

Diocese of Sheffield

Safe Church Policy

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 checks and the Independent Safeguarding Board 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.

Resources and Information

Relevant publications

House of Bishops, Promoting a Safe Church: policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England, 2006. Church House Publishing

House of Bishops: Protecting All God's Children: The Child Protection Policy for the Church of England, 2004 Church House Publishing

Time for Action: A report of Sexual Abuse Issues. 2002. Church House Publishing.
Care Act 2014 and related guidance from www.dh.gov.uk/care

Disclosure and Barring Service from www.gov.uk/dbs

Statutory Agencies

Social Care (Adult Services)

.....
(please enter your local office number and out-of-hours numbers)

Police - public protection unit

999 for emergencies

Each service also has a direct number for these protection units.

National Health Service

999 for emergencies

0845 4647 for NHS Direct (nurse advice)

Diocesan contacts

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:

Linda Langthorne
01709 309149 or 07871 796682

Archdeacon with responsibility for Safeguarding:

Steve Wilcockson,
01709 309100

DBS enquiries and processing:

Sue Lamprell
01709 309151

General Helplines

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Tel: 0808 200 0247

Website: www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Parentline Plus - Helpline for parents

Tel: 0808 800 2222

Email: parentsupport@familylives.org.uk

Website: <http://familylives.org.uk>

Samaritans

Tel: 116 123

Website: www.samaritans.org

Stop It Now - Helpline for abusers, potential abusers and others concerned with sexual abuse

Tel: 0808 1000 900

Email: help@stopitnow.org.uk

Website: www.stopitnow.org.uk

Women's Aid

Tel: 0808 2000 247

Website: www.womensaid.org.uk

Voluntary organisations for people who may be vulnerable

Action on Elder Abuse

Tel: 080 8808 8141

Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Age Concern

Website: www.ageconcernyorkshireandhumber.org.uk

Age UK (Formerly Help the Aged)

Tel: 0800 678 1174

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Tel: 0300 222 11 22 (National Dementia Helpline)

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Action on Disability

Tel: 020 7385 2098 / 7381 2042

Website: www.actionondisability.org.uk

MENCAP – advice for those with learning disabilities

Tel: 0808 808 1111

Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk

Website: www.mencap.org.uk

MIND – The National Association for Mental Health

Tel: 0300 123 3393 or text 86463

Website: www.mind.org.uk

RNIB – The Royal National Institute for the Blind

Tel: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID)

Tel: 0808 808 0123 or SMS: 0780 0000 360

Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Scope - the main national organisation for those with cerebral palsy

Tel: 0808 800 333

Email: helpline@scope.org.uk

Website: www.scope.org.uk

Livability (formerly The Shaftesbury Society)

Tel: 020 7452 2000

Email: info@livability.org.uk

Website: www.livability.org.uk

Through the Roof - Christian body who help to improve access of disabled people to the Church

Tel: 01372 74995

Email: info@throughtheroof.org

Website: www.throughtheroof.org

Resources for adult survivors of abuse

Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse - Support and self-help for survivors

Website: www.christiansurvivors.com

MACSAS - Support and networking for survivors of sexual abuse by those in ministry

Tel: 08088 01 03 40

Email: helpline@macsas.org.uk

Website: www.macsas.org.uk

NAPAC - National Association for People Abused in Childhood

Tel: 0808 801 0331

Website: www.napac.org.uk

RESPOND - For survivors or abusers with learning difficulties

Tel: 0808 808 0700

Website: www.respond.org.uk

Survivors UK - Support for male survivors

Tel: 0203 598 3898

Website: www.survivors.org.uk

S:Vox - Support and self-help for survivors of any form of violence or abuse

Email: svox@me.com

Website: www.svox.org.uk

Pastoral care

Holy Rood House: Centre for Health and Pastoral Care - Offering counselling and psychotherapies

Tel: 01845 522850

Website: www.holyroodhouse.org.uk

Useful websites

Dept. for Education and Skills

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education-and-skills

Dept. of Health

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

Church of England

www.churchofengland.org

Diocese of Sheffield

www.sheffield.anglican.org

Section 1 - Introduction

In 2006, the Church of England published “Promoting a Safe Church: the policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England”. This is a very welcome development in our mission to make church a safe place for all. The diocese has a well-established policy and guidelines for safeguarding children and young people. The issue of safeguarding adults, and particularly vulnerable adults, is one which has frequently arisen in training events for safeguarding children.

“Promoting a Safe Church” is a policy which is keen to recognise that we all are, at some times in our lives, vulnerable, and that we are all potential victims of the abuse of power. While the policy takes into account the different needs and concerns for those with disabilities or with specific vulnerabilities, this policy is one which promotes the safeguarding of all. It is important not to divide people into those who need to be protected, and those who do the protecting: we all share common vulnerabilities and the potential for being harmed. This is why the church has not called this policy the Vulnerable Adults Policy, but rather is concerned with the concept that safeguarding is a policy for us all.

The following Guidelines and advice on implementation is informed largely by the national document “Promoting a Safe Church”. It has also been informed by the Diocese of Ripon & Leeds “Taking Care” handbook, the Church of England document “Responding to Domestic Abuse”, and government guidance in “Safeguarding Adults: a national framework of standards and good practice in adult protection work”. We have also borne in mind the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland report “Time for Action”, concerned with the churches’ response to those who have been sexually abused in a church context.

We have been slow to recognise that abuse of children does take place in a church context. It is, still, to some extent, something we would prefer not to recognise. This is even more the case with the recognition that adults too can be, and are, abused within a church setting. In the government document “Safeguarding Adults”, it affirms that, ‘all adults should be able to retain independence, wellbeing and choice, and to access their human right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect’. The church is also committed to this aim: it is incumbent on all of us working with adults in any sort of pastoral relationship to have at heart this message.

This policy is only words until it is put into place in parishes. The implementation therefore places responsibilities on parishes which are set out later in the guidelines. These are parallel to many of those required by the Safeguarding Children Policy. We are aware that training and assistance will be needed, and suitable training for those undertaking a Safe Church role in parishes will be offered. We hope that this will be welcomed as an opportunity to ensure that our churches really are safe places for us all.

