



# **A Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of Blackburn.**

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## FOREWORD BY THE BISHOP OF BLACKBURN

A vision for the direction of the Diocese has been emerging over quite a long period of time, but has gathered pace during the past 18 months. A major part of that vision is to make Church life healthy, so that by 2026, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese, we have much to celebrate. Part of that 'healthiness' vision is to ensure each local Church and Christian community is operating and living out good safeguarding practice in the care of children and vulnerable adults.

The crucial nature of this cannot be stressed strongly enough. We have a primary concern for survivors of abuse, children and vulnerable adults, to be assured of good processes and procedures to be in place on their behalf. As an organisation, we are very vulnerable and exposed, if we do not ensure good practice with regard to safeguarding. Good safeguarding needs to be in the very DNA of the Diocese and each local church.

I am extremely grateful to Kaley Vaughton, our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, for her work and in particular for the training she has given the Diocese in recent months with the Chair of our Safeguarding Management Panel, Mary Bunting – we also owe Kaley a deep debt of gratitude for the re-working of this policy document and making us keep in line with national guidelines.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Julian". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a single horizontal line that extends to the right.

# SECTION ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

### INTRODUCTION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone

It is the House of Bishops which approves national policy and provides recommended procedures where it is judged that the Church of England should have common practice across the Dioceses. Using this information and building upon it, this policy (when used alongside the additional guidance and safeguarding resources) provides additional procedures and examples of good practice to give further substance to the House of Bishops' policy, so that those authorised volunteers, employed laity and people holding the Bishop's licence, can properly and with confidence engage with children and adults.

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING**

Blackburn Diocese recognises that safeguarding good practice concerns the development of safer expressions of care to all and underpins the love and welcome of God for all people. We can show God's love through action, by working in a supported and coordinated manner when responding to safeguarding concerns.

When dealing with safeguarding matters communication is key and requires Church Safeguarding Officers and Parish Priests to make timely responses to concerns, consulting and working in conjunction with statutory agencies, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and where necessary drawing in additional support from the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

The Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG) with the Bishop's office and senior staff will ensure the overall operational management of safeguarding across the Diocese, requesting additional specialist support as needed.

All churches and faith communities are required to have in place arrangements which include:

- Procedures to identify, respond to and report concerns
- Codes of safe practice
- Safe recruitment procedures

Our policies will govern the work undertaken with children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend church or take part in activities on church premises (or that are organised by the church) within the parish.

**Liability insurance in relation to such issues may be invalidated if such policy is not in place and being implemented.**

# **SAFEGUARDING IN THE DIOCESE OF BLACKBURN**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from harm. The Church can work towards creating a safe non-discriminatory environment by being aware of situations which can create vulnerability.

The Diocese of Blackburn, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the safeguarding of the vulnerable both in society as a whole, and in its own community. The Diocese will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of all members of its community. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or adult or about the behaviour of someone working, volunteering or in a position of trust, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into abuse is necessary. It is also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help us learn lessons from the past. In respecting the dignity and value of every person we are committed to:

- **the care, nurture of and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults;**
- **the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults who may be at risk;**
- **establishing safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' and action in safeguarding matters**

We will seek to fulfil these through:

- **The production of clear policy and procedures to which all will comply**
- **The safe recruitment, training and support of those in positions of responsibility and trust.**
- **Respond quickly to concerns or complaints**
- **Work alongside professionals in processes which support safeguarding and pastoral care**
- **Provide care and support to those who have experienced abuse**
- **Provide supervision and support to those who have abused others.**

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

To guide all elements of safeguarding activity delivered by those within the Diocese we will:

- **Provide pastoral care which is respectful and informed**
- **Provide timely safeguarding actions**
- **Respect confidentiality**
- **Identify and manage risk**
- **Discharge our duties at the highest level of Christian behaviour**
- **Actively commit to the promotion of a safe church community**

## **CODE OF SAFER WORKING PRACTICE**

This code is provided for all those across the Diocese who work or volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable adults. The code provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours which promote safe practice. It assists those working with children and vulnerable adults to monitor their own standards and practice by setting expected boundaries of behaviour.

These guidelines serve to reduce the possibilities of positions of trust being abused and false accusations being made.

- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity, use language, body language and a tone of voice which is respectful.
- Involve children, young people and vulnerable adults in the planning and running of the activities offered where appropriate.
- Use active, transparent communication to aid the development of a community where workers, children and vulnerable adults are allowed to discuss inappropriate attitudes and behaviours in each other.
- Avoid being alone with a child where possible to protect all involved in the activity.
- Ensure everyone knows to whom they can share their concerns with; promote the role of the church safeguarding officer and their contact details.
- Never use illicit substances, alcohol or abuse prescription medication when responsible for a child or vulnerable adult.
- Keep physical contact to the needs of the activity, if touch is required always check with the person first. Never use rough play, sexually provocative words or games or any form of punishment.
- Obtain consent for photographs / video to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Never scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, young person or adult or allow others to do so.
- Never show favoritism to, or single out anyone or group for more of your attention.
- Never give lifts to children or young people on their own or allow unknown adult's access to children.
- Never share sleeping accommodation with children or invite them to your home

- alone.
- Always operate within the Diocesan principles, procedures and guidelines, clarifying these when unsure.

The above set clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice serve to reduce the possibilities of positions of trust being abused or misused, or false accusations being made. More detailed guidance on safe working practices such as when to gain consent, working with and transporting children, can be found in the guidelines available through the Safeguarding additional resources information on the web Blackburn Diocese website.

## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

Concerns about children, young people and vulnerable adults will be responded to according to our procedures, recognising the sensitivity it may hold for those involved. Where there is a concern, this should be reported to the appropriate person, the church Safeguarding Officer or advice sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (within 24h).

The flow chart on page 9 sets out the process you should follow and who you can seek assistance from.

