as Christ loves them
- setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- praying for those in their care

Guidelines for recognising and responding to potential abuse

St Andrew The Great is committed to preventing abuse and neglect taking place and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable adults within our community. We are committed to ensuring that St Andrew The Great:

- Provides a safe environment for vulnerable adults and actively seeks to prevent harm.
- Identifies vulnerable adults who are suffering.
- Takes appropriate action to see that such vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm.

All Leaders need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Definitions

WHEN IS AN ADULT VULNERABLE? (Care Act 2014)

The term 'vulnerable adult' (recently renamed as 'adult at risk') refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Please note that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

SOME FACTORS THAT INCREASE VULNERABILITY INCLUDE:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Dementia
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties of old age
- Those who are homeless
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse
- Significant emotional coercion
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood

- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma.

It is also important to note that these factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

The Care Act 2014 provides the following examples of types of abuse. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

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

Domestic abuse that is usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour, by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.

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, 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, exploitation, 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 including slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude; and traffickers and slave master using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse is maltreatment or harassment that is based on any characteristic of a person's identity, such as their race, sex, or disability. Many of the signs of discriminatory abuse will be the same as for psychological abuse. The impact of discriminatory abuse can lead to significant self-harming and must never be underestimated.

Organisational abuse which can include 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.

Domestic abuse that is usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour, by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.

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; or the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect which covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It should be noted that self-neglect may not prompt enquiry. A decision on whether a response is required undersafeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

Although not a formal category of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse. **Spiritual abuse** is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

FACTORS THAT MAY LEAD TO ABUSE

Abuse can occur in any setting no matter where a person lives or where they are being cared for. Abuse can occur in residential or day care settings, in hospitals, in other people's homes churches and other places previously assumed safe, and in public places. Abuse is more likely to occur if the vulnerable adult:

- Rejects help
- Has a communication difficulty
- Has challenging/unusual behaviour
- Is not helpful or co-operative
- Is behaviourally disturbed or there are major changes in personality behaviour
- Is socially isolated

Research has shown that mistreatment is more likely to occur if carers:

- Are lonely or isolated
- Are under stress due to poor income or housing conditions
- Have other responsibilities i.e. work, family
- Are showing signs of physical or mental illness
- Are becoming dependent on alcohol or drugs
- Family relationships over the years have been poor
- Live where family violence is the norm.

2. Recognising signs of abuse

Safeguarding adults is everyone's business. Anyone can witness or become aware of information suggesting that abuse or neglect is occurring. It may not always be obvious that a vulnerable adult is being abused or mistreated, however there may be general indicators that something is amiss: the adult may say or do things that hint that all is not well. In some cases, there may be a marked change in behaviour or a direct disclosure or complaint of abuse.

The government is clear that workers across a wide range of organisations—including faith groups—are often well-placed to notice changes in an adult that may indicate they are being abused or neglected, and therefore need to be vigilant in identifying concerns and understand how to respond appropriately.

This will include:

- Knowing about different types of abuse and neglect and their signs
- Supporting adults to keep safe
- Knowing who to tell about suspected abuse or neglect
- Supporting adults to think and weigh up the risks and benefits of different opinions when exercising choice and control.

SIGNS OF ABUSE TO LOOK OUT FOR

If someone is suffering abuse you may notice one or a combination of the following signs:

- Multiple bruising or finger-marks
- Injuries you cannot give a good reason for
- Worsening health for no reason
- Withdrawal or mood changes
- Tearfulness
- Neediness, wanting affection or being clingy
- An unexplained shortage of money
- Inappropriate, dirty or inadequate clothing
- Covering up or rationalising injuries or demeaning behaviours towards them
- Confusion and/or denial that anything is amiss despite marked deterioration
- Flirtatious, precocious or expressive sexual behaviour out of character
- Indications of unusual confinement e.g. closed off in a room.

Behaviours that may be observed about the carer, family member or the person close to the vulnerable person include:

- Getting the vulnerable person to pay for their (i.e. carer's) shopping/petrol/tickets
- Taking advantage of their naivety or trust
- Attitudes of indifference or anger towards the vulnerable person
- Blaming or chastising them e.g. that soiling themselves was deliberate
- Aggressive or harsh behaviour (threats, insults, harassment)
- Inappropriate display of affection or care
- Social isolation or restriction of activity
- Lack of willingness to let other people have access to the vulnerable person
- Obvious absence of assistance or attendance.

3. Procedures following disclosure or concern of abuse

You should never assume that someone else will report the concern and pass on the information. It is far better that two caregivers raise their concerns and the person is made safe than no-one says anything because they assume someone else will deal with it and the person is significantly harmed.

GUIDELINES FOR WHEN SOMEONE TELLS YOU THEY HAVE BEEN ABUSED

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following general points may be of help:

- Above all else, listen, listen, and listen!

- Keep calm, and show acceptance of what they say, however unlikely it seems
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else—don't promise confidentiality
- Be aware the person may have been threatened
- Never push for information. If they decide not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen
- Avoid leading the person and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said - you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the person had been led.

CONCLUDING

- Reassure the person that they were right to tell you
- Explain that you will try to take steps to protect them from further harm
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to social services or the police to prevent the person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Reassure them that they will be fully involved in any decisions about what will happen next, and ask them what they would like to be done
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the person said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and always within 24 hours.

4. Responding to concerns of abuse

- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- You must contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately (for contact numbers see end of this document). Please also contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer if the allegation is against your ministry area leader.
- At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Adult Social Care or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Serious matters must be reported as soon as possible and within one working day to Adult Social Care. (For contact numbers see the section at the end of this policy).
- Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is (in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team) to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- Apart from telling the Parish Safeguarding Officer, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.

- You should also consider your own feelings and ask your ministry area leader for pastoral support if needed.
- Even if you may feel the person's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken.

RESPECTING THE VULNERABLE ADULT'S RIGHTS TO DECIDE IF THEY WANT HELP

The following is quoted in the Statutory Guidance:

BMA Adult safeguarding toolkit: *"...where a competent adult explicitly refuses any supporting intervention, this should normally be respected. Exceptions to this may be where a criminal offence may have taken place or where there may be a significant risk of harm to a third party. If, for example, there may be an abusive adult in a position of authority in relation to other vulnerable adults [sic], it may be appropriate to breach confidentiality and disclose information to an appropriate authority. Where a criminal offence is suspected it may also be necessary to take legal advice. Ongoing support should also be offered. Because an adult initially refuses the offer of assistance he or she should not therefore be lost to or abandoned by relevant services. The situation should be monitored and the individual informed that she or he can take up the offer of assistance at any time."*

Even without the consent of the individual, the PSO retains the right (extended confidentiality) to seek advice from social services or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser provided they do not use any names or details. It should also be noted that adults have the right to make decisions for themselves some of which we might view as unwise. The 6 priorities to consider are empowerment, protection, prevention, partnership, proportionality and accountability (Care Act 2014). 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.

5. Procedures for responding to abuse: outcomes

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) by the Parish Safeguarding Officer:

- If the DSA advises **further action**, PSO must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.
- If the DSA advises **no further action** required, this is not the end of the process. The PSO must arrange a further meeting in the parish to discuss whether alternative actions should be taken, or support provided

This meeting should include the PSO and the Vicar, and they can involve others as necessary, including church wardens, pastoral counsellors, and the relevant ministryarealeader.

Guidelines for responding to a disclosure of historic abuse

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The church is required to take advice from the diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.