Safeguarding Management Group

Support for parishes and the diocese is available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Practice in the diocese is overseen by the Safeguarding Management Group comprising representatives from parishes, the diocese, lay representation and local Statutory Services.

Section 2 - Parish Implementation

Everyone, as a citizen, has a responsibility for the safety, wellbeing 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 should be presented to the PCC 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 they are concerned about people being harmed or abused.

Those who work most closely with vulnerable people in lunch clubs, day centres, Bible study groups or 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 vulnerable 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 organises 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 PCC together with the incumbent carries a duty of care for the safety of those who attend or use the church. The council should 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.

A named individual should 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. This person should be recruited using the “recruitment procedures” section in this document, and should apply for a DBS check. This person may be the most appropriate person to receive information about concerns and will need to listen to all concerns carefully, possibly discussing the matter with the adult concerned. In such cases the procedure in the section “What to do if you suspect abuse” should be followed. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should also be contacted.

It is possible for smaller parishes and those in a united benefice to appoint one person for the group, provided that it is clear that each PCC is legally responsible for the activities in its own parish.

Each parish should adopt the “Parish Policy Statement” (Appendix 1), send a copy to, and inform the Safeguarding Administrator, Church House, Rotherham of the details of the appointed representative.

Section 3 - Useful Definitions

Church worker

For the purposes of this policy the term church worker has been used as a generic term and means anyone doing a task on behalf of the church. It applies to clergy and laity, whether paid or voluntary.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is not an absolute concept but a relative one, which may change with time and according to circumstance. All human beings are subject to change and chance happenings which may affect their capacity to manage themselves and their situation. All human beings have different strengths and weaknesses: all have different capacities and disabilities. While some people may appear to be strong we know that anyone can be vulnerable and at different times in our lives and in different circumstances strengths can change and grow, diminish or disappear. Some people because of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others, and it is our duty as Christians to recognise this and support those who are vulnerable in a way that affords them as much independence and autonomy as possible. We must do this in a way that allows compassion and empathy without undermining dignity.

Some of the factors which may increase vulnerability include:

- Sensory or physical disability or impairment
- Age
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- Addiction to alcohol or drugs
- The failing faculties in old age
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, e.g. bereavement, previous abuse, trauma or family breakdown
- In hospital/care home, in prison, homeless
- A refugee, asylum seeker or immigration status
- Having a relationship with someone in a position of trust
- Subject to harassment/bullying

Adults in need of Safeguarding

The Care Act 2014 has updated the definition of adults who fall within the duties of Safeguarding. This now applies to an adult who:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including both adult and children. However, a check is just one part of robust recruitment practice. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The DBS is responsible for:

- Processing requests for criminal records checks (DBS checks)
- Deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed or removed from a barred list
- Placing or removing people from the DBS children or adults barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The guidance on Safer Recruitment (2016) is approved by the House of Bishops and can be accessed at: <http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/UserFiles/File/Safeguarding/safer-recruitment-practice-guidance-2016.pdf>

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety; free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted. This includes, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

Abuse

This term covers abuse, bullying and harassment. These categories are not watertight and can overlap and converge on each other, and the seriousness can be difficult to assess. The consequences for those who are victims of such behaviour must always be taken into account.

Different forms of abuse

Spiritual aspects of abuse

Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly to those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership, penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. (See "What to do if you suspect abuse" and "Allegations Policy" sections).

Careful supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Sexual abuse

A sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other individual is abuse. Such behaviour includes contact and non-contact abuse. The issue of informed consent is a fraught one and would need to be carefully investigated. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or have a position of trust.

Non-contact abuse may include sexual remarks and suggestions, introduction to indecent material, or indecent exposure.

Contact abuse may include rape, indecent assault, being forced to touch another person, sexual intercourse, or being pressurised into consenting to sexual acts.

Physical abuse

The ill-treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury, is regarded as physical abuse. Instances might include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, inappropriate restraint, withholding or misuse of medication, squeezing, biting, suffocating, poisoning, drowning or killing. It could include racially or religiously motivated attacks. A requirement for someone to work in an unsafe environment can be construed as physical abuse.

Emotional or psychological abuse

The use of threats, fear or the power of the carer's or other adult's position to negate the vulnerable person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional or psychological stress. Bullying, sexual and racial harassment would also come into this category if physical harm were not used. It includes lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation, making someone feel worthless, lack of love or affection, threats, verbal abuse, humiliation, blaming, controlling, pressurising, coercion, fear, or ignoring the person.

Other behaviours which may take place within a working relationship include public or unreasonable criticism, insults and shouting, ignoring a person's wishes or point of view, setting unreasonable work targets, removing areas of responsibility, or undervaluing a person's efforts.

Harassment may include name calling, victimisation and ostracism, unwanted sexual attention, stalking, compromising invitations or gifts, the display of images that are racially or sexually offensive, or the suggestion that sexual favours might further promotion prospects.

Financial, material or legal abuse

The wilful extortion or manipulation of the vulnerable person's legal or civil rights must be construed as abuse. Such activity may include misappropriation of monies or goods, the misuse of finances, property or possessions, withholding money, the exploitation of a person's resources or embezzlement. Such abuse may involve the use of a position of authority or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts, to leave legacies or change a will.

Neglect

Neglectful behaviour is any pattern of activity by another person which seriously impairs an individual. Neglect can include: failure to intervene in situations where there is danger to a vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk, not giving personal care, deliberately withholding visual or hearing aids, withholding food, drink, light and clothing, restricting access to medical services, denying social, religious or cultural contacts, denying contact with family, lack of appropriate supervision.

Self Neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour where individuals neglect the basic care of themselves. Examples include neglecting personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Domestic abuse

Any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes emotional/psychological, physical, sexual or financial abuse and stalking/harassment, honour based violence, female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

Modern slavery

This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment.