## Diocese of Blackburn Flowchart: Safeguarding concerns

A safeguarding concern is reported to, or identified by someone within the parish – please remember concern for the safety and wellbeing of the child/adult should remain uppermost at all times

**YES**



If the person is at immediate risk of harm or needs medical attention, dial 999 to contact the emergency services and follow any advice given.  
As soon as possible, but within 24 hours, follow the reporting and recording steps on the right.

Any concerns can be discussed with Archdeacon's or Bishop's but advice should always be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (via the contact numbers to the right) and /or the Local Authority safeguarding team. All concerns reported to the DSA are shared with the relevant Bishop and Archdeacon and any concerns that Bishops and Archdeacons are made aware of are reported immediately to the DSA.

**IS THE CHILD/ADULT AT IMMEDIATE RISK?**

**NO**

**Concern about a member of clergy**



Inform the Local Authority Safeguarding team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible (within 24h) who will discuss with the Bishops Leadership Team to work out the next steps

**Concern about a member of the laity of congregation**



Inform the incumbent and Church Safeguarding Officer within 24h who should seek advice from the Local Authority safeguarding team and Kaley Vaughton – DSA



Report to Local authority safeguarding team and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: Kaley Vaughton, Tel: 07711 485170  
Email: [kaley.vaughton@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:kaley.vaughton@blackburn.anglican.org)  
If not available or call CCPAS Helpline as below

**IF A SERIOUS 'CONCERN' ABOUT A 'CHILD/YOUNG PERSON' ARISES 'OUT OF OFFICE HOURS' PLEASE CONTACT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SAFEGUARDING TEAM OR CCPAS HELPLINE ON 08455 120 455**

## **SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Clear, robust procedures are essential to safeguarding. However, it is important to remember that above all it is people who protect, not procedures. The aim should be to create a culture of informed vigilance in the Church by sharing the responsibility but having clear roles and responsibilities when dealing with safeguarding. Within the Diocese of Blackburn, safeguarding responsibilities are held by the Diocese and in parishes by Parochial Church Councils (PCC) along with specified safeguarding personnel.

### **DIOCESAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

In line with General Synod guidance the Diocese has:

- Adopted the House of Bishops' safeguarding policies, (Protecting all God's children 2010 and Promoting a safe church 2006);
- Provided a structure to manage safeguarding in the Diocese;
- Established a Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG) with an independent chair to coordinate the strategic development of safeguarding within the Diocese;
- Appointed a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser to co-ordinate the operational management of all aspects of safeguarding;
- Provided a code of 'Safer Working Practice' for all in the Diocese to follow;
- Ensured safeguarding training and development opportunities are available to all;
- Ensured a proper flow of safeguarding information; to and from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, parishes and organisations outside of the church;
- Promoted good practice in safeguarding across the Diocese, including record keeping, risk assessment and responding to complaints;
- Included the monitoring of safeguarding in parishes as part of the archdeacons' responsibilities;
- Provided access to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) through the CCPAS e-bulk system for parishes, the cathedral, the bishop's office and the Diocesan office for those beneficed and licensed clergy, paid workers and volunteers who need to obtain disclosures or to have their registration with the DBS checked;

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS (PCCs) RESPONSIBILITIES

PCCs have a key role within our worshipping communities. Their influence and good management of safeguarding is fundamental in keeping all within our churches safe. Each PCC should therefore:

- Formally adopt and implement the Diocesan policy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults 'Safeguarding in the Diocese of Blackburn' and the associated procedures and guidance provided by the Diocese. Where helpful, Parish Guidelines which help to implement the adopted policy in your parish may be developed and appended.
- The implementation of the policy and procedures should be discussed and reviewed by the PCC regularly (at least annually) and at the first PCC meeting after the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), the Church Safeguarding Officer should present a report for discussion and the PCC Safeguarding Policy Statement should be signed. PCCs are strongly advised not to amend this. (The PCC Safeguarding Policy Statement is provided on page 13 and can be found in the "Safeguarding toolkit" section on the Diocese web site.) One copy of this policy statement should be filed with the PCC minutes, another copy sent to the DST and copies displayed prominently in the church and wherever work with vulnerable groups takes place (it is recommended that parishes display the Safeguarding Poster provided to Church Safeguarding Officers mentioned below);
- Appoint at least one Church Safeguarding Officer to work with the parish priest and the PCC in order to implement the policy and procedures. The Church Safeguarding Officer should attend the PCC at least annually and should not be a member of the clergy;
- Appoint a person to be a child advocate, where possible this should be different from the Church Safeguarding Officer. This should be someone children can recognise as being someone they can trust and talk to.
- Display in church premises (where children's activities take place), the contact details of the Church Safeguarding Officer along with contact numbers for: 'Childline' (0800 1111), 'Family Lives' (was 'Parentline Plus' – 0808 800 222), the CCPAS Helpline (0845 120 4550) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (07711485170). This can most easily be achieved by displaying the safeguarding poster available in the "Safeguarding toolkit" section on the Diocese web site;
- Ensure that all those authorised to work with children (paid and voluntary) are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice and are trained and supported;
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities which involve children undertaken in the name of the PCC and that risk assessments are completed for all activities;
- Ensure all those hiring church premises undertake to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities towards children and young people;
- Where working within Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs), agree which denomination or organisation's safeguarding policy to follow, including where to seek advice in urgent situations. This decision should be ratified both by the bishop and

other appropriate church leaders in the partnership (in the event of a specific safeguarding concern, ensure that all the LEP partners are also notified).

## **HIRE OF CHURCH PREMISES**

Ensuring the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults lays with those responsible for their care. Where external organisations / individuals are using church premises, hire arrangements must make it clear that the organisations / individuals are to abide by the PCC's safeguarding policy.

A copy of the PCC policy statement forms part of the hire agreement and hirers should be asked to sign a copy of this, even when an organisation have their own, to acknowledge that this has been seen and will be adhered to and that all concerns about children, young people and vulnerable adults will be reported to the relevant statutory authority. If an organisation has a safeguarding policy, a copy of this should be requested and filed with the hire agreement.

