



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Purpose of the Policy

This policy has been designed to provide guidance for those connected to the parish churches in the event that they suspect abuse, or are party to a disclosure of abuse. As parish that is called to be in community with people of all ages including children, vulnerable adults and a number of older people, the PCC recognise that we have a duty of pastoral care.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, and the PCC are committed to doing so; both through education, coherent safeguarding policies, diocesan training and by taking appropriate and timely action when a concern or incident arises. The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding lies with the PSO and TEAM RECTOR they must be informed immediately any issue arises. They are responsible for notifying the PCC and Diocesan Safeguarding Team where necessary.

### Summary of the Policy

Being an open church and a Christian presence in the community it is possible that the parish will encounter children and adults at risk. Parishioner's, congregation members, and church staff may disclose that they are not being treated well, or that they are being taken advantage of. Disclosures of historic nature may also be made. **All disclosures or suspicions of abuse should be promptly discussed with the TEAM VICAR, TEAM RECTOR, CHURCH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER and PSO, and if unavailable the diocesan safeguarding team are available.**

### The Parish Safeguarding Team includes

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Rev Jonathan Haynes - Team Rector   | <i>vicar.cces@gmail.com</i>   |
| Rev Alex Barrow - Team Vicar  | <i>vicar.ases@gmail.com</i>   |
| Rev Ayoob Adwar - Team Vicar  | <i>vicar.stmvm@gmail.com</i>  |
| Ruth Mann - PSO (All Saints) - c/o Safeguarding lead                      | <i>ruthmannuk@yahoo.co.uk</i> |
| Matt Pass - Safeguarding Officer St Mary's                                |                               |
| Sharika Fernando-Ewing, Safeguarding Officer Christ Church [pending]      |                               |
| The Parish Wardens - <i>ex officio</i> - Brenda Morris and Kate Woodhouse |                               |

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality should not supersede the need to protect the individual at risk. Everyone should be made aware that disclosures may be shared within the safeguarding team Care to ensure appropriate action is taken. (see Confidentiality policy)



## Scope of policy

This policy is to be used in conjunction national church safeguarding team and Diocesan Safeguarding guidelines and policies.

[Safeguarding - The Diocese of Southwark](#)

[Diocesan policies and procedures - The Diocese of Southwark](#)

[Links and resources - The Diocese of Southwark](#)

[ASC Section 2 Diocesan policies.pdf](#)

In cases where a member of the clergy or licensed/commissioned minister may be implicated or suspected, referral to the TEAM RECTOR and PSO is mandatory.

In the case of the Team Rector may be implicated or suspected, referral to PSO, PARISH WARDENS and DSA is mandatory.

## Definition of 'Adult at Risk'

The term 'adult at risk' or "adult at risk of harm" replaces "vulnerable adult" and as defined in the Care Act of 2014 refers to an adult aged 18 years or over who may require community care services due to physical or mental disabilities, age-related vulnerabilities or illnesses. This includes individuals unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

An adult at risk includes, but is not limited to:

- Elderly individuals facing frailty or health issues.
- Persons with learning disabilities, physical impairments or sensory limitations.
- Individuals with mental health conditions, including dementia or personality disorders
- Those with long-term illness or substance misuse issues
- Unpaid carers experiencing abuse while providing care and assistance
- Individuals lacking capacity to make informed decisions and in need of support

## Understanding Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights, leading to significant harm. It can manifest in various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, finance/material, neglect, discriminatory or institutional abuse. Recognising these forms is crucial for effective intervention and support.



## **Procedure for responding to suspected abuse or disclosure:**

### **Immediate action at any church site**

In cases of immediate risk to the adult at risk, emergency services should be contacted by dialing 999. Following this, the TEAM RECTOR must be informed.

### **Church Officers and Volunteers, community**

Anyone encountering suspected abuse or neglect must report their concerns promptly to a member of the safeguarding team. If unavailable, contact the DSA. If any member of church staff or officer is suspected then this must be reported to the TEAM RECTOR and PSO.

### **Stipendiary, PTO Clergy, Licensed Commissioned Ministers, Church Staff, Directors of Music**

Anyone observing or suspecting abuse or neglect must report their concerns promptly to the TEAM RECTOR and Church Safeguarding officer and PSO. If unavailable, consultation with the DSA is required.