Discriminatory abuse

Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practice within an organisation.

Section 4 - Promoting Good Working Practice

Promoting a safe church is not so much a matter of procedures and rules, although these are also needed, but rather working together, both helpers and those with differing vulnerabilities, to provide the right environment for everyone to grow in Christian faith. It is important that those working together agree on standards of conduct and how activities are to be carried out. This is particularly necessary if those adults involved in the activity cannot speak for themselves. Attitudes of respect and consideration should be developed in all work with adults, ensuring that everyone is able to maximise their life chances and independence. Privacy and confidentiality are important to everyone and especially people who are dependent on others for aspects of their everyday living.

Premises

Church buildings will be inspected to meet Health and Safety standards and should allow people with disabilities to participate as much as possible. Each parish should ensure it carries out its duties under the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005. Briefly, issues of access, visibility, audibility and toilet facilities are among the items that should be addressed. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Health and Safety Policy document should also be consulted and its advice implemented.

Duty of care - Insurance advice

All church workers have a duty of care to those to whom they minister. National and diocesan good practice guidelines should be followed to ensure that insurance cover is maintained. The insurers should be contacted as soon as it is clear that a claim may be made against a diocese or parish.

Prevention of abuse in the Church

Prevention is best achieved by both the careful training of workers and the provision of supervision or mentoring for all those working with vulnerable people. Church workers need to understand that they hold a position of power and influence, even if they do not feel that this is the case.

As in the case of protecting children, a culture of informed vigilance is one where abuse is less likely to take place. This requires that we all accept the possibility that people can be abused by individuals and by groups within the church, and to develop an awareness of such situations.

Prevention can be particularly difficult with those who may be vulnerable, because of the range of people who are in contact with them and the variety of ways in which churches and others try to be of help or befriend people who would otherwise be isolated. The desire to provide a safe environment should not get in the way of allowing people to develop their own friendships and contacts - some of which may be felt to be risky. People have to be free to make mistakes.

Risks are increased when people have individual contact with those who are vulnerable.

Having people working together in groups can be one way in which harmful behaviours can be prevented. This is not always the case, however, and there have been many instances of a culture of abusive behaviour or attitudes developing in organisations or amongst groups of workers.

Worship

There are times and occasions when it is appropriate to hold services which have a focus on people with learning or other disabilities. In such services the liturgy should not be demeaning or patronising but should have the same aims as any other form of worship. Consultation with those who will attend, their families and their carers will help to ensure that everything is appropriate to the occasion.

Regular worship in church should take account of the wide range of requirements of any congregation and plan accordingly.

Possible Indicators of Abuse

The following are possible indicators that a vulnerable person is being abused. They are not necessarily conclusive, and care should be taken not to misinterpret. If a worker becomes aware of the following indicators, they should discuss this with their line manager, incumbent, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or the Archdeacon. (See the “What to do if you suspect abuse” or “Allegations Policy” section)

Possible indicators of physical abuse:

- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, bruising, welts, discolouration, black eyes, burns, broken bones and skull fractures
- Untreated injuries in various stages of healing or not properly treated
- Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene
- Dehydration and/or malnourishment without an illness-related cause, loss of weight, soiled clothing or bedding
- Broken eyeglasses or frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, or signs of being restrained
- Inappropriate use of medication, over dosing or under dosing
- The individual telling you they have been hit, slapped or mistreated

Possible Indicators of emotional/psychological abuse:

- Feelings of helplessness
- Hesitation in talking openly
- Implausible stories
- Confusion or disorientation
- Anger without an apparent cause
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- The person becoming emotionally upset or agitated
- Unusual behaviour (sucking, biting or rocking)
- Unexplained fear
- Denial of a situation
- The person becoming extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive
- The individual telling you they are being verbally or emotionally abused

Possible indicators of financial abuse:

- Signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the individual's signature or which are signed when the individual cannot write
- Any sudden changes in bank accounts including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money
- The inclusion of additional names on an individual's bank account.
- Abrupt changes to or creation of wills
- The sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a vulnerable person's affairs or possessions
- The unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family
- Numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone is supposed to be paying bills for the vulnerable person
- Unusual concern from someone that an excessive amount of money is being expended on the care of the vulnerable person
- Lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford
- The unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions such as art, silverware or jewellery
- Deliberate isolation of a vulnerable person from friends and family resulting in the caregiver alone having total control

Possible indicators of neglect:

- Dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment
- Rashes, sores, lice on the vulnerable person
- Inadequate clothing
- Untreated medical condition
- Poor personal hygiene
- Over or under medication
- Lack of assistance with eating or drinking
- Unsanitary and unclean conditions

Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- Bruises around the breasts or genital area
- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infection
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- The vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped

Possible indicators of Domestic Abuse

- Seem afraid or anxious to please their partner
- Feel like they have no power over their life
- Describe feeling like they are 'walking on eggshells' around their partner
- Check in often with their partner to report where they are and what they are doing or receive frequent phone calls
- Mention their partners temper, jealousy or possessiveness
- Have frequent injuries with the excuse of 'accidents'
- Lack a support/social network and be isolated from family
- Have very low self esteem
- Use alcohol/drugs to cope

Other indications that abuse may be occurring:

- The vulnerable person may not be allowed to speak for themselves, or see others, without the caregiver (suspected abuser) being present
- Attitudes of indifference or anger towards the vulnerable person
- Family member or caregiver blames the vulnerable person (e.g. accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act)
- Aggressive behaviour (threats, insults, harassment) by the caregiver towards the vulnerable person
- Previous history of abuse of others on the part of the caregiver
- Inappropriate display of affection by the caregiver
- Flirtations, coyness, etc. which might be possible indicators of an inappropriate sexual relationship
- Social isolation of the family or restriction of activity of the vulnerable person by the caregiver
- Conflicting accounts of incidents by the family, supporters or the vulnerable person
- Inappropriate or unwarranted defensiveness by the caregiver
- Indications of unusual confinement (closed off in a room, tied to furniture, change in routine or activity)
- Obvious absence of assistance or attendance

Code of Conduct: Guidelines for those in positions of trust or exercising pastoral ministry with vulnerable people

All those involved in pastoral ministry, whether paid or unpaid, clergy or lay, should be working to these following guidelines. Following these guidelines should both ensure that vulnerable people are protected and that workers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

These guidelines are not intended to replace those contained in the guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, and should be read in conjunction with those guidelines.

Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters. Church workers should be aware of their language and behaviour. For example, innuendos or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the worker should be discerning about the motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist.

The church worker should consider in advance:

- The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, and the worker's dress
- The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby)
- The physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past
- Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction
- The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone, especially in the evening
- The personal safety and comfort of all participants
- Establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration
- The appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted

Pastoral Relationships

Exercising any kind of ministry involves church workers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the wellbeing of others and how they ensure their own wellbeing and safety. People in positions of trust necessarily have power, although this may not be apparent to them, therefore respecting professional boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making this guidance even more necessary.

- Church workers should exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal relationship or family relationship
- Church workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise
- Church workers who exercise a healing ministry should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work
- Church workers should recognise their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice). In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise
- Church workers should avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships
- Church workers should treat those with whom they minister or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice
- Care should be taken when helping with physical needs, washing and toileting, always respecting the choices of the individual concerned
- Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations should be handled sensitively. Church workers need to recognise such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements should be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned
- Church workers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs

Behaviour outside work and ministry

- In church ministry, behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. Church workers are expected to uphold Christian values throughout their lives

Record keeping and privacy

- Church workers should consider keeping a daily record of pastoral encounters to include date, time, place, subject and actions to be taken
- The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of abuse or mistreatment
- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years)
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation

Working with colleagues

The standards maintained within a pastoral relationship are equally relevant in relationships with colleagues. Harassment or bullying should never be condoned. All church workers need to be aware of the possibility of stress within the work place. The needs of family must be acknowledged and all who work together should acknowledge the boundaries between work and home, allowing sufficient time for relaxation and holidays. Everyone who works with vulnerable people should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to discuss their work.

- Church workers should be aware of the responsibilities, function and style of other church workers and encourage cooperation and consultation between workers in the tasks they do
- Colleagues should not be discriminated against, harassed, bullied or abused for any reason
- Colleagues should not be penalised for following this guidance, or for taking action regarding others and this guidance
- When leaving office or relinquishing any task, church workers should relinquish any pastoral relationship, except with the agreement of a successor
- Church workers should know to whom they are accountable and be regularly mentored by them or another person who can assist. Such mentoring is especially necessary for those undertaking a continuing individual pastoral ministry of counselling, or when their ministry takes them outside normal church work
- Church workers should ensure that their tasks can be carried out by another if they are ill or otherwise unable to fulfil their responsibilities

Sexual conduct

The sexual conduct of church workers may have an impact on their ministry within the church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Workers should be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

- Church workers must not sexually abuse any adult or a child
- Church workers must take responsibility for their words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood) or to talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and refraining from such contact if in doubt about the person's wishes
- Church workers should follow the church's discipline on sexual matters
- Church workers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and should refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults
- Church workers should avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted

Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest
- Money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated lay people
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague where it should be decided whether they could be accepted
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved

What to Do If You Suspect Abuse

Many clergy and lay workers will visit vulnerable people as part of their ministry. If you suspect that someone is being mistreated in some way you should always take responsibility for doing something about your concerns. Doing nothing is not an option.

Some vulnerable people will find it difficult to disclose abuse and may need help to tell their story to someone they trust. An independent interpreter should be used if there is any kind of communication challenge. Careful listening is most important, without 'leading' someone with suggestions or closed questions that may confuse the story. If someone discloses abuse, it is important to receive the information without making a judgement or making a comment that may lead the individual to believe his or her word is doubted. Do not promise to keep information confidential but explain what and why you are going to do.

Talking to a member of the clergy, a line manager, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, a senior member of a voluntary organisation or social or health care services may help to clarify the issues. A referral to the local authority may then be necessary.

Under no circumstances should anything be done that might be construed as an investigation of the allegation: action of this nature may contaminate evidence should a formal investigation by the police or the local authority be instigated.

Many vulnerable people rely on their carers for support, shelter and care and therefore the reporting of mistreatment needs to be undertaken with sensitivity.

All local authorities have a designated person in Adult Services to whom serious concerns should be referred. Details are available through local authority websites or directories.

Allegations against church workers

Church workers themselves may be suspected of mistreatment of an adult or another worker. Workers may not be following the code of conduct for church workers (see "Code of Conduct" section for guidelines which should be followed). If mistreatment of a child is suspected, the Allegations Policy in the Safeguarding Children Policy must be followed. If the abuse of an individual appears to be a criminal offence, the police must be informed and a referral made to the Local Authority. Consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) is essential, and a decision will be made as to whether the worker should be suspended during any investigation. (See Appendix 6 - Allegations Policy for further details)

If the allegation concerns a member of the clergy, the relevant Archdeacon and the Bishop must be informed, and the diocesan procedures including the Clergy Discipline Measure will be followed.

With less serious matters such as inappropriate behaviour or attitude not amounting to abuse, the worker's immediate superior should approach the worker and discuss the concern with them with the aim of improving the situation. The worker should be informed that disciplinary proceedings might be brought or their position as a volunteer reviewed if there is no improvement.

Record keeping

It is recognised that people may not make a complaint about abuse until many years after the event. It is therefore important to make careful, factual records in all circumstances where it is considered that abuse might have taken place. It is recommended that records containing issues of child or adult abuse should be held indefinitely: the National Guidelines suggest a minimum of 50 link years. The people involved in such records should be informed that a record is being kept and if possible all parties should agree the record.

Matters following an investigation

An investigation into harm of an adult may result in a criminal conviction, disciplinary penalties, dismissal or resignation from a voluntary or paid position. Support of all concerned will need to be continued throughout the incident. Sometimes in less serious cases, the person will need appropriate training and extra supervision in order to be able to continue in their position.