A hire of church premises agreement can be found in the "safeguarding toolkit" on the Diocesan safeguarding web page.

## PCC SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

Parish of .....

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. This implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

- We accept and endorse the principles set out in ‘Safeguarding in the Diocese of Blackburn.
- We commit ourselves to nurture, protect and safeguard all our members, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole church community.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection, appointment, training and support of those working in both paid and voluntary positions with children or vulnerable adults, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and making appropriate referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- We will respond without delay to concerns or allegations that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and social care services in any investigation.
- We will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them appropriate pastoral support.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

The PCC of this Church agreed and adopted the above Policy at its meeting on.....

We have appointed .....as our Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO).

Copies of “Safeguarding in the Diocese of Blackburn” and any parish guidelines and procedures are held by: .....

The PCC shall review this policy annually. The next review will take place on: .....

Signed:

Vicar/Rector/Priest in Charge.....

Churchwarden: .....

Churchwarden.....

## **ROLES IN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Full role descriptions for parish safeguarding personnel (Church Safeguarding Officer) can be found on the Diocesan website. Below are brief details of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and Church Safeguarding Officer.

### **DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER**

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group (DSMG). Their role is to support the Diocese in the development of local policy, good practice and training. To ensure that allegations of abuse are appropriately referred to the statutory authorities ensuring the provision of appropriate advice and support to survivors and victims of abuse. To make sure that offenders returning to the community are appropriately supported and managed. To coordinate all the mechanisms for safeguarding practice across the Diocese including the provision of specialist advice, support and monitoring in line with the law, government guidance and national guidance from the House of Bishops and National Safeguarding Adviser.

### **DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADMINISTRATION CO-ORDINATOR**

The Diocesan Safeguarding administration co-ordinator works closely with the adviser. The co-ordinator is not qualified in safeguarding but has access to relevant safeguarding administrative information and can support in all areas of administration. The coordinator will ensure that anything that may be a complaint or disclosure is passed to the adviser for action. The co-ordinator has undertaken basic safeguarding children awareness training.

### **CHURCH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

The Church Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring the coordination of any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or the behaviour of an adult working with vulnerable groups. Their role is to ensure that these are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. They should attend the PCC at least annually and work with them to ensure the proper implementation of the safeguarding policy.

Where the Church Safeguarding Officer becomes aware of a suspicion or concern about possible abuse the following steps should be followed:

- if the child / adult is in immediate need of medical treatment or protection, contact the ambulance service or the police (very few situations will fall into this category, it is only when injuries have been received needing urgent medical intervention or you believe

that their safety and welfare will be endangered if they return to their home / living arrangements that this would need to be done)

- inform the rector/vicar/priest-in-charge (unless there is a valid reason not to, i.e. the concern is related to them)
- inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser asap (within 24 h). This will allow you to discuss your concerns further with someone experienced, and seek advice and guidance to agree the most appropriate action to take in the best interests of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, in line with policies and procedures. The Local Children's / Adults Social Care Department and CCPAS are also available for consultation on concerns.

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST CHURCH OFFICERS**

The guidance below relates to circumstances where it is alleged that a church officer (for example: clergy, church warden, children / youth / vulnerable adult leader, choir leader) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child / vulnerable adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child / vulnerable adult
- behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children / vulnerable adults

Where there are concerns for the behaviour of, or allegations against, a church worker these should be directed immediately to the Church Safeguarding Officer and / or the Parish Priest who will confirm the appropriate next action. These concerns must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible (within 24 h) and will be addressed drawing on the relevant policy procedures guiding paid and voluntary workers. This may involve: providing advice, supervision and training, the use of disciplinary and statutory processes (including suspension from their role if there is a police investigation) or a combination of these. A referral must be made to the police and / or local authority where it appears that a criminal offence has occurred against a child or vulnerable adult.

Any allegation against those working with children must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where any of the three circumstances identified above exists. This is a useful means of consultation as the LADO will advise if the situation meets the criteria and contains sufficient information to proceed and will provide support throughout the process. Parishes can access the LADO themselves or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser can do this on their behalf.

Further guidance on reporting concerns and record keeping can be found in "Guidance on Managing Concerns, Reporting and Recording" in the "Additional policy resources" section of the Diocesan safeguarding web pages.

## **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

All those volunteering or working with vulnerable groups must complete Diocesan safeguarding training and renew this every three years. Those expected to complete this are:

- all clergy holding the Bishop's licence
- all licenced and authorised lay ministers
- Church Safeguarding Officers and parish advocates
- Church wardens
- PCC members
- all those working or volunteering with children, young people and / or vulnerable adults

Further details of the level of training required and the dates this is available can be found in "Safeguarding Training" on the safeguarding page of the Blackburn Diocese web site.

## **SELECTING, RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING THOSE THAT WORK AND VOLUNTEER IN PARISHES**

Safer recruitment practices form part of a network of checks and balances which will minimise the possibility of appointing inappropriate individuals to work with vulnerable groups. They are one of the essential four elements of 'safe care' practice, which are:

- effective, clear appointment/recruitment procedures and practices
- explicit and shared standards
- clear, reliable supervision arrangements
- access to appropriate training opportunities.

Appointments to all roles within a parish should be in line with the Church of England's "Protecting all God's Children" (2010), and Safeguarding Recruitment Policy and Practice Guidance (2014) both can be found via the Diocesan safeguarding web page under "Safeguarding Policy".

Each appointment to both paid and voluntary posts should be subject to a recruitment process, vetting checks and a mandatory six month probationary period. Good appointment and support processes will therefore include:

- clarity about what the post involves and the kind of person to occupy it (role description / person specification, samples available via the Diocesan website in the Safeguarding Toolkit)
- completion of confidential declaration forms enabling information to be openly explored
- consistent interviewing and assessment methods, where identity is verified (by seeing photographic evidence i.e. a passport or new style driving licence)

- requesting appropriate, specific references to ascertain a person’s suitability for the role
- checking and rechecking regularly that the individual is suitable to work with vulnerable people
- clear and thorough risk assessment to enable ‘safe’ appointments to be made;
- using the ‘Volunteer Agreement’ and ‘Code of Conduct’ to guide best practice (both available on the web site in “Safeguarding Toolkit”)
- provision of appropriate means of induction, supervision, training and ongoing support.