If the TEAM RECTOR is involved in any way, then the Church Safeguarding officer, PSO, Parish Wardens and DSA must be informed.

### **DSA- Southwark Diocese Safeguarding**

referrals / general

enquiries: [safeguarding@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@southwark.anglican.org) / Telephone: 0207 939 9441 (Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm)

Safeguarding training enquiries: [safeguardingtraining@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:safeguardingtraining@southwark.anglican.org) / Telephone: 0207 939 9476

Admin and DBS enquiries: [safeguardingadmin@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:safeguardingadmin@southwark.anglican.org) / 020 7939 9478

**Emergencies:** If you suspect you or someone is at risk of immediate harm, phone 999.

If you are worried that a child, young person, or adult is at risk of being harmed, abused or neglected, contact social services within your local authority area

### **Royal Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

[Children's services - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

[Single Point of Access - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

**What to do on hearing a disclosure.**



A disclosure is when a person tells you something that has affected them, for example about instances of abuse. This may be current or historic.

The Church is called to be a safe space for all people to be themselves and say what they think. As staff member, officer or volunteer we often find ourselves in positions of trust and pastoral care, in so far as we are a Christian Neighbour. People may feel comfortable and safe, and they might discuss things that concern or affect them. This could include concerns involving another member of the church.

Some things that may be shared with you include self-harm and physical, sexual or emotional abuse, and you may (in children and vulnerable adults) notice signs of neglect. Children and younger adults may also have a concern about something that has happened online or through social media.

Discussing these things may be difficult to hear and tough to deal with. Following these dos and don'ts will help you offer them the best support possible. If you are concerned you should speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

In the first instance

**Do:**

- Listen carefully and trust that what's being said is correct.
- Reflect back key phrases of what's been said, to check your understanding.
- Offer immediate support and reassurance.
- Record a factual account of the conversation immediately, using the person's actual words wherever possible. Sign, date and keep the record safe.
- Share the report with a member of the SG team immediately report the disclosure.
- Ask open questions to clarify what specifically is being disclosed. And check whether they have any concerns about this being shared so steps can be taken to mitigate any ongoing risks.

**Don't:**

- Tell the person that you can keep it a secret. Do explain that you may need to pass the information on to keep them, or other people, safe.
- Panic, overreact, be judgmental or make assumptions.
- Investigate, repeatedly question or ask the individual to repeat the disclosure.
- Discuss the disclosure with people who don't need to know.

**Referral**



Following consultation, those handling the case should

Ensure the person understands the rationale behind a referral and its implications.

Assess the individual's capacity to make decisions regarding intervention.

Respect the individual's wishes unless overriding factors necessitate intervention, such as public interest, duty of care, or lack of mental capacity.

If intervention is warranted and consent is obtained, the staff member should communicate the nature of the referral to the adult at risk. This should be done in line with the parish confidentiality policy (see parish policies).

In cases of refusal, but where abuse is suspected and capacity is lacking, Adult Social Services in London Borough of Richmond upon Thames should be alerted promptly. The PSO and DSA will also be able to advise.

This can be done via an online form:

[https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/adult\\_social\\_care/safeguarding\\_adults/report\\_adult\\_abuse](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/adult_social_care/safeguarding_adults/report_adult_abuse)

**Adult Social Services Access Team in London Borough of Richmond upon Thames contact details:**

- **Telephone: 020 8891 7971**
- **Email: [adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk)**

**Out of hours cover from 1700-0800 on weekdays and 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays: Adult Social Services London Borough of Richmond Emergency contact details:**

**Telephone: 020 8744 2442**



Police involvement is mandatory in cases where criminal activity is suspected, such as sexual abuse, physical harm, cruelty, financial abuse, or unusual circumstances suggesting organised or institutional abuse.

### **Regulated health and social care settings**

If the adult at risk is allegedly abused in a regulated health or social care setting by a member of staff who is employed by a regulatory body, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) must be contacted.

### **Mental Capacity Act and consent**

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 underpins the safeguarding process concerning individuals lacking capacity. A mental capacity assessment will be carried out by a social worker to ascertain if the person has the capacity to make decisions regarding the abuse allegation and consent to a safeguarding investigation. They may then appoint an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA). If you suspect that someone is being deprived of their liberty in a care home or hospital the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards provide a framework for protecting people who lack the mental capacity to make the decision as to whether they receive care and/or treatment in a care home.