Any abuse within the church also creates second-order victims, those who experience a betrayal of the trust they have placed in those holding office of any kind. Members of congregations can, for example, feel let down and hurt when one of their leaders offends. Special care is required when a congregation is recovering from the effects of disclosure of abuse.

Great care will need to be taken if a person who has been convicted of any relevant offence wishes to be employed, redeployed or continue to attend church. The diocesan procedures for risk assessment following the receipt of a blemished disclosure will be followed and coordinated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). Therefore, any blemished DBS certificate must be shared with the DSA (with the individual's permission) in order for a risk assessment to be undertaken, to consider whether the information provided on the DBS has an impact on the role they are applying for.

Responding to Disclosures by Those Who Have Experienced Misuse of Power, Abuse or Harassment

After experiencing abuse, at some time during the healing process, many people will want to consider further action beyond personal acceptance of what has happened. Such action may involve deciding to tell a trusted friend, partner, parent or perhaps a member of the clergy. However, some people have experienced further hurt when the recipient has not been able to cope with the disclosure and has responded inappropriately. Seeking some kind of therapeutic help may be an option and it may be that within such help, or in discussions with friends, consideration is given to what else needs to be done.

Abuse, which thrives on secrecy, loses some of its power to harm when this secrecy is broken. Nevertheless, whom to tell, when, and for what purpose needs careful thought. Being able to talk to a close friend or relative, who is able to hear, support and care, is for many people the most useful help in healing. For some, this trusted relationship is with a counsellor, clergy person or other professional.

At some point in the personal healing journey many survivors consider what they should do about the abuser. Some may wish to confront the abuser either personally or by letter, for others this is impossible, but they still may wish to ensure that the abuser is not in a position to harm others.

One of the consequences of speaking to others about the abuse is that they may have a responsibility to act. A family member may need to be sure that others in the family are safe. A friend may be aware that the abuser is involved with children or vulnerable people and be concerned for them. Organisations that work with children or vulnerable people will have policies with procedures that need to be followed if someone in the organisation becomes aware of allegations of abuse.

For some it will be important that the person is brought to account for their actions through the criminal justice system, and if a criminal act has been committed this may be a necessary action that the church must take in order to protect others. Following an investigation, the alleged abuser may be charged and taken to court. It takes a lot of courage to give evidence in court and to accept the decision of the jury. Nevertheless many people feel relieved whatever the outcome that they have done their best and spoken out in public.

If the alleged abuse has taken place within the church, the survivor may wish to make this known to someone in authority, and this should be facilitated even in cases where a formal complaint is not made. If a formal complaint is made written statements will be required. If the case comes to a tribunal evidence may need to be given in person. It is important that the survivor is supported throughout this process: deciding what to do, making the formal complaint and giving evidence if necessary.

Working With Those Who Present A Risk

It is inevitable that there will be people worshipping in our churches who have been convicted of offences that indicate they pose a risk to children, other adults and particularly to vulnerable adults. Some have been members of church communities before their convictions, others have developed a faith during imprisonment and are seeking to join church communities on release. There may also be members of the church community who have not been convicted of an offence, but whose behaviour has led to disciplinary action in employment, and possibly inclusion on the DBS 'Barred List' list. Their offences may not necessarily have been sexual: some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse, harassment or bullying. The church's duty to minister to all imposes a particular responsibility to such people. This responsibility must not however compromise the safety of children and vulnerable adults within the church community.

When it is known that a member of the congregation has been accused or convicted of abusing children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) must be consulted, so that a safe course of action can be agreed; which is likely to be a safeguarding agreement between the offender and church.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) follows a national procedure, whereby:

- A frank discussion will be held with the offender, explaining that a small group from the church leadership will need to know the facts in order to create a safe place for him or her. Those needing to know are likely to include the clergy, churchwardens, child and adult safeguarding representatives, and anybody coordinating activities for vulnerable groups so they do not inadvertently ask the person to volunteer
- No-one else in the congregation should be informed and the highest levels of confidentiality should be maintained
- In order to establish clear boundaries for both the protection of the young or vulnerable people a written safeguarding agreement may need to be prepared. This will always be coordinated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- The agreement should be maintained and reviewed. Changes to the agreement should only be agreed after consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. If the offender will not comply, or breaks the agreement, further action may be necessary, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will need to liaise with the statutory agencies

In some cases offences only come to light after many years. In such cases sensitivity and discretion will be required. However, the risk to children or to vulnerable people will still need to be considered and the above process will need to be followed.

Section 5 - Recruitment Procedures for Paid Employees and Volunteers

All PCCs should establish a system so that those who are recruited to work with either children or young people and should follow the latest guidance on Safer Recruitment, available on the Diocesan website at:

<http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/UserFiles/File/Safeguarding/safer-recruitment-practice-guidance-2016.pdf>

- The PCC should use the guidelines to establish procedures for recruitment and appointment of any parish workers, paid or voluntary, and decide who will be involved in this process. It should be decided who is responsible for taking up references, seeking a confidential declaration, and validating the identity of those applying for a DBS check. These need not be the same person and need not be the same person for children's workers as for workers with vulnerable adults. All those undertaking a pastoral role within the parish should be assumed to be working with vulnerable adults and follow the recruitment process
- When groups identify potential new recruits for work with either children or vulnerable groups they should be referred at an early stage for the above procedures to be followed
- In general people should be involved in the life of the church for at least six months before being asked to help with children or vulnerable people. This can be waived in specific circumstances where people have a track record in another parish or have a professional post in similar work
- People may visit groups on an occasional basis where it would be unrealistic to recruit them using this process. They should be supervised and in no circumstances should they be responsible for the group
- Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 assisting as helpers should be treated as visitors to the group: they should be supervised and supported and should not be responsible for the group

Guidelines for recruitment procedures for those working with vulnerable adults or for those with pastoral responsibilities

1. For any position involving pastoral work with church members, including those positions with vulnerable adults, provide a job / role description form. An application form should be completed by the applicant, along with the Confidential Declaration
2. Take up the references provided by the applicant. One reference should be from the previous employer or previous church if at all possible. Never accept open references. (eg to whom it may concern).