Those appointing to both paid and voluntary posts should use the recruitment process as an opportunity to satisfy themselves that the person has the knowledge, skills, experience and integrity for the work. It is recommended that volunteers are not appointed to children’s work until they have been regular members of the congregation for a sufficient length of time for them to become known and trusted by the wider church community.

More information on safer recruitment can be found in the supplementary guidance “Volunteering and Working in the Diocese of Blackburn” available in the additional policy resources section of the Diocesan web page.

Children (under the age of 18) wishing to volunteer must never be left alone with responsibility for a child / group of children or vulnerable adult(s) and should be supervised at all times. Safer Recruitment principles should still be applied and one of the references must be provided by their head teacher / Head of Year. They must also count as a child in any ratios of adults to children when involved in children’s work.

## **DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)**

This organisation was formed in 2012 with the amalgamation of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The DBS is responsible for processing applications for criminal record checks (DBS disclosures) and for considering those judged to be a danger to either children, young people or vulnerable adults for barring (being legally prevented from working or volunteering with these groups).

There is a legal duty to refer anyone that has been employed by, or volunteered for, a parish where allegations have been received, referred to the appropriate authorities and found to have substance, to be considered for barring.

Further information on eligibility for a criminal record disclosure can be found in the “CCPAS/Safer Recruitment” section of the Diocese safeguarding web page.

## **SAFEGUARDING CONTACT LIST**

It is strongly recommended that a local contact sheet is developed by the Church Safeguarding Officer. A generic contact list template can be found on the safeguarding pages of the Diocesan Website in the ‘safeguarding toolkit’ section.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The safeguarding of children and adults is an integral part of the life and ministry of the church, set out clearly in legislation and is everyone's responsibility. This safeguarding children and young people policy sits together with the safeguarding adult's policy. This policy is drawn from the policy for safeguarding children in the Church of England, 'Protecting All God's Children, 2010'. It provides the basis for ensuring that within our Diocese we provide the safest possible environment to enable our children to grow and flourish.

This policy represents the Diocesan commitment to safeguarding children and young people and reflects our policy statement and guiding principles. The Diocese believes that the welfare of the child is paramount, the needs of the child should be put before the needs of adults and all children should be protected against harm or abuse. To do so we will work in partnership with children, parents, carers and agencies to promote and safeguard the welfare of our children.

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD ABUSE**

### **WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?**

Safeguarding: the broader activities through which we are vigilant and responsive to promoting the welfare of our children and young people<sup>2</sup> and protecting them from potential harm. This is demonstrated through carefully planned activities for children, offering support where possible, responding to concerns and working with partner agencies. It also involves caring for those hurt by abuse and managing the behaviour of those in our church who have caused or may cause harm to others. The primary concept in safeguarding is recognising and responding to potential significant harm to children. Significant harm is any single or multiple maltreatment or impairment to the health and development of a child and is determined by careful assessment.

### **WHY IS SAFEGUARDING IMPORTANT?**

Too often children have been abused or died in the hands of those who are supposed to have protected them. Therefore the work of safeguarding children and young people is now guided by a significant body of legislation and policy. This serves to reinforce the importance of this work and forms the basis from which we should be operating. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) challenges us to take measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Within England this is reflected in the Children Act 1989 which provides the statutory powers for the Local Authority to investigate and intervene where there are concerns for significant harm to a child. More specifically, statutory and voluntary organisations are guided by "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2013)<sup>3</sup>, published by HM Government, which provides specific guidance for faith organisations. This policy has been developed using this legislation.

## **HOW MIGHT CHILDREN BE HARMED?**

There are many ways in which children can be harmed. Maltreatment of a child occurs where: their health, physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, spiritual or social development is damaged by other people. All abuse is a betrayal of trust and a misuse of relationships and power.

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. Abuse can be an act of commission, such as sexual abuse, or omission, such as neglect or failure to protect or report.

Child abuse affects girls and boys, babies and young people of all ages up to 18, including children with learning difficulties, children with physical disabilities and children from all kinds of family backgrounds. It occurs in all cultures, religions and classes. Research<sup>4</sup> shows that disabled children are more vulnerable. Abuse may be happening in the home, at church or in peer relationships.

Digital technology such as the internet and mobile phones are being increasingly used as a medium for abuse. Amongst their peers, children may experience 'sexting' or be enticed to take or send explicit photographs of themselves. With adults it may also take the form of the production and distribution of photographs or videos displaying abusive images of children. Children can be entrapped by these practices.

## **WHO MIGHT HARM A CHILD?**

Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children, including bullying and abuse through the use of digital technology. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Most child abuse (circa 70%) is perpetrated by an adult, male or female, who is well known to the child, often a family member. Such trusted adults may be in the child's community; they may be trusted professionals, leaders or members of a child's church.

## **WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN?**

Abuse can result in a child suffering significant harm and the need for court proceedings to safeguard their welfare. Abuse prevents children from achieving their full potential and undermines their dignity and rights. The harm it causes will affect children both while it is happening and in later life. It can be educational, emotional, psychological and relational. Historic accounts are therefore to be responded to with the same diligence. When abuse occurs within the context of the Church or by a Christian, it may affect the person's faith and spiritual development.

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic abuse. Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people, who are or who have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. Domestic abuse will always include at least emotional abuse of any children in the household, and there may also be direct abuse of them.

