

# All Saints

LITTLE SHELFORD

[www.allsaintslittleshelford.org](http://www.allsaintslittleshelford.org)

## **SAFEGUARDING Vulnerable Adults**

**For people with safeguarding responsibilities for adults  
who may be vulnerable**

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**Approved by the PCC November 12 2018**

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

For the purposes of this document, safeguarding duties (as defined in the Care Act 2014) apply to an adult, over the age of 18, who meets the following circumstances:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is not able to protect himself/ herself from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

*The adult experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect is a **vulnerable adult**.*

It should be noted that, because of particular circumstances (e.g. redundancy, bereavement, relationship problems), any adult may become vulnerable on a temporary or permanent basis.

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is the responsibility of anyone within the church (either in a paid or voluntary capacity) who has pastoral or spiritual oversight of individuals or groups of adults, e.g. small group leaders, prayer partners, youth and children's work team leaders, pastoral workers, counsellors.

### Considerations in the Care of Vulnerable Adults

In church ministry, the boundaries between work and private life can be difficult to distinguish clearly. These guidelines are not for application to informal friendships arising from church membership, but rather to relationships formed when services are more formally offered by or on behalf of the church. Church workers, paid or voluntary, are expected to endeavour to uphold Christian values in both 'public' and 'private' areas of their lives.

Where possible, arrange visits to a person's home beforehand rather than 'cold-calling'. This is especially important the first time you visit e.g. at the beginning of a planned programme of visiting.

- Avoid times or places to meet (including your own home) when you and the vulnerable person will be alone.
- Make clear from the outset what is being offered (e.g. bereavement counselling) and discuss with the person how s/he would like to be supported, within the structure of the service offered.
- Consider carrying a form of identity that links you to the church so that the vulnerable person can, if s/he wishes, check you out before letting you in to their home.
- On a home visit, leave a card or note with your name, role and contact number so that the person, or a carer, knows who you are and how to contact you.
- Keep a written note of all visits and 1:1 work with adults in a work journal or diary. Log all visits made: times, dates, the purpose of the visit and any concerns that arose.
- Include the reason for the visit or session, and a note of any concerns that arose.

- Respect a person's independence. Always knock before entering a person's room or home; consider the appropriateness of initiating or receiving physical contact when greeting someone.
- Do not assume that the use of first names rather than the more formal Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms is acceptable; always ask.
- Someone who lacks capacity to act for him/herself in one area of life may nonetheless be quite capable in other areas; ensure participation and inclusion wherever it is possible.

Remember also that, as the Mental Capacity Act 2005 makes clear, every adult who has capacity retains the right to make decisions that others may deem to be unwise.

- In conversation, consider the appropriate level of language for the needs of the vulnerable adult and be aware of any special difficulties e.g. use of hearing aids, speech impediment or learning disability. Where communication skills are impaired, ask the adult if he or she is comfortable involving a member of the family or a friend to help communication, and let the adult choose who this should be.
- Where you are seeking to find out the views of a person, or you are asking him or her to make a choice, offer clear unbiased choices and allow the person time to consider and express a decision.
- Respect the person's right to personal space and privacy. Particular consideration should be given when assisting someone to use the toilet; balance the need for physical assistance with the need for dignity and privacy, and involve the person in any decision to either assist or to leave a door unlocked etc.
- Consider the potential difficulties of home visits and discuss with fellow workers how risks to the vulnerable adult, and to the visitor(s) can be minimised. Remember to:
  - Be sensitive to a person's own beliefs and faith; do not try to persuade the person to adopt your own views.
  - When dealing with financial affairs, be very cautious. Honesty, integrity and transparency are all vital. Do not engage in any activity that involves a personal financial gain; do not canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved.
  - Do not accept gifts, other than small unsolicited tokens of thanks or birthday/Christmas gifts that are of low value (i.e. an ordinary box of chocolates). Tell a colleague or your supervisor about any gift, even a small one.
  - Be sensitive to any signs of a developing dependency upon you that might be inappropriate, especially where the person's vulnerability has arisen in a time of personal crisis. Where you feel an inappropriate attachment might be forming, seek advice from an appropriate source (e.g. the incumbent, the co-ordinator, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer).
  - If ever you feel that you are moving out of your depth in a relationship with a vulnerable person, or you do not feel competent to deal with a developing situation, step back and seek advice. Make sure you know your routes to support if you are in difficulty.