### **Training**

**It is mandatory for Clergy/Licensed, Commissioned and Affirmed Ministers/Staff/ church officers/and volunteers in contact with children and vulnerable adults to attend and update training as per guidelines of the Diocese of Southwark. This is managed in parish by the PSO who reports to the PCC and TEAM RECTOR.**

### **Risk Reduction Measures**

Safeguarding awareness is mandatory for all clergy, ministers, staff, church officers, PCC and Consultative Group members and volunteers. The Parish safeguarding policy is available to volunteers via the church websites safeguarding pages and volunteers undergo Disclosure and Barring Services checks in line with the guidelines of the DSA and Diocesan policy.

Encouraging individuals to access information, advocacy schemes, and support services can empower them to protect themselves from abuse. Those in leadership in the church should remain vigilant, acknowledge risk factors and seek support when necessary.

**A risk assessment should be completed before all activities in church take place.**

### **Logging and monitoring**



All safeguarding alerts will be logged by the Parish Safeguarding team, in accordance with confidentiality policies. Investigations will be conducted as swiftly as possible, ideally within 2 weeks, and outcomes recorded as upheld or inconclusive. Anonymous reports will also be investigated. Guidance on practice should be sought from the DSA.

### **Agreements and contracts**

Any contract for anyone worshipping and subject to safeguarding restrictions are compiled and risk assessments done in partnership with the DSA, PSO and TEAM RECTOR. The PCC is updated on safeguarding matters in accordance with the parish confidentiality policy and in line with the DSA guidelines. The risk assessment should note who will be briefed and files kept securely.

### **Chaperones and Leaders**

Children must have a DBS checked chaperone in addition to a group leader for activities.

**In any safeguarding concern, consultation with the Team Rector and PSO is paramount. If unavailable the DSA should be contacted promptly the details can be seen on page 3 of this policy.**

## Children at risk



**A child** - is defined as a person who is aged under 18, and includes an unborn child.

**A child at risk** - is a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

It is important to note that the use of the term 'at risk' means that actual abuse or neglect does not need to occur, rather that early interventions to protect a child at risk should be considered to prevent actual harm, abuse and neglect.

The two conditions necessary to demonstrate a child is at risk of abuse or neglect ensures that protection is provided to those with care and support needs who also require actions to secure their safety in the future. Risk of abuse or neglect may be the consequence of one concern or a result of cumulative factors.

**Harm** is defined as ill treatment; this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse.

It also includes the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment) and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

**Types of harm include but are not limited to:**

- **Physical abuse** - Hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** - Threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others.
- **Sexual abuse** - Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Financial abuse** - This category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be, for example, not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments, or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **Neglect** - Failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.



In addition to the above, harm can also include the following acts which are not included in the Care Act:

- **Cyber bullying** - This occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person -online, or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages. It can also involve using online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating, or isolating another person. It includes various different types of bullying, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special education needs and disabilities. The main difference is that, instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face to face, they use technology as a means to do it.
- **Forced marriage** - This is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will; in the case of children, a person is only able to give their consent if they are over the age of 18 years. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse but this does not apply to the under 18s, unless they are in Scotland which is governed by a different legal system and those 16 years and over may give their consent. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.
- **A “mate crime”** - Is when “vulnerable people and children are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them” (Safety Network Project, ARC). It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the young adult or child knows, and it often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Care Reviews relating to young people and children with a learning disability who were seriously harmed, or even murdered, by people who purported to be their friend.
- **Radicalisation** - The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.

### What is the Difference Between Safeguarding Children and Child Protection?

The differences between the two phrases are subtle but important. Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

**Child protection involves the work and engagement of key agencies such as:**

- Police.
- Children’s social care.
- Health services.
- Local authorities.
- Housing.
- Probation services.

All organisations that work with or come into contact with children should have safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that every child, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm.



Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are fulfilled acknowledging the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**These organisations include but are not limited to:**

- Schools, colleges and other educational providers.
- Early Years and Childcare.
- Health and designated health professionals.
- Public Health England.
- Sports organisations and clubs.
- Social care services.
- Voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations (churches) and private sector organisations.
- Housing services.
- Police and British Transport Police.
- Prison Service.
- Probation Service.
- Children's homes.
- Youth offending and secure establishments.
- UK Visas and Immigration, Immigration Enforcement and the Border Force.
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services.
- Armed services.

## Children with special and additional needs (from the Diocesan policy)



Children and young people who have special needs may, through physical or learning disabilities, require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding or mobility. They may behave in a non-age appropriate way.

Others may experience difficulties in communication through sensory disability but have no learning disability. Yet others may have mild or moderate learning difficulties, some of which may be specific, which affect their ability to process information, communicate and socialise. Whatever the special needs, it is important to remember that every child is different and assumptions should not be made about them.

The church can have a pivotal role in empowering and including children and young people with special needs in all-age and all-ability activities, in ways which they may not encounter in other areas of their life. To help this process, the following may be of assistance:

- ask the child as well as their parents or carers about their specific needs and how they can be met in the church or activity context
- if you divide your activities by age, consult with the child and their parents or carers about which is the most appropriate group for them to join; churches usually have more flexibility than schools, for instance, but equally the child's self-esteem may be damaged if placed in a younger group.
- ensure that all leaders involved with the child are aware of their specific needs; consider whether you need an extra leader in order to include the child or young person and whether they need, where possible, the same adult to work with them consistently
- if a child needs personal assistance, ensure that this is given by a leader of the same gender
- develop appropriate disability awareness with all leaders, including the use of appropriate language
- when planning programmes, take into account the special needs of children in the group
- be clear about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not – if a child's behaviour is known to be challenging, negotiate with the child and their parents or carers about the sanctions for unacceptable behaviour
- ensure your buildings are accessible (for instance, with ramp access, disabled toilets, hearing loop system).

Children and young people with special needs may be at greater risk of abuse and there is therefore a need for extra vigilance on the part of workers:

- children or young people with disabilities may have or seek more physical contact and may require higher levels of personal care.

- the definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities, and can include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation



- children may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.

## Information

Diocese of Southwark: A Safe Church (section 9)

## National Safeguarding Team definitions of different forms of abuse

This section is taken from the Church of England's fact sheet on types of abuse: <http://bit.ly/CoETypesOfAbuse>.

The lists of signs and symptoms are not exhaustive – there may be other signs or symptoms not listed which could be indicators of abuse. Similarly, some of these signs and symptoms will not always be indicators of abuse. The lists under each category of abuse contain examples of possible indicators. The presence of one or more of these signs or symptoms does not necessarily confirm abuse.

**Please note that many types of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated as such.**

## Legislation that Underpins Safeguarding

The child protection system in the UK is the responsibility of the government of each of the UK's four nations - England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Each government is responsible for passing legislation, publishing guidance and establishing policy frameworks that organisations are required to implement and comply with.

## Relevant legislation and statutory guidance includes:

### In England -

- Children Act 1989.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- Children Act 2004.
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Chief executive officers and senior management in these organisations have a statutory executive responsibility to ensure that they and all staff implement and comply with safeguarding policies and procedures; take personal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people; and co-operate with other agencies to protect individual children and young people from harm.

All board members including non-executive members must have a level of knowledge of safeguarding at least equivalent to all staff.

Information



## **Policy Note on professional practice.**

Whereas the Parish of Mortlake with East Sheen a Church of England parish is not structured as a board with CEOs and senior management or similar, the Parochial Church Council is a formal body of Trustees of a registered charity 1132303.

The PCC of the Parish of Mortlake with East Sheen is committed to the highest levels of safeguarding ensuring the dignity and agency of everyone, who we believe is made in the image of God.

The Parish of Mortlake is a member of Inclusive Church. [www.inclusive-church.org](http://www.inclusive-church.org)

### **Further notes**

Under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 all authorised clergy, Bishops, Archdeacons, licensed Readers and lay workers, Churchwardens and PCCs must have “due regard” to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops (this will include both policy and practice guidance).

Diocesan safeguarding information is available online via the link in this document. Additional information can be found in section 21 of the Guidelines for Clergy Conditions of Service 2025, a copy of which is kept in the parish office.