### **WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH BE CONCERNED?**

Churches are places where everyone should be able to flourish in God's love. Sadly research from the Lucy Faithful Foundation has indicated that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally. It is therefore likely that congregations may have people who have abused children among their worshippers, some of whom will be known. Not all will have committed sexual offences; some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse; they may still present a risk to children. The Church is a community of sinners being forgiven, and has a duty to minister to all people. This imposes a particular responsibility to not place people in the way of temptation, and not to compromise the safety of children.

### **CARING FOR THOSE WHO MAY OR HAVE HARMED CHILDREN**

It is the policy of both the Church of England and the Diocese of Blackburn that all those who work or volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable adults have a Criminal Records check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of the Safer Recruitment process and that all elements of this process must be satisfactorily completed before a person is allowed to commence working either as an employee or volunteer.

The DBS must be 'renewed' every 5 years. Where the information disclosed on the certificate results in a 'blemished' disclosure, there should always be a risk assessment. This process should be carried in conjunction with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and should be proportionate to the role and the information disclosed. The Freedom of Information Act, 2012 means that many old, minor or unrelated offences will no longer be disclosed as part of this process and disclosures of past offences do not always mean that the person cannot be appointed to the proposed role.

As well as people with cautions and convictions against children there are others whose behaviour may be considered to pose a risk to children. A protocol for 'Managing Offenders' must be completed for all those with cautions or convictions relating to children - A 'Covenant of Care' agreement should be completed with those who may potentially present a risk to children, for example if they are the subject of police enquiries, even where they have not been arrested or charged with an offence. These agreements will put in place boundaries that will protect both vulnerable groups and the (alleged) offenders including provision for pastoral care.

These documents can be accessed via the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who will be able to support you in drafting them and putting them in place. These agreements are reviewed regularly within the parish to ensure that they remain appropriate and are being adhered to. Any suggested changes should be agreed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. We need to keep in mind that those who have offended against children may always pose a risk.

Unless an offender discloses their offence it is impossible to know who may present a risk to children and young people. Vigilance is essential, not only to members of church but also guests visiting the church; any concerning behaviour regarding the welfare of a child should be reported to the safeguarding officer immediately.

## **CATEGORIES, SIGNS AND SYMPTOM OF ABUSE**

There are four categories of abuse described in “Working Together to Safeguard Children”, (2013) from which the following definitions are taken. Please note that the signs and symptoms listed below are not conclusive evidence of abuse.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

#### **Physical Signs**

- Bruises, black eyes and broken bones
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen
- Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns, human bites, scalds and burns

#### **Behavioural signs**

- Obvious changes in behaviour
- Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Behaving aggressively or being disruptive
- Showing fear of certain adults
- Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Using drugs or alcohol

## **NEGLECT**

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

### **Physical signs**

- Abandonment
- Unattended medical needs
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Inappropriate dress, poor hygiene
- Lice, distended stomach, emaciated
- inadequate nutrition, hunger

### **Behavioural signs**

- regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in sessions
- steals food, begs from others
- reports that there is no carer at home
- frequently absent or late
- self-destructive
- extreme loneliness and need for affection
- school dropout (adolescents)

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Physical signs**

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy in female

### **Behavioural signs**

- A marked change in the child's general behaviour.
- Becoming unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive.
- May suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically
- May refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected
- May show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities
- May start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age
- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

### **Physical signs**

- speech disorders
- delayed physical development
- substance abuse
- ulcers, severe allergies

### **Behavioural signs**

- Habit disorder (sucking, rocking biting)
- Anti-social, destructive
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibitions of play)
- Passive and aggressive behaviour extremes
- Delinquent behaviour (adolescents)
- Developmental delay

## **WHY CHILDREN DON'T TELL AND ADULTS DON'T ACT**

It is commonly believed that a child or young person would resist abuse at all costs or immediately tell a trusted adult. In fact children usually need to overcome a number of barriers which may be emotional or intellectual but are very real for them. The majority of children and young people don't tell because often they:

- are scared because they have been threatened
- believe they will be taken away from home and put in care
- believe they are to blame
- think it is what happens to all children
- feel embarrassed and guilty
- don't want the abuser to get into trouble
- have communication or learning difficulties
- may not have the vocabulary to explain what happened
- are afraid they won't be believed

All of us have a natural revulsion upon hearing someone has maltreated a child, especially if it is someone we know, and must resist our inclination to dismiss its possible truth in favour of a more comfortable rationale. The reasons adults do not share their concerns may be because we:

- find it hard to believe what we are seeing or hearing
- cannot believe that someone we know may have behaved in this way
- fear we might 'get it wrong' or make it worse
- fear the consequences of getting it wrong – for the child, young person, their family and/or for ourselves
- simply 'don't want to be involved'
- believe we do not have the information about what to do or who to contact

## **PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IF THERE IS CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD**

### **What to do with disclosures and concerns**

Concerns about a child or young person may present themselves in a number of ways. The flow chart in Section One will guide the response in specific situations. The core actions that should always be taken are:

- take any emergency action needed to alleviate any immediate risk to life or limb (call 999)
- discuss your concerns with your Church Safeguarding Officer /Parish Priest
- make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard or become concerned about (within an hour when possible)
- listen, don't ask any leading<sup>6</sup> questions and treat all information confidentially
- ensure safeguarding action is taken.

All situations of actual or suspected child abuse should be reported without delay to the appropriate agency and to the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser (within 24h) for further advice and support.

