



ST GERMAIN'S CHURCH EDGBASTON

POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

St. Germain's Church PCC

September 2022

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POLICY FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS FOR

ST GERMAIN'S CHURCH, EDGBASTON.

PREAMBLE

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- St Germain's Church is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of the vulnerable adults who attend or are in contact with the church and are part of our church family
- The Diocese of Birmingham recommends that each Parish adopts a policy for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, and appoints a member of the church to be the named Adult Safeguarding Officer. It is advised that this policy is reviewed annually.
- This document has been drawn up in line with the recommendations of the Diocese and the guidance given in the Department of Health publication 'No Secrets'.

BIBLICAL BASIS CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- There are many instances in Scripture where we are urged to have a concern for those who are vulnerable in our society. Such texts as Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Isaiah 1:17, Leviticus 25:35, and the story of David and Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 8. In the New Testament the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46 is a clear teaching regarding our care for the vulnerable in society.

DEFINITIONS

- **Vulnerable Adult** as set out in the House of Bishop's Report 'Promoting a Safe Church' page 2:
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.
- **Abuse** as written in the Human Rights Act 1998:
Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.
(See guidelines for a fuller explanation)

SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

- This policy consists of the following parts:
- **The Policy** – This is the statement of intent concerning the safeguarding of vulnerable adults

- **The Guidelines** – This document covers the details of each part of the policy including the implementation and all issues relating to safeguarding vulnerable adults in relation to the church.
- **The Appendices** – These cover useful references, information and links to other organisations working in the field of safeguarding.

A POLICY STATEMENT ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF ADULTS IN ST GERMAIN'S PARISH

This statement was originally adopted by St Germain's Parish at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on 13th July 2016.

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

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 considered as 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 safeguard vulnerable people from physical, emotional, sexual, financial, online and spiritual abuse; and to report by the recognised channels, 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 of Birmingham, particularly in relation to the acquisition of safeguarding qualifications.
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 Bridget Hathaway, in addition to the vicar, to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies.

Incumbent: -----

Churchwarden: -----

Churchwarden: -----

Date: -----

GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been drawn up for St Germain's Church. The Diocese has produced a comprehensive handbook called 'Diocese of Birmingham: Safeguarding Policies; Parish Pack for Safeguarding Adults.' There are comprehensive appendices including explanations on working with people from other cultures. A copy of the Handbook can be found in the church office.

The Diocesan Guidelines can be found online at:

<http://cofebirmingham.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2013/11/Safeguarding-Adults-Parish-Pack.pdf>

This policy and the guidelines are aimed at protecting both the vulnerable adult and the church. It will also give clear guidelines of the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident

When a situation and procedure is unclear advice will be sought from the Bishop's Officer for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

WHO IS A VULNERABLE ADULT?

'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.'

House of Bishop's Report 'Promoting a Safe Church' page 2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

- The Incumbent together with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are responsible for agreeing on a named person to act as Church Adult Safeguarding Officer (ASO).
- The Diocese recommends that the Adult Safeguarding Officer should fulfil the following criteria:
 - A person who has some experience in working with vulnerable adults
 - Has a DBS disclosure and has received Diocesan training
 - Be a member of PCC or be co-opted on to the PCC for the purpose if not a member

- The responsibilities are likely to involve the following tasks:
 - Advocacy at PCC and other meetings within the church and in the community
 - Checking that the Policy is being followed in a co-ordinated manner in the activities of the church
 - Be the point of contact for any concerns regarding vulnerable adults within the remit of the church.
 - Be the point of contact between the church and the Bishop's Advisor for Safeguarding Adults.
 - Ensuring that the Policy and Guidelines are reviewed whenever necessary and at least annually. The annual review should be passed by the PCC.

REDUCING THE RISK OF ABUSE IN THE CHURCH CONTEXT

- The Adult Safeguarding Officer together with the PCC should form a sub-committee of people who will have oversight of the policy and its implementation.
- Each member of the group will be required to hold DBS clearance
- In house training will be given to the PCC and team during which the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults policy and procedures will be outlined and explained. The existence of a policy should also be made known to the church in an appropriate manner.
- Those who are licensed by the Bishop to distribute Holy Communion to people in their own homes should have DBS clearance.
- Those who are sent by the church in an official capacity to make visits to vulnerable adults should have DBS clearance.
- The Diocese of Birmingham recommends that those visiting Care Homes on an individual basis on behalf of the church should apply for a DBS check.

RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- Remember that it is *essential* that all issues regarding vulnerable adults are kept confidential. A designated place in the church office should be made for the safekeeping of records
- Any issues regarding possible abuse should be passed through the recognised channels and *never* be passed to any other person. (See Guidance for Responding to Allegations of Abuse)
- Records should only be passed to a third party after permission from the incumbent/church warden.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

‘Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.’

Human Rights Act 1998

“Abuse is the harming of another individual, usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (e.g. by denying access to people who can come to the aid of the victim, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse. In many cases, it is a criminal offence”
Centre for Policy on Ageing (1996)

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE

The following are the different categories of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** anything that causes physical harm including hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misuse of medication.
- **Sexual abuse:** any sexual activity that a person does not understand or want, including harassment by touching or teasing.
- **Psychological (emotional) abuse:** including shouting, swearing or threats that make the person feel afraid, guilty or humiliated.
- **Financial / material abuse:** including the illegal or improper use of a person’s money, property, pension, bank account or other belongings.

- **Neglect and acts of omission:** not giving the help, support or treatment needed including not providing food, drink, medication or other medical care.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including racist or sexist abuse, or abuse based on a person's age, disability or gender.
- **Abuse of an individual's rights:** abuse of an individual's rights takes place when a vulnerable adult is prevented from exercising the same rights and human rights as the rest of society.
- **Institutional abuse:** repeated poor care of vulnerable adults or groups of individuals through neglect or poor professional practice.
- **Spiritual abuse:** the enforcing of inappropriate religious values or ideas, including the misuse of authority or penitential discipline and deliverance ministry which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

'Indicators of abuse' are signs that draw attention to the fact that something may be wrong. *They do not necessarily indicate abuse but may suggest a need for further enquiries to be made particularly if there is a sudden change in a person's behaviour that is out of character for that person.*

- Repeated bouts of depression
- Exhibiting anger and hostility or being unable to connect at all with feelings
- Behaving like a victim, low self-esteem and putting themselves down and constantly apologising
- Inability to get close to people or wanting to be inappropriately close
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares etc
- A history of unexplained marks or bruises on the body, unexplained weight loss, signs of mal medication, repeatedly changing GP or care agency
- Self - harming
- Anxiety, phobias, confusion or tearfulness; hallucinations or flashbacks of abuse
- Extreme feelings of guilt and shame
- Amongst other indicators a sudden mismatch between previous living standards and present living standards may indicate financial abuse
- Exclusion from standard rights such as health care, education etc
- In institutional situations: poor personal hygiene, lack of personal possessions, ulcers and sores on the skin, withdrawal from social situations

WHERE CAN ABUSE HAPPEN?

- In the domestic home
- Whilst staying with family and friends
- In a day centre, residential home, care home or nursing home
- In hospital
- On church premises or during church events
- Social Media e.g. Facebook

WHO MIGHT BE THE ABUSER?

- A partner
- A friend or relative
- A carer
- Someone living in the same hostel, care home or housing scheme
- Someone attending the same day activities

- A stranger
- Anyone who has contact with the church
- A vulnerable adult

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC ABUSE?

“any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.”

GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

- If the vulnerable adult is confiding in you then ensure you are in a place where conversation is not overheard, but you are not behind closed doors.
- Listen carefully with full concentration; sustain the conversation by prompts only, but do not use any leading questions or phrases. Endeavour not to show shock or any negative emotion but focus on listening.
- **Do not question** except to clarify something or find out if anyone else witnessed the incident
- Ascertain the wishes, needs and fears of the alleged victim/witness, and find out what they want to do, or what they would like to happen. If someone is clearly at risk or poses a risk to others, then confidentiality might need to be broken; the victim/witness must be made aware of this.
- Make a full factual report of the disclosure which is given to the ASO (See Flow Chart)
- Do not share the information with anyone other than the Adult Safeguarding Officer
- If you receive a third-party disclosure of suspected abuse, report this to the Adult Safeguarding Officer and make a factual written report. Monitor the situation.
- If any member of the church has a concern regarding a vulnerable adult they should speak to a member of the committee or the ASO