3. If the references or declaration give any cause for concern, the incumbent or person responsible for running the group or activity should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
4. All references and the Confidential Declaration must be stored in a secure place and access available only to those who need to be involved: for instance, the incumbent, the group leader and those who form the parish Taking Care or Safeguarding group.
5. Have an appropriate interview: at least one of those interviewing should be the leader of the group in which the applicant will be employed. It is desirable that a member of the parish Safeguarding group should also be involved.
6. All interviewees should be provided with a copy of the appropriate Safeguarding policy and sign a statement that they will abide by it.
7. Depending on the nature of the group or task, an application must be made where the role is eligible for a DBS check. (see Safer Recruitment Guidance)
8. The decision to appoint should be made conditional on a probationary period and confirmed in writing after satisfactory completion of that time.

Section 6 - Care of Adult Survivors of Abuse in the Church

Many adults in the church may be suffering from the effects of abuse - abuse they suffered in childhood or as adults, abuse of different kinds. The church has a responsibility to support those people who may feel very vulnerable and whose vulnerability may open them up to further abuse. The severity of the abuse has to be seen in terms of the consequences for the victim, whether at the time or subsequently.

Studies into the prevalence of abuse vary in results, depending on the definitions of abuse used and the style of the surveys and/or interviews used. Recent research has shown that something like one in five girls and one in eight boys had been the victims of sexual abuse. Practitioners are also aware of a considerable under-reporting by boys, and that for both boys and girls many never disclose. Whatever the exact picture, we can be sure that in most congregations there will be people who have been abused as children.

Some survivors are able to cope well with life and to live apparently 'normally'. However, some of that group may well be suffering and may be unable to say what the problem is, or may feel unease and a lack of a sense of joy and peace.

Some survivors may show a range of symptoms such as:

- Repeated bouts of depression
- Exhibiting anger and hostility - or being unable to connect at all with feelings
- Behaving like a victim - experiencing low self-esteem, constantly feeling inadequate and apologising
- Inability to get close to people, or wanting to be inappropriately close
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares
- Tending to cut off from reality at times
- Exhibiting fears, phobias and anxiety
- Self-harming (done as a coping mechanism, not as attention-seeking)
- Tending to feel an inappropriate amount of guilt and shame
- Sometimes relying on smoking, drugs, alcohol or medication to cope
- Experiencing hallucinations and/or flashbacks of the abuse
- Sometimes moving from one abusive relationship to another

Loss of trust

Adults and children who are abused can lose trust in those around them, especially if the abuse was within the home. The loss of trust will profoundly affect the life of the survivor. They may decide (often unconsciously) never to trust anyone ever again - and this is likely to affect their faith and relationships.

Why survivors do not disclose

Many (if not most) survivors say nothing about the abuse for many years. Some have buried their memories so deeply within themselves that they have 'forgotten' what happened - especially if the abuse happened when they were very young. Memories may be triggered in different ways, for example:

- Hearing about abuse on television
- Being in another abusive situation such as finding difficulties with a domineering employer
- Being in a situation where they feel powerless
- Feeling vulnerable, ill, under stress, or suffering from burnout
- The death of their abuser or of one of their carers
- The birth of their own child

Owing to a number of factors, many victims do not feel able to report their abuse close to the event and reported abuse therefore often relates to events from years before, leading to difficulties about finding any proof or corroborating evidence about what happened. Responsibility for deciding whether case proceeds to court lies with the police; where cases do go to court, the experience can be traumatic for both children and adults and they are likely to need considerable support.

Pastoral care of survivors

An adult (or indeed a child) disclosing abuse is in a vulnerable state. Above all they need someone to listen to them, and also to believe them. They may need to be 'heard' in different contexts and over several years.

If there is a complex pastoral situation when an adult discloses abuse (e.g. a young person in their twenties accusing a church worker of sexually abusing them), it would be appropriate to find support for different parties involved, and their selection should be done with sensitivity to the needs of those involved.

There is no quick fix for healing from abuse. It is crucial that survivors:

- Are not pushed into forgiving their abuser too early, or on occasions at all. Forgiving the abuser is a complex process, (not a one-off event) and considerable damage can be done by treating forgiveness as something they must do unreservedly and now
- Are not put in a position of feeling even more guilty than they already do. Survivors tend to feel that the abuse was all their fault (particularly when told this by the abuser)
- Are accepted as themselves, however full of anger they may be. Anger can be seen as one step along their journey towards healing
- Are given a sense that those within the church community who know about the abuse are 'with them' along the road to recovery. The journey can be very long and supporters are essential

Survivors and church

Many survivors have problems with attending church and it can be that some of those on the fringes of church communities include survivors

There are some specific things that can be difficult:

- Saying the Lord's Prayer (believing that they must forgive immediately or God will reject them)
- Specific words can trigger unwanted feelings or images, such as 'Father', 'sin', 'let Jesus come into you', 'overshadow' etc.
- The Peace can frighten survivors because they often do not want to be touched, particularly hugged
- The emphasis on sin can be so difficult that some survivors leave the church altogether
- Anointing and touch is very difficult for someone whose body boundaries have been violated

Holy Communion can be extremely problematic:

- Words such as 'blood' and 'body' can trigger memories of the abuse
- Some can't cope with anyone behind them so queuing to get to the altar is difficult
- Having to get physically close to others might lead to unwelcome smells, such as deodorant, after shave, or the smell of alcohol
- It can be hurtful to kneel with a man standing over them delivering wine at crotch level

Those who have been ritually or spiritually abused face particular difficulties. Triggers may include ritual symbols and equipment such as the altar, candles, chalice, crosses and crucifixes, the sacrificial lamb, etc. People abused by those in ministry may have been told it was ordained by God, Spirit led, etc. Sensitivity, care and ideally informed input are needed to help people work through these issues to discover the liberating truth of the Gospel.