### **MAKING A REFERRAL TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE / POLICE**

If it is necessary to make a referral, this will normally be done by the Incumbent, Church Safeguarding Officer or where needed the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- give the social worker / police officer as much detail as possible: names, addresses, descriptions, dates, times, and what was actually said / seen
- distinguish between fact and opinion and between what you have seen and what others have told you
- follow up your contact with the relevant statutory agency by either a letter or email confirming what you have said to them (within 24 hours)
- keep a record<sup>7</sup> of all contact made, including the names of those you have reported to, regarding the concern
- be prepared to have further discussions with social services and / or a police investigation team
- continue to support the child and ensure they know what will happen
- you may need support for yourself - from others in the parish who know what is happening (i.e. the incumbent / Church Safeguarding Officer / church wardens)

Further guidance on reporting concerns and record keeping can be found in “Guidance on Managing Concerns, Reporting and Recording” in the via the additional policy resources in the Diocesan web site.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **CONSENT**

It is important to ensure that children and young people are able to make an informed choice about whether to be involved in specific church activities (i.e. children’s / youth groups). This can be done by sending the children and young people a briefing document or meeting with them before the event / activity and talking them through what it involves. Children and young people should be given the option at any time before or during an event or activity to say if they feel unhappy or uncomfortable with what is happening and they must be listened to. Parental consent must be obtained for all children and young people up to the age of 18 years, unless they are 16 years or over and living and working independently from their parents/ guardians and are not part of the looked after system where the local authority should then be approached. Consent will be needed for:

- the activities the group will engage in, especially when taking place off site or addressing an issue that could be deemed controversial
- the taking and use of any photographs or video clips
- the use of private cars to transport children
- the use of electronic means of communication with children (email, text, social network sites)
- It is not recommended to keep contact with a child or young person outside of agreed church activities - written parental consent should be sought if any activity is to take place outside of church and it must be made clear to parents that the activity is no longer on behalf of the church. The church must also be informed of this agreement.

An example of a consent form is available in the ‘Safeguarding Toolkit’ section on the Safeguarding pages of the Diocesan web site.

## **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

This section of the policy document sets out the Diocese of Blackburn's commitment to working with others to promote and safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults in its community

### **WHEN IS AN ADULT VULNERABLE?**

The Church recognises that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions yet, at some times, may become vulnerable due to pressures, dangers or overwhelming circumstances. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. This may be because, for example they have a disability, mental health issues or dementia. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity.

Government guidance<sup>9</sup> describes a vulnerable adult as, any person over the age of 18 years "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".

Within faith settings it is also recognised as a person who has recently suffered personal adversity making them in particular need of pastoral support. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

- sensory or physical disability or impairment
- learning disability
- physical illness
- chronic or acute mental ill health (including dementia)
- addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties in old age and
- permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity through life events such as bereavement / loss, abuse or trauma

Mistreatment or abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation.

### **WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH BE CONCERNED?**

Every church has members who are or will become temporarily or permanently vulnerable and who may look to the Church for support and care during these times. They entrust themselves to the care of their Christian community in good faith. At these times they may not have the capacity to make decisions which may have consequences for themselves and / or for

others. These may relate to daily care, health, finance or property. The Church has a duty to empower and protect such individuals and is supported by legislation<sup>10</sup> to do so.

All church activities which support an individual deemed vulnerable / at risk must follow these five principles as outlined in the 'Mental Capacity Act', 2005:

1. An assumption of capacity – all adults, even those felt to be lacking in mental capacity, have the right to make their own decisions and must be assumed to have the capacity to make decisions about their own safety unless it is established (on a balance of probabilities) otherwise;
2. Individuals should be supported in making their own decisions – giving all appropriate help and support before considering making any decisions on their behalf;
3. Respect the right to make unwise decisions – recognise that the person retains the right to make seemingly eccentric or unwise decisions;
4. Act in their best interests – decisions made on behalf of a person who lacks mental capacity must be in their best interest and the least restrictive on their basic rights and freedoms;
5. Take the least restrictive option – when making a decision or acting on behalf of a person who lacks capacity, consideration needs to be given to whether it's possible to act in a way that would interfere less with the person's rights and freedoms of action.

## **HOW DO I KNOW IT IS MISTREATMENT OR SIGNIFICANT HARM?**

Abuse or mistreatment is a single or repeated act which violates an individual's human and / or civil rights. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, be an act of neglect or omission, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not given, or cannot give, consent<sup>11</sup>.

The harm can be deemed significant where there is not only ill treatment but impairment and avoidable deterioration to physical, mental, social, sexual or emotional health. The seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear and concerns should be assessed carefully taking the vulnerable person's demeanour and point of view into consideration.

Each situation should consider the:

- vulnerability of the individual
- nature and extent of the abuse
- length of time it has been occurring
- impact on the individual
- risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults

## **WHO MIGHT MISTREAT OR ABUSE A VULNERABLE ADULT?**

Vulnerable adults may be mistreated or abused by a wide range of people including relatives / family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other vulnerable people, neighbours, friends, associates and strangers. The abuse can take place within a caring relationship or when the abuser is not well known to the vulnerable person. It may be accepted or exacerbated by the behaviour or culture within an institution, in which case it is described as institutional abuse. Abuse concerns the misuse of influence or power where control and / or authority can result in harmful or criminal activity. Someone may use their position of influence, power or authority to the detriment of the safety, welfare and general wellbeing of a vulnerable person through ignorance, or with intent and for personal gain - this could be seen as deliberate grooming.

## **GENERAL INDICATIONS THAT ABUSE MAY BE OCCURRING**

It may not always be obvious that a vulnerable adult is being subjected to mistreatment or abuse; and it may not be appropriate to question them at the time. However there may be general indicators that something is amiss and that the adult is unhappy about their situation. Marked change in their behaviour or disclosure of concerns should always be discussed immediately with the Church safeguarding officer.

Some general indicators that may be noticed about the vulnerable person:

- 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
- obvious absence of assistance or attendance

## **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARDS (SABs)**

With the introduction of the Care Act, 2014, each Local Authority now has a statutory duty to put in place a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). SABs will operate in a similar way to Local Children Safeguarding Boards (LSCBs), and will be responsible for undertaking reviews where there is a suspicion that serious abuse or neglect has contributed to the serious harm or death of an individual (serious case reviews). They also have the power to carry out other reviews as they deem required and will liaise with the police and other statutory and voluntary organisations to arrange relevant meetings for information sharing. There is now a legal duty to provide this information and, in the explanatory notes to this Act, it is clear that this could include anyone coming into contact with a named vulnerable adult through their voluntary role or a minister of a church attended by either the vulnerable adult or their family.