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OF THE CHURCH

- A complaint against a member of staff of the church should be taken seriously and initially the same procedure followed as for any allegation of abuse.
- The allegation should be referred to the Bishop’s Advisor on the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.
- The advice of the Bishop’s Officer should be followed at this point.
- If persistent and malicious allegations of abuse against a person occurs, then this could be considered as harassment and will be dealt with accordingly.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

Survivors of abuse may say nothing for years or may have buried the memories very deep and may not recognise their presence. Memories may be triggered in a number of ways:

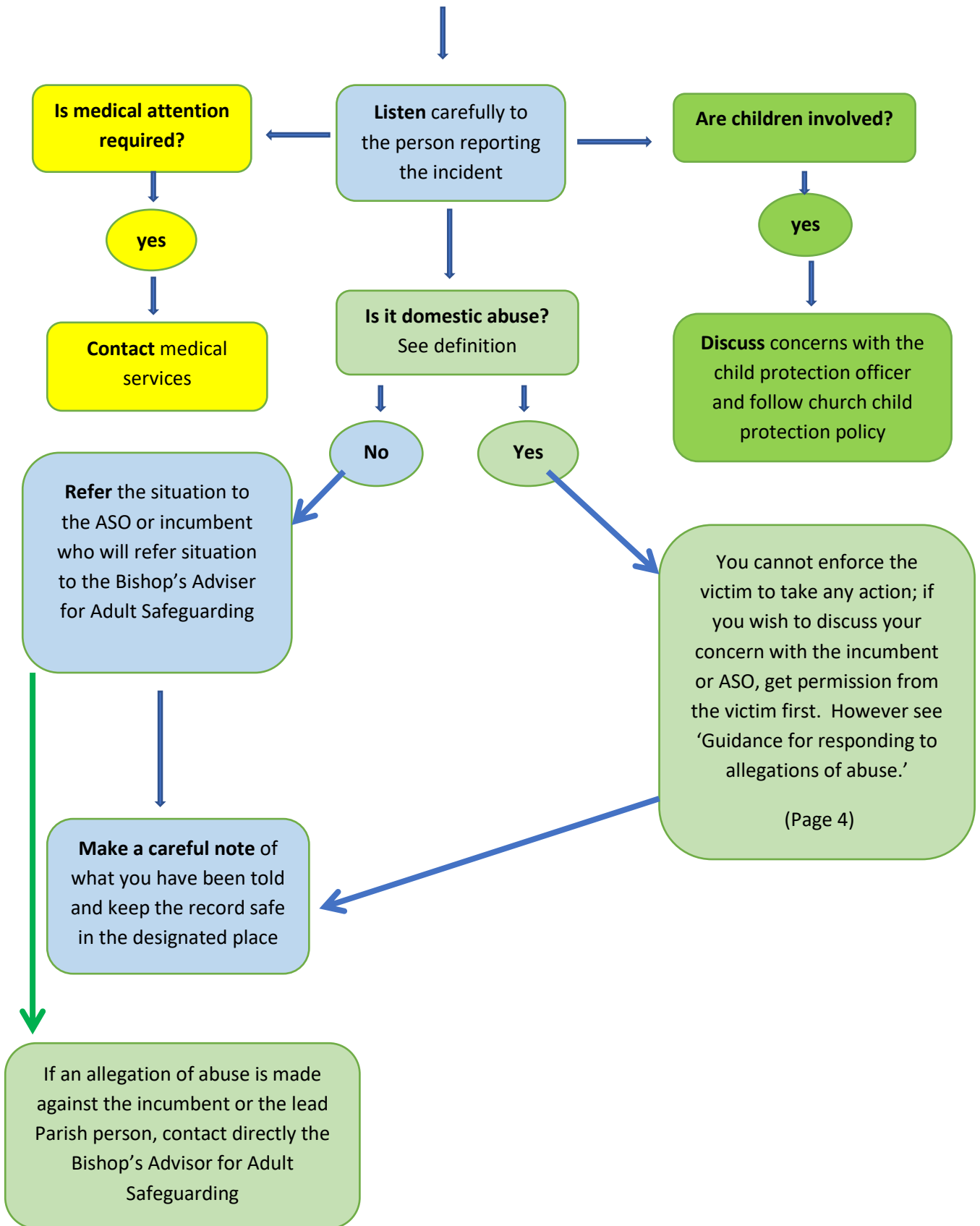
- Hearing about abuse on television
- Suffering from burnout or when under severe stress
- When ill or vulnerable in any way
- Being in an abusive position, perhaps at work or socially
- Whilst pregnant or after giving birth