## **Parish of Mortlake with East Sheen Policies and Procedures for church activities**

### **Policy for Safeguarding Children**

We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- are youth-friendly and child-friendly and nurture their positive development
- enable children and young people to be active contributors to the church community
- protect children and young people from actual or potential harm
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child or young person is paramount
- all children (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- abuse of children can occur in all communities and is most likely to occur within families and by people known to the child
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:
  - In all our activities -
  - valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people
  - fostering and encouraging best practice by setting standards for working with children and young people, in co-operation with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities

### **Policy for Safeguarding Adults who may be vulnerable**

We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- encourage adults who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible, to choose how to lead their life, and to be active contributors to the church community
- protect adults who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

We recognise that:

- everyone has different levels of vulnerability, and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives
- all adults who may be vulnerable (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- abuse of adults who may be vulnerable can occur in all communities and is most likely to occur within families and by people known to them
- working in partnership with adults who may be vulnerable, their carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.



In all our activities, we will endeavour to safeguard adults who may be vulnerable by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting adults who may be vulnerable
  - fostering and encouraging best practice by setting standards for working with adults who may be vulnerable, and boundaries for acceptable behaviour, in co-operation with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities
- Procedures for Activities with children and young people These recommendations apply to all churches' activities with children or young people - for instance, Sunday School, crèches, holiday clubs, youth clubs
- They apply as much to Sunday morning 'in house' activities as to activities which you run in and for the local community They are designed to protect the children in your care, as well as your leaders.

## Leadership

- Always have at least two leaders, no matter how small the group. Small groups with single leaders may meet in adjoining rooms with an open door between. If a child or young person is being interviewed alone, have another adult nearby
  - Try to ensure the leaders' genders reflect the group, i.e. endeavour to have at least one male leader if there are boys present, and at least one female leader if there are girls present
  - At least two leaders (preferably unrelated) need to be present from before the first child arrives until after the last child leaves
  - No person under the age of 18 years should be left in charge of a group of children of any age
  - Young people aged 16 and 17 years may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult leader, who is responsible for ensuring that good practice and the safeguarding children procedures are followed
  - Recruit all regular leaders of activities with children according to the 'Selecting, recruiting and supporting staff' procedures - including taking up references and obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure
- 
- Parents or carers who are not regular leaders in the church can assist with occasional activities such as holiday workshops, but should always work in the company of two nominated and known leaders, and be responsible to an appointed leader
  - Ensure all leaders are aware of the health and safety issues relating to the activity, including procedures for fire and first aid
  - Give regular leaders a copy of the relevant sections of the safeguarding children policy and procedures, and offer them support and training in their role.

## Staffing levels

These are the minimum required staffing levels for children's groups. More staff may be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

For every age group, always a minimum of two leaders.

0-2 years 1 person for every 3 children

2-3 years 1 person for every 4 children

3-8 years 1 person for every 8 children

Over 8 years 1 person for the first 8 children and then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children.



## Administration for activities

- The Safeguarding Officer should make and update annually a list of all paid staff and voluntary workers in the church who have regular, direct contact with children, and ensure that full recruitment procedures have been followed for each of them
- Leaders should register every child or young person attending each specific activity with a form which includes their name, address, date of birth, contact number for their parent and carer and consent to the activity. Store the forms together in a confidential place, and always have them available for leaders of the activity throughout each session
- Leaders should keep an attendance register for each activity of every child and leader in attendance at each session
- There should always be a phone throughout each activity for emergencies; this may be a mobile phone
- All confidential records about leaders, and confidential records relating to allegations of abuse against members of the congregation, and specific concerns about children or young people, should be stored in a locked filing cabinet, with access limited to the Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent
- Record all accidents in the Accident Book, which should always be accessible on the premises.

### Running of activities

- Ensure children and young people are in sight of an adult leader at all times
- Check areas of the building out of sight, e.g. toilets, regularly during sessions
- Accompany young children to the toilet. Children and young people should have access to toilets without having to be in contact with other users of the premises
- As a general principle, parents or carers of children under 11 are responsible for taking and collecting their children to an activity for which they have registered
- Parents or carers must be clearly informed of the place and time of meeting; and, if the meeting is off-site, when children will return
- For children over 11, it is the parents' or carers' responsibility to make arrangements with their child for collection or travelling home independently
- If a leader has concerns about the collection arrangements for a child over 11, they should address these directly with the parents or carers
- In the event of a child not collected as arranged, the parent or carer should be contacted by phone and asked to collect the child. If contact with the parent is not possible, two leaders should wait with the child until contact with parent or carer has been established. Only in exceptional circumstances should the child be escorted home. If a child appears to have been abandoned, statutory services must be contacted
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable - and what is not - from children and young people.