The Care Act 2015 sets about clarifying or strengthening policies that are already best practice for a lot of councils, while other elements change the nature of what users and carers can expect from their council in relation to assessment, care payments and eligibility for services.

## **CATEGORIES OF ABUSE FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Nine categories of abuse have been identified. Any or all of these may be carried out as the result of: deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is the act of physical ill treatment. It may include hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, burning, biting, suffocating, and misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. No suspected injury should be ignored, however, care should be taken as not all marks and injuries are caused as a result of abuse. The key to identifying mistreatment or abuse is noticing unexplained marks, or injuries with unsatisfactory explanations. Where an injury occurs often, you should at least question the safety of the environment and what could be done to minimise further risks. Always note the site and type of injury observed so that patterns can be identified.

If however the injury (ies) still give cause for concern discuss the issue with the Church Safeguarding Officer (within 24 hours) to decide if a further intervention is required.

### **Possible indicators of abuse in adults**

- any injury not fully explained
- untreated or poorly treated injuries
- unexplained bruises or welts, particularly in protected areas
- bruises in various stages of healing, clusters forming regular patterns

- any cuts or abrasions
- injuries to head/face/scalp
- broken eyeglasses or frames
- unexplained burns, fractures or lacerations
- malnutrition and dehydration without an illness-related cause; loss of weight
- lack of personal care
- urinary/faecal incontinence
- inappropriate use of medication, overdosing or under dosing
- history of moving GPs or frequently moving between agencies (agency hopping)

## **EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE**

Emotional or psychological abuse is the use of threats or fear of the use of ‘power over’ relationships to deny the vulnerable person’s independent wishes. This includes: threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation and denial of dignity, blaming, controlling, bullying, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal of services / supportive networks. Harassment may include: name calling, victimization and ostracism, unwanted sexual attention, stalking, compromising invitations or gifts, the display of images that are racially/sexually offensive or the suggestion that sexual favours might be advantageous. Visible signs may not be evident, however the impact of emotional mistreatment or abuse should never be underestimated as the deterioration in a victim’s physical or mental health may take a long time to recover from, and may be irreparable.

### **Possible behaviour of vulnerable adult in the case of emotional abuse**

- insomnia/sleep deprivation
- change in appetite, weight gain or loss
- ambivalence to carer
- anger without an apparent cause
- deference, resignation, helplessness, excessive fears
- unexplained paranoia
- self-harming/suicide attempts
- emotional withdrawal – the person becomes uncommunicative or non- responsive
- low self esteem

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse is a sexual act (contact or non-contact) carried out without the informed consent or knowledge of the other individual. Non-contact abuse may include sexual suggestions, salacious exposure to indecent material and indecent behaviour. Contact abuse may include rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting. Victims suffer emotionally and psychologically. If you believe there is any issue about an individual’s

capacity to consent to any relationship, you should seek advice from the Church Safeguarding Officer.

### **Possible indicators of sexual abuse**

- full or partial disclosure
- low self esteem
- nightmares
- signs of depression or stress
- unusual difficulty in walking and sitting
- torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- pain, itching or any injury to genital area
- sexually transmitted diseases/infections
- bites, bruising or any marks on inner thighs or arms
- significant change in sexual behaviour/language
- agitation during personal care/examination
- pregnancy in a person who is unable to consent

***No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or when they are in any position of trust with someone.***

### **NEGLECT**

Neglectful behaviour is any pattern of activity or omission which seriously impairs an individual. This includes: ignoring a need for medical or physical care, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care, religious or educational services, or the deliberate withholding of necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Also denying contact with family, failing to intervene in situations where there is danger to the vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk.

### **Possible indicators of neglect**

- poor physical condition, e.g. rashes, sores, weight loss/gain
- inadequate heating/lighting
- inadequate clothing in poor condition
- malnutrition
- failure to access medical care or give prescribed medication when required
- lack of assistance with eating and drinking
- failure to ensure privacy and dignity
- inconsistent/reluctant contact with health or social agencies
- inappropriate clothing

- sensory deprivation
- poor personal hygiene

## **FINANCIAL ABUSE**

Financial abuse is the wilful use or manipulation of the vulnerable person's property, assets, or monies without their informed consent or authorisation. This can include theft or fraud of monies or possessions, exploitation, pressure or undue influence to change wills, financial arrangements, or the misuse of property, possessions or benefits<sup>12</sup>. You should be alert to the deliberate isolation of a vulnerable person from friends and family resulting in the carer alone having total control.

### **Possible indicators of financial abuse**

- signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the adult's signature or which are signed when the adult cannot write
- sudden changes in bank activity including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money
- inclusion of additional names on an adult's bank account
- issues with Powers of Attorney
- abrupt changes to or creation of wills
- sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a vulnerable person's affairs or possessions
- unexplained transfers of assets to family member or someone outside the family
- numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone should have been paying these for the vulnerable person
- A carer asks financial questions about a person, unrelated to their care
- lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford
- unexplained disappearance of money or valuable possessions e.g. silverware or jewellery

## **DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE**

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 emotional abuse. The impact of discriminatory abuse can lead to significant self-harming and must never be underestimated. The emotional and psychological impact of discriminatory abuse can cause untold damage to the individual, both physically and mentally and in many cases leads to self-harm and tragically in some cases, suicide. Recent cases<sup>13</sup> and inquiry have borne out the fatal impact of discrimination on the grounds of disability.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE**

Institutional abuse is when a culture of poor practice or maltreatment within a setting becomes routine at the expense of good professional practice. It may be exercised through defamatory attitudes, negative stereotyping, and abusive behaviours which are not corrected. Local authorities and churches should promote good practice in adult care.

