

Section E

Safeguarding Adults

Policy for Safeguarding Adults

The Diocese of Leicester affirms the Policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England as set out in Promoting a Safe Church, the main points of which are set out below.

Summary of the Policy (page ix of Promoting a Safe Church)

- ▶ We are committed to respectful pastoral ministry to all adults within our church community.
- ▶ We are committed, within our church community, to the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people.
- ▶ We will carefully select and train all those with any pastoral responsibility within the Church, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures where legal or appropriate.
- ▶ We will respond without delay to any complaint made that an adult for whom we were responsible has been harmed, cooperating with police and the local authority in any investigation.
- ▶ We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate healing ministry.
- ▶ We will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.
- ▶ We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a vulnerable person.

Adopted by Diocesan Synod 23 November 2013

Principles underlying the Policy (paragraph 2.1, page 5 of Promoting a Safe Church)

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. The Church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers. A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- ▶ be treated with respect and dignity;
- ▶ have their privacy respected;
- ▶ be able to lead as independent a life as possible;
- ▶ be able to choose how to lead their life;
- ▶ have the protection of the law;
- ▶ have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background;
- ▶ be able to use their chosen language or method of communication;
- ▶ be heard.

The House of Bishops Policy Statement on safeguarding adults in the Church of England (paragraph 2.2, page 5 of Promoting a Safe Church)

The Church of England is committed to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety. Everyone, whether they see themselves as vulnerable or not, will receive respectful pastoral ministry recognizing any power imbalance within such a relationship.

All church workers involved in any pastoral ministry will be recruited with care including the use of the Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure service when legal or appropriate. Workers will receive training and continuing support.

Any allegations of mistreatment, abuse, harassment or bullying will be responded to without delay. Whether or not the matter involves the church there will be cooperation with the police and local authority in any investigation.

Sensitive and informed pastoral care will be offered to anyone who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired: help to find appropriate specialist care either from the church or secular agencies will be offered.

Congregations will often include people who have offended in a way that means they are a continuing risk to vulnerable people. The risks will be managed sensitively with the protection of adults and children in mind.

Definitions for use with those who may be vulnerable (paragraph 1.3, page 2 of Promoting a Safe Church)

Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Further information

Further information including definitions, procedures and recommendations for good practice are contained in Promoting a safe church.

Two points should be noted:

The definition of a vulnerable adult for the purposes of obtaining a DBS check is covered in the Safer Recruitment Policy (June 2013) and is narrower than that in Promoting a safe church.

The procedure for safer recruitment provided in Promoting a safe church is superseded by the Safer Recruitment Policy (June 2013).

Implementing a policy in a parish (paragraph 2.5, page 7 of Promoting a Safe Church)

Everyone, as a citizen, has a responsibility for the safety, well-being and protection of others. Everyone within the church community also has a responsibility to ensure that there is a welcome for all people, including those seen as vulnerable. A policy about the safeguarding of vulnerable people should be the concern of the whole congregation and therefore should be presented to the Parochial Church Council for adoption and be reaffirmed at least annually. This is an opportunity for church members to remember their commitment to one another.

Everyone should be alert to situations where those who might be vulnerable are exposed to unacceptable risks. Those who work with vulnerable people often find themselves in challenging situations and need the support, prayers and encouragement of everyone in the congregation. Sometimes workers may be confronted with difficult behaviour on the part of those with whom they are working; sometimes workers may have to face difficult decisions about incidents that may need to be reported to the statutory authorities. The congregation and church workers need to be clear about the procedures which should be followed when there are concerns about people being harmed or abused.

Those who work most closely with vulnerable people in lunch clubs, day centres, Bible study groups or as pastoral visitors, etc., are in a unique position to get to know them. As a result workers might learn about things that give cause for concern or they may see others, sometimes including fellow workers or church members, behaving in ways that may be described as abusive or potentially harmful. When visiting a care home, for example, a visitor may observe another resident showing signs of abuse. Workers should have a good knowledge of the guidelines for good practice and should be implementing them; they should know what to do if they learn of any incidents where vulnerable people are being mistreated or abused.

Not all concerns about the welfare or safety of a vulnerable person need the public authorities to be involved; sometimes it may be that the concern focuses on behaviour and attitudes that are not immediately harmful and then the matter should be dealt with through training or discussion. The choices of the adult concerned should if at all possible be accepted. The response to any concerns should always be proportionate and appropriate to the issue.

Parishes should do their best to provide a safe place for those who may be vulnerable. Where the parish organizes special activities or groups for vulnerable people, care should be taken to ensure that those who work in these activities are carefully appointed, supported and supervised. Recruitment to other positions of trust should be carried out sensitively but thoroughly to try to prevent inappropriate appointments being made.

The Parochial Church Council together with the incumbent carries a duty of care for the safety of those who attend or use the church. The Council should, with the help of the diocese, ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the need to safeguard vulnerable people and that it is being implemented and has appropriate resources. The Council needs to find ways to communicate the policy to the whole congregation. Clergy in particular need to be aware of the pastoral needs of vulnerable people, their carers and those that work with them.

It is recommended that a named individual be appointed by the PCC to act as the key person to speak on behalf of vulnerable people both within the congregation and to outside bodies. Ideally the appointed person should have some experience in this field. They should be recruited using the Safer Recruitment Policy. Such a person may be the most appropriate person to receive information about concerns and will need to listen carefully, possibly discussing the matter with the adult concerned and making a decision about whether these concerns should be passed to an outside statutory body such as the police or the local authority Adult Services. The lead person should always liaise with and seek advice from the designated person in the diocese. If there is clear evidence that the vulnerable person has suffered abuse, then this should be reported as soon as possible to local authority Adult Services as the lead agency. All Adult Services Departments (or similar) have policies about the safeguarding of vulnerable peoples and will work in multi-agency collaboration with the health service and police.

Some parishes may find it difficult to appoint someone to undertake this responsibility. It may be more appropriate for this to be considered as an appointment within each deanery. However it must be remembered that each PCC is legally responsible for the activities in its own parish.

A model policy statement on the safeguarding of adults in a parish (paragraph 2.6, page 9 of Promoting a Safe Church)

Policy on the Safeguarding of Adults in the Church

This statement was adopted by (Parish) at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on

This policy will be reviewed each year to monitor the progress which has been achieved.

1. We recognize that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
2. As members of this parish we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
3. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
4. We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
5. The parish commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
6. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
7. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
8. The parish is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
9. The parish adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese.
10. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies.

Incumbent

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

Date