Supporting survivors of abuse needs a professional skilled person to be involved. The church may be involved by being a caring supporting presence in the person's life. Dependency on one individual should be avoided, and confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

- It is recommended that St Germain's ASO attends a Workshop/Training held by the Bishop's Advisor on Adult Safeguarding.
- After attending a workshop, the ASO will be responsible for organising training for the sub-committee on issues regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. It is advisable that training reviews take place on a regular basis, if possible, twice a year.
- The ASO will take responsibility for keeping the PCC informed of any Government regulations that might impact on the policy and guidelines. They will also be responsible for ensuring that an annual review of the Policy and Guidelines takes place.

FLOW CHART FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE



APPENDIX 1

RESOURCES

WEB SITES

Action on Elder Abuse	https://www.thenationalcareline.org	
Age UK	https://www.ageuk.org.uk	
Alzheimer's Society	www.alzheimers.org.uk	
Mencap	www.mencap.org.uk	
Mind	www.mind.org.uk	
Scope	www.scope.org.uk	National organisation for people with cerebral palsy
Royal National Institute for the Blind	www.rnib.org.uk	
Royal National Institute for the Deaf	www.rnid.org.uk	
The Shaftesbury Society	www.shaftesburysociety.org.uk	
Through the Roof	www.throughtheroof.org.uk	A Christian body which aims to equip and train churches to become more inclusive for people with disability

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

- *Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for Good Practice and Outcomes in Adult Protection Work* ADSS 2005
- *No Secrets* Department of Health 2000 www.dh.gov.uk/scg/nosecrets.htm
- *From Silence to Sanctuary* Chevous, Jane SPCK 2004

ORGANISATIONS FOR ADULT SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

- *Respond* www.respond.org.uk Support for those with learning difficulties suffering abuse
- *Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse* www.christiansurvivors.com
- *Women's Aid* www.womensaid.org.uk
- *Survivors UK* www.survivorsuk.org Support for male survivors of abuse

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid

Phone: 0808 800 0028 0808 2000 247 (24 hour line)

Safeguarding Adults Birmingham City Council

Web site: www.birmingham.gov.uk/safeguardingadults

Samaritans www.samaritans.org.uk

Phone: 116 123

ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH THOSE WITH DRINK AND DRUG PROBLEMS

Drug Scope Web site: www.drugscope.org.uk

Email: info@drugscope.org.uk

Drinkline Tel: 0300 1231110

CHURCH RESOURCES

For church training resources see the Diocesan Handbook on the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Page 56, 60-61

POINTS OF RELEVANCE WHEN DEALING WITH SURVIVORS FROM A MINORITY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Do remember that the need to build a sense of security and trust, which applies to all encounters with survivors, is likely to be intensified for those from minority ethnic communities.

- Do take extreme care before deciding whether family or community support networks would be beneficial; they might be part of the problem.
- Do make referrals, as far as possible, for support and advice to organisations from the same background as the survivor, with a reliable track record of helping survivors

APPENDIX 2

ST GERMAIN'S CHURCH EDGBASTON SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS RECORD SHEET

Name of Vulnerable Adult:	
Contact details:	
Concern(s) raised by (name):	Date on which concerns raised:
Nature of potential safeguarding concern:	
Actions taken by Adult Safeguarding Officer in response to the concern(s) (in chronological order; add to and update as necessary until the issue is resolved):	
Date:	Action taken:
Final outcome / resolution:	

Has this incident prompted a change to policy or procedure?	YES / NO
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Were Adult & Community Services / other agencies informed of these concern(s)? YES / NO Please give details:
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Signature of Adult Safeguarding Officer	Date:
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