### **Possible indicators of institutional abuse**

- Lack of respect and dignity;
- Name calling – inappropriate ways of addressing people;
- Inappropriate use of power or control;
- Inability to make choices and decisions;
- Agitation when routine is broken;
- Patterns of challenging behaviour;
- Inappropriate use of power or control;
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Poor standards of care

### **SPIRITUAL ABUSE**

Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in both vulnerable adults and children experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual harm. Churches need to avoid any practice which could be seen as an attempt to ‘force’ religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. Additionally, spiritual abuse may include attempts to direct what people believe and do, and to deny choices.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Domestic abuse is the use of forms of control and / or maltreatment within an intimate or domestic relationship. Types of domestic abuse can be observed in all of the categories listed above.

### **Possible indicators of domestic abuse**

- has unexplained bruises or injuries
- shows signs of feeling suicidal
- becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn
- has panic attacks
- has frequent absences from work or other commitments
- wears clothes that conceal even on warm days
- stops talking about her/his partner
- is anxious about being out or rushes away

## **WHAT TO DO WITH DISCLOSURES AND CONCERNS**

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility and concerns about vulnerable people can emerge in a number of ways. Parish Priests and lay workers should be alert to possible signs of abuse when visiting their parishioners, and if they observe anything that makes them uneasy, should seek advice and report concerns to the appropriate authorities. It is possible that historic abuse could be disclosed as part of the pastoral process. The process for responding to historic abuse is the same as for current abuse (even when the alleged perpetrator is deceased) and advice should be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The safeguarding flow diagram on page 9 will guide your response.

The core actions that should always be taken are:

- take any emergency action needed to alleviate any immediate risk to life or limb
- make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard or become concerned about (within an hour when possible)
- listen, don't ask any leading questions and treat all information confidentially
- discuss your concerns with your Church Safeguarding Officer / Parish Priest
- ensure safeguarding action is taken, supporting the adult, if they have capacity, to make a referral when this is the action they choose to take.

All situations of historic, actual or suspected abuse should be reported without delay to the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser and their advice sought.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Any disclosure made by a vulnerable adult or any concerns that become apparent must be treated with sensitivity and any sharing of information must be carried out on a strictly 'need to know' basis. The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults<sup>14</sup> and Church guidance advises, "Where a vulnerable person is judged to be at risk of significant harm or an adult is likely to harm themselves or others, usually it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting that vulnerable person"<sup>15</sup>.

All concerns therefore should in the first instance be passed to the Church Safeguarding Officer / Parish Priest as soon as possible. It is appropriate to ascertain the wishes of the vulnerable person about what they want to do about the situation, explaining the boundaries of confidentiality. However, care should be taken if telling the vulnerable person what you are going to do could make them more vulnerable or at further risk.

## **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS AND DISCLOSURES**

There are many reasons why individuals do not disclose mistreatment or abuse, perhaps personal or family reasons or fear. Some people blame themselves for what has happened or make excuses for their 'abusers' particularly where they rely on them for care, support, shelter

or companionship. Fear of 'getting a loved one into trouble' or losing contact with them altogether may be very real. Consequently victims may refuse to speak to the police, especially in the initial stages even if the situation is extremely serious.

If someone tells you about mistreatment or abuse or you have concerns about a vulnerable person, your role is to respond sensitively and provide support. Ascertain what the vulnerable person wants to do about the situation and consult the Church Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. The use of diagrams and sketches is often very useful in trying to accurately record a concern. Date and sign your notes and keep them safe.

In emergency situations (where you believe that the adult will be further harmed if left in their current situation) contact the police, ambulance or social care services immediately and inform the Church Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible; the Church Safeguarding Officer should inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Make a record immediately afterwards and always let the police know all that you have seen and done in responding to the situation (within 24h).

Do:

- assure them you are taking them seriously
- stay calm, the person concerned is likely to be anxious and need reassuring
- listen attentively and accept what is being said, your role is to pass on the concern
- let the person tell you in their own words, avoid any assumptions or suggesting explanations
- keep any questions to a minimum
- record what is said and seen using their own words or actions
- let them know that you have a duty to speak to your Church Safeguarding Officer about the situation and that their concerns may have to be shared with others who could have a part to play in protecting them (this should be done within 24 hours)
- reassure them that they will be fully involved in any decisions about what will happen next
- explain that you will try to take steps to protect them from further harm

Do Not:

- press for more details, someone more appropriate may do this at a later point
- be judgmental, jump to conclusions or voice your own opinion
- do not promise to keep secrets or keep complete confidentiality
- discuss the information with the alleged abuser
- attempt to deal with the problem alone, or try to investigate it

These simple actions could help to protect a vulnerable adult against further abuse.

<sup>1</sup> The policy applies to all within the Diocese, paid and unpaid, clergy and laity

<sup>2</sup> The term child is defined in law as a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Therefore the term 'child' is used throughout this policy and procedure and this includes young people.

<sup>3</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013

<sup>4</sup> NSPCC Protecting Deaf and Disabled Children [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)

<sup>5</sup> Note that acceptance of a caution is an admission of the offence and is, therefore, equivalent to a conviction.

- 6 Leading questions are those that suggest a particular answer. Therefore care must be taken not to put words into a child or young person's mouth either by a direct suggestion or in the form of a loaded question.
- 7 a suggested format can be found in 'safeguarding toolkit' on the Diocesan website, this should be updated when necessary and stored securely (in a locked, unmovable cabinet).
- 8 House of Bishops, Promoting a Safe Church: policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England, 2006
- 9 No Secrets (Department of Health) 2000
- 10 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 - the act also introduced a new criminal offence of ill treatment or neglect of a person who lacks capacity;
- 11 No Secrets (Department of Health) 2000
- 12 It is worthy of note that the Fraud Act 2006, section 4, created a specific criminal offence of fraud by a person in a position of trust.
- 13 For example: the case of Fiona Pilkington who killed herself and her daughter Francesca after repeated abuse (2007)
- 14 No Secrets (Department of Health) 2000
- 15 The House of Bishops guidance 'Promoting a Safe Church' 2006