- In working on behalf of the church with an adult who is vulnerable, it would never be appropriate to promise total confidentiality. Always make clear that, although you will keep matters confidential if you possibly can, you reserve the right to share information with appropriate people if you feel someone is at risk of significant harm.

## **Training**

The Diocese of Ely offers Safeguarding training and the Church of England has developed a new safeguarding training framework tailored to the role that any church volunteer or employee undertakes.

All Saints, Little Shelford staff and volunteers working with adults who may be vulnerable will follow the training framework.

Details are (including on-line access for some modules) are available at <http://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-diocese-ely> and <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/login/index.php>

## **Reporting mistreatment**

Many clergy and lay people will visit vulnerable people. If they suspect that someone is being mistreated in some way, they should always take responsibility for doing something about their concerns. 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.

Talking to a member of the clergy, social responsibility adviser, senior member of a voluntary organization or the social or health care services may help to clarify the issues. A referral to the local authority may be necessary.

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

**The government guidance No Secrets places on local authorities the responsibility to provide a structure for the investigation of harm to vulnerable people. It is therefore important that serious concerns are referred to the designated person in the Adult Services Department (or similar) of the local authority.**

## **What degree of abuse justifies referral to the local authority?**

When deciding whether a referral is necessary it is helpful to consider the concept of 'significant harm' introduced in the Children Act 1989, which provides the threshold for the state to intervene to investigate possible abuse.

The Act states that

harm should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. In assessing the seriousness of abuse the following factors need to be considered:

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

The details of how to contact the local authority can be found at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/adults/report-abuse-of-a-vulnerable-adult/>

Concerns can be logged and submitted on the form below to the Rector or the Parish Safeguarding Officer (polly.stanton@ntlworld.com)

## **Further information**

The Diocese of Ely's website's Safeguarding section can be found at:

<http://www.elydiocese.org//safeguarding>

A full version of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures can be found at:

[http://www.elydiocese.org/application/files/8515/1542/4546/Promoting\\_a\\_Safe\\_Church\\_safeguarding\\_policy\\_for\\_adults\\_2006.pdf](http://www.elydiocese.org/application/files/8515/1542/4546/Promoting_a_Safe_Church_safeguarding_policy_for_adults_2006.pdf)

## Logging a Concern about a Child or Vulnerable Adult's Welfare

**1. Full Name of Child/Young Person/Vulnerable adult**

**2. Address**

**3. Date of birth (if under 18)**

**4. Other members of the family (indicate age if under 18)**

**5. Account of what happened**

*Write what happened factually and as accurately as you can. Include who was involved, what happened (what you saw or heard or were told about), when it happened (day, month and time), where it happened, any other witnesses or behavioural signs that you observed. If your log includes an injury, describe it and say exactly where it was on the child, using a body map sheet if necessary Use a separate sheet if necessary.*

**6. Action taken**

*What did you do? Whom did you tell? What action was agreed? If you contacted another agency (e.g. Cambridgeshire Direct/Social Care/Police) note down any names, contact numbers or file reference numbers you are given.*

<b>7. Your name and role in the church (sign and print)</b>
<b>8. Your contact details</b> Telephone/mobile: E-mail address:
<b>9. Date (include day/month/year) and time of the incident and of this log</b>

*Please ensure that once the information here has been shared confidentially with those who need to know, this document is stored securely in your church's safeguarding file. This is usually held by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the parish, or the Vicar.*

If your concern involves inappropriate behaviour by a member of the church, you must also contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser. This is currently Rebecca Boswell: tel. 01353 652731 or e mail: [rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org](mailto:rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org)