## **Programme of activities**

- Ensure the activities are appropriate and safe for the age range
- Enable children to be consulted in the programme planning if possible
- Consider setting ground rules agreed by the group for participating in activities
- Films shown in a group activity must not be rated higher than the age of the youngest child in the group (e.g. 12 or 12A only to children of 12 or over).

## **Procedures for Activities with adults who may be vulnerable**

These recommendations apply to all churches' activities with adults who may be vulnerable - for instance, during worship on Sunday mornings, on outings, in groups and when visiting at home. They apply as much to church 'in house' activities for regular attendees as to activities which you run in and for the local community.

They are designed to protect the adults who may be vulnerable in your care, as well as your leaders.

## **Active membership and inclusion**

Create an environment where all people, including those who are vulnerable, are encouraged to participate in and contribute to all aspects of church life.

## **Respect**

- Always respect the adult who may be vulnerable and all his or her abilities:
- Ask about personal preferences, forms of address, how much help might be needed
- Ensure his or her individuality - e.g. always use their name
- Give the same respect as to others
- Respect differences - e.g. in appearance, ideas, personalities, ability
- Don't assume or withhold physical contact - ask first
- Have a proper conversation using appropriate language - e.g. ask about interests.

## **Choices**

- Recognise the choices vulnerable adults make, even if they may appear risky
- Give vulnerable adults the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances
- Consult with the vulnerable adult about who s/he wishes to be included in decisions affecting his or her life
- Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise a person's independence
- Give vulnerable adults a choice about where they sit, and what activities they participate in
- Ensure that there is clear access to all areas which are available to members of the congregation - e.g. where coffee is served, the bookstall, where meetings are held.



## Language and visual resources

- Always use positive language when referring to disability, age and mental health
- Consult with individual vulnerable adults to identify their specific needs
- Use proper sign language for deaf people and those with learning disabilities, as appropriate
- Install a loop system
- Have available service books and sheets in large print
- Use suitable font size and colours on all printed material
- Ensure that everyone has access to presentations etc., by offering a clear 'sight line'
- Make information on notice boards accessible - take into account height, words and images and size.

## Premises, and administration of activities specifically targeted for vulnerable adults

- Check the building regularly for accessibility - doors, steps, toilets, sight lines, lighting, acoustics, colours of walls, doors, paintwork
  - The Safeguarding Officer should make and update annually a list of all paid staff and voluntary workers in the church who have regular, direct contact with vulnerable adults, and ensure that full recruitment procedures have been followed for each of them.
  - For specific activities or groups for vulnerable adults, register every person attending each activity with a form which includes their name, address, and contact number for their carer. Store the forms together in a confidential place, and always have them available for leaders of the activity throughout each session.
  - For vulnerable adults who may have erratic behaviour patterns, be clear about what behaviour is acceptable - and what is not - during activities, and discuss if appropriate with carers
  - Keep an attendance register for each specific activity of every vulnerable adult and leader in Attendance.
  - Always have a phone throughout each activity for emergencies; this may be a mobile phone
  - All confidential records about leaders, and confidential records relating to allegations of abuse against members of the congregation, and specific concerns about adults who may be vulnerable, should be stored in a locked filing cabinet, with access limited to the Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent.
  - Record all accidents in the Accident Book, which should always be accessible on the premises.
- ### Leadership of activities
- For specific activities or groups for vulnerable adults, always ensure that there are at least two people in a leadership role
  - All regular leaders of activities with vulnerable adults should be recruited according to section 5: Selecting, recruiting and supporting staff, including taking up references and obtaining a DBS enhanced disclosure.



## Renewal and review

This policy is upheld by the PCC and reviewed annually before the APCM.

Date of review by PSO and Safeguarding Team **January 28<sup>th</sup> 2026**