The sense of pollution is frequently internalised. It can take a long time (if at all) for survivors to overcome this feeling of contamination. Some survivors may even feel that if they go to church they will 'pollute' the service for others; such is their feeling of guilt and shame.

It is important to recognise the vulnerability and possible 'childlike' state of survivors, especially when they are in crisis or the early stages of healing. They can be over-compliant and easily manipulated. Abuse of power within pastoral care is a real danger here.

Inappropriate responses to survivors

There are examples of inappropriate responses to survivors in the “Time for Action” report (see “Resources and Information” section).

It is inappropriate to:

- Tell a female survivor it is her fault she lost her virginity
- Insist a survivor must forgive before he or she comes to communion
- Say to them, “It was all so long ago, why don’t you forgive and forget”
- Expect a survivor to move towards recovery without considerable support
- Tell a survivor that they cannot work with children or young people “because abused people abuse others”
- Have unrealistic expectations of healing such as, “we’ve prayed for you over a year now so you must be better”
- Try to arrange for the survivor to meet with the perpetrator or suggest reconciliation is a good thing - you could put someone in real danger
- Try to counsel survivors without having sufficient knowledge or awareness yourself of the dynamics and issues of abuse
- Use touch or anointing without clear boundaries and informed consent

Survivors need time to work on their feelings and be able to accept that:

- It was not their fault
- They have not committed the unforgivable sin
- They have no need to feel guilt and shame
- God loves them unconditionally

**Diocese of Sheffield
Safe Church Policy
Parish Policy Statement on Safeguarding Adults in the Church**

This statement was adopted by (Parish)
at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on (Date). This policy
will be reviewed each year to monitor progress achieved.

1. 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.
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

Diocese of Sheffield
Volunteer Role Description

Parish of

.....

Post

.....

.....

Name of Supervisor

Contact number

Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

Range of work to be undertaken

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Diocese of Sheffield
Volunteer Application Form

Parish of

To be completed by all church workers with pastoral responsibilities

The PCC is responsible for the acceptance, and where applicable, the accreditation of all workers with pastoral responsibilities.

Every worker must fill in a copy of this form, which will be retained by the responsible clergy.

This form is confidential and will be seen only by the clergy, group leader or line manager, and the Safeguarding Group of the PCC

Full Name

Date of Birth

Telephone No: Day

Evening

Address

.....

.....

.....

How long have you lived at the above address?

Previous Address (If less than two years at current address)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Church Currently Attended

Name of Vicar or Minister

Details of previous relevant experience:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Details of any relevant training or qualifications, with dates and venues:

.....

.....

.....

Anyone appointed as a church worker will enter a probationary period. Workers will agree to undertake any necessary training and preparation.

Are you prepared to undertake appropriate training? YES / NO

References

Please give the details of two people who are prepared to supply a reference below. At least one of these should be a previous employer, or member of the clergy from a previous church. All references will be taken up.

1. Name:	2. Name:
Position / Relationship:	Position / Relationship:
Contact No:	Contact No:
Address:	Address:

I agree to complete a Confidential Declaration, and to apply for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (if appropriate).

Print Name

Signed

Date

Diocese of Sheffield Confidential Declaration Form

This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will be seen only by those responsible for the appointment and, when appropriate, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. All forms will be kept securely under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. If you answer yes to any question, please give details, on a separate sheet if necessary, giving the number of the question you are answering.

- 1 Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence (including any spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)?
Please tick YES NO

Declare all convictions, cautions, warnings or reprimands however old. Posts where the person is working or coming into contact with children or vulnerable adults are exempt from the 'Rehabilitation Act 1974'. Convictions abroad must be declared as well as those from the UK.

- 2 Have you ever been cautioned by the police, given a reprimand or warning or bound over to keep the peace?
Please tick YES NO

- 3 Are you at present under investigation by the police or an employer for any offence?
Please tick YES NO

- 4 Has your name been placed on the DBS Barred List (for Children or Adults) barring you from working with children of vulnerable people?
Please tick YES NO

- 5 Have you ever been found by a court exercising civil jurisdiction (including matrimonial or family jurisdiction) to have caused significant harm * to a child or vulnerable adult, or has any such court made an order against you on the basis of any finding or allegation that any child or vulnerable adult was at risk of significant harm from you?
Please tick YES NO

- 6 Has your conduct ever caused or been likely to cause significant harm * to a child or young person under the age of eighteen, or put a child or young person at risk of significant harm?
Please tick YES NO

- 7 To your knowledge, has it ever been alleged that your conduct has resulted in causing significant harm * to a child?
Please tick YES NO

* Significant harm involves serious ill-treatment of any kind including neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or impairment of physical or mental health development. It will also include matters such as a sexual relationship with a young person or adult with whom you had pastoral responsibility.

If yes, please give details, including the date(s) and nature of the conduct, or alleged conduct, and whether you were dismissed, disciplined, moved to other work or resigned from any paid or voluntary work as a result.

Declare any complaints or allegations made against you, however long ago, that you have significantly harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Any allegation or complaint investigated by the Police, Children's Services, an employer or voluntary body must be declared. Checks will be made with the relevant authorities.

8 Has a child in your care, or for whom you have or had parental responsibility, ever been removed from your care, been placed on the Child Protection Register or been the subject of a care order, a supervision order, a child assessment order or an emergency protection order under the Children Act 1989, or a similar order under other legislation?
Please tick YES NO

All these matters will be checked with the relevant authorities.

9 Have you any health problem(s) which might affect your work with children or vulnerable adults?
Please tick YES NO

Declare in confidence any health issues that may affect your ability to work with children or adults. This question is primarily intended to help you if you subsequently need to withdraw from work, e.g. because of a recurring health issue.

10 Have you, since the age of eighteen, ever been known by any name other than that given below?
Please tick YES NO

If yes, please give details of any previous names.

11 Have you, during the past five years, had any home address other than that given below?
Please tick YES NO

If yes, please give details of all previous addresses in the past 5 years, on a separate sheet if necessary.

Declaration

I declare that the above information (and that on the attached sheets **) is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. (** Please delete if not applicable)

Signed.....

Date.....

Date of Birth.....

Full Name.....

Address.....

.....

Please return completed form to:

.....

All information declared on this form will be carefully assessed to decide whether it is relevant to the role applied for, and will only be used for the purpose of safeguarding children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Before an appointment is made, applicants will be asked to provide a satisfactory check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (where appropriate). Consult with your incumbent or safeguarding/safe church coordinator for details of the process.

Diocese of Sheffield
Policy Acceptance Form

Parish of

To be completed by the church worker.

I confirm that I have read the Diocesan / PCC's Safe Church Policy.

I will do my best to carry out the policy, and will seek help from the group leader, safe-guarding representative, incumbent or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser if there are things I do not understand, or if I become concerned about a vulnerable adult with whom I am working.

Print Name

Signed

Dated

A copy to be placed on the group file and a copy given to the church worker.

Diocese of Sheffield Allegations Policy

Key principles

- All staff and volunteers working with vulnerable adults in the diocese must know who to contact to report concerns or an allegation that a church worker may have harmed an adult (please refer to the Safeguarding Children's Policy when an allegation is made that a church worker may have harmed a child or young person)
- The Local Safeguarding Board procedures should be followed as closely as possible
- No action should be taken that could undermine or jeopardise a subsequent statutory investigation. Examples of this are: checking an individual's story, questioning other people who may have been involved

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) should be informed as soon as an allegation is made. The DSA will liaise with a Safeguarding Officer in Adults Social Care and, where required, the relevant statutory bodies will investigate. It is important that the church takes allegations very seriously and deals with them promptly and within the bounds of confidentiality. Careful records should be kept.

Dealing with allegations made against clergy, staff or volunteers

When the allegation concerns behaviour contrary to the Code of Conduct the following process should be followed:

- Allegations against clergy and lay ministers holding the Bishop's licence should be referred to the Bishop, either directly, or indirectly through the Archdeacon or Warden of Readers as appropriate. The DSA will also be informed
- Allegations against volunteer staff should be referred to the clergy responsible for the parish, or other organisation, who will then inform the DSA
- If the allegation concerns the possible commission of a criminal offence the police will be informed, either by the recipient of the allegation or the DSA if that is considered appropriate

The Safeguarding Officer in Adult's Social Care will be informed by the DSA of the allegation. The DSA will discuss with the Safeguarding Officer whether any further details are needed and will consider the following factors:

- Does the allegation indicate that the person has:
 - Behaved in a way which has harmed or may have caused harm?
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence?
 - Behaved in a way that indicates s/he may be unsuitable to continue in post?
- Which may lead to:
 - A police investigation
 - A social care enquiry and assessment
 - Consideration of disciplinary action by the employer

If these criteria do not apply, and depending on the evidence and individual circumstances, it may be the case that no further statutory action is taken but further action by

the church may be required.

Employment issues

Since 1st October 2004 employers have been required by law to comply with minimum dismissal and disciplinary procedures, which in most cases will involve a three stage process;

1. The employer notifies the employee in writing of the alleged disciplinary matter and invites the employee to attend a meeting. The employee must be told the basis of the complaint and given a reasonable time to respond, and no action (except suspension) may be taken until the meeting has been held.
2. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting, at which he or she is entitled to be accompanied. The employer must notify the employee of the decision taken and of the right to appeal.
3. If the employee notifies the employer that he or she wishes to appeal, a further meeting must be held, but any disciplinary action does not have to be postponed in the meantime. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal meeting and is, again, entitled to be accompanied. The employer must notify the employee of the decision made.

It is essential that these procedures be followed, as failure to do so will automatically render any dismissal unfair if a claim is brought in an employment tribunal. Legal advice should be sought as appropriate.

Volunteers

When an allegation is made against a volunteer the same process as for employees should be followed and if an allegation is referred to the local authority or the police, consideration should be given to whether the volunteer is suspended until the outcome of those investigations is known. If the investigations are inconclusive or if concerns remain, the incumbent, PCC or other body responsible for appointing the volunteer will need to consider carefully whether the suspension should be lifted, and, if so, on what conditions. Professional advice (e.g. from the diocesan registrar or DSA should be sought as appropriate).

Advice for any person receiving an allegation or having a concern

Only a proportion of abused individuals talk about their experience while it is happening. It is therefore of vital importance that all disclosures are:

- Listened to carefully, avoiding the use of leading questions
- Taken seriously
- Acted upon
- Carefully recorded as soon as possible and kept in a secure place

If an individual speaks about being harmed physically, emotionally or sexually by another person, or if signs of abuse are observed:

DO:

- Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind
- Inform the person in the parish who is responsible for safeguarding, the responsible clergy, the Archdeacon, and the DSA immediately
- Make a referral to the Social Care (formerly Social Services) department if instructed
- Where urgent medical aid is required, contact the emergency services; concerns about possible abuse should be reported to the medical personnel treating the victim
- Make a written record of the allegation or concern as soon as possible. This should include the date, time, persons involved, and what was said / observed. Sign and date this, and keep in a secure place until required by senior staff or the investigating authorities
- Make a written record of what actions you have taken and keep it in a secure place
- Continue to support the individual and seek support for yourself

DO NOT:

- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality, as others will need to be involved if the abuse is to stop
- Attempt to investigate or deal with the situation yourself
- Speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made
- Discuss the allegation or concern with anyone other than those to whom you have reported the allegation
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the alleged incident/s

Even if you are not certain that abuse has occurred you must still discuss the concern with the appropriate person. It is possible to discuss concerns with the DSA or Social Care (Adult Services) without disclosing the names of the people involved. If in doubt it is always better to make a referral to Social Services rather than do nothing.

Any issue of possible abuse concerning the church community, from whatever source, must be reported to the Archdeacon and DSA as soon as it becomes known.