

St. Matthew's Harwell  
with All Saints' Chilton



HARWELL  
CHILTON  
CHURCHES

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR CHURCH  
WORK  
WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

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## St. Matthew's Harwell with All Saints' Chilton Safeguarding Policy

1. We are committed to:
  - The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and all adults.
  - The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
  - The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.
2. We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records checks.
3. We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation and we will have a clear reporting procedure in place.
4. We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him or her an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
5. We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
6. We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
7. In all these principles we will follow statute, guidance and recognised good practice.
8. We will advise the Diocese which Registered Body we use to process applications for Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records checks.
9. We will advise the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser if we receive a Disclosure which is 'blemished' or 'positive'.
10. We will review this policy annually, check that our policies are up to date, and supply a copy of the updated policy statement to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

## What do we mean by 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 from significant harm or exploitation.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some ways and at certain times, some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. Some of the factors which increase vulnerability are:

- A sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- A learning disability.
- A physical illness.
- Mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute.
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- The failing faculties of old age.
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Remember:

- Vulnerability is often not a permanent state.
- Vulnerability is not always visible.
- A person with apparently visible vulnerabilities may not perceive themselves as such.
- Vulnerable people may also pose risk and cause harm.

## Recruitment

All leaders and helpers should follow Diocesan-approved recruitment procedures, which include:

- Submitting an application form if new to the parish
- Completing a Confidential Declaration Form.
- Having a valid Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service, with barring information if eligible.
- Accepting that the role is a position of trust.

One of the aims of the policy is for church groups to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour.

## Positions of Trust

The Diocese makes the following expectations for those in a position of trust

- all church workers must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the Church; this includes both while on duty and also when off duty;
- they must possess a personal copy of this Good Practice Guide for their work and comply with it;
- they will be seen as role models by the children or vulnerable adults with whom they are in contact at all times, including when they are off duty;
- they must not in their private life engage in activities which could bring the church or their role in it into disrepute;
- they must take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they must ensure that all communications they may have with or about children or vulnerable adults are appropriate in their tone;
- they must seek advice immediately if they come across a child or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate;
- they must not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European or international law.

It is contrary to the policy of the Church of England for those in a position of trust, including priests and youth workers among others, to have sexual or inappropriate personal relationships with those for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a disciplinary offence. It will be referred as appropriate to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and in some cases it may also constitute a criminal offence. Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind is likely to be dismissed and referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring.

## Adult abuse definitions

- Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;

- Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- Neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating; and
- Discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- Survivors of abuse, usually sexual abuse, which may have been in childhood or adulthood, and who may need specific pastoral care. A good practice document, *Responding Well to Survivors*, was published by the House of Bishops in 2011.
- Domestic abuse, which is a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors; note that there is often an overlap between domestic abuse and child abuse.
- Spiritual abuse: the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries.

## Activities with adults who may be vulnerable

- These recommendations apply to all churches' activities with adults who may be vulnerable – for instance, during worship on Sundays, on outings, in groups and when visiting at home.
- They apply as much to church 'in house' activities for regular attendees as to activities which you run in and for the local community.
- They are designed to protect the adults who may be vulnerable in your care, as well as your leaders.
- Activities set up specifically for adults known to be vulnerable will need planning and preparation of a kind not needed for activities open to all.
- Ensure there are supervision arrangements and a reporting line back to the PCC.

## Active membership and inclusion

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

- Risk assess continuing and new activities including worship exploring what inclusion, choice and independence mean for communities and individuals.
- Set up policies and procedures for complaints and allegations.
- Share information appropriately.

## Respect

- Always respect the vulnerable adult and all his or her abilities.
- Ask about personal preferences, forms of address, how much help might be needed.
- Ensure his or her individuality e.g. always use their name.
- Give the same respect as to others.
- Respect differences e.g. in appearance, ideas, personalities, ability.
- Don't assume or withhold physical contact – ask first.
- Have a proper conversation using appropriate language e.g. ask about interests.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to set boundaries for some to ensure the safety of others.
- Obtain specialist advice when necessary e.g. on harassment, disability, mental illness, domestic abuse.

## Choices

- Respect the choices vulnerable adults make, even if they may appear risky.
- Consider whether the vulnerable adult has the capacity to make choices and whether safety might require intervention.
- Give vulnerable adults the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances.
- Consult with the vulnerable adult about who he or she wishes to be included in affecting his or her life in a way that does not further highlight to others their vulnerabilities.
- Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise a person's independence.
- Give vulnerable adults a choice about where they sit and what activities they participate in, recognising that some people find making choices stressful.
- Ensure that there is clear access to all areas available to members of the congregation.
- Do not assume that someone's level of comprehension matches their verbal communication.

## Transport

- Lifts arrangement by adults among themselves are a private matter and not the concern of the church unless there appears to be abuse of exploitation.
- Lifts arranged by the church, whether using existing pastoral care workers or a special team of drivers, are a church Lifts responsibility. Drivers need to be safely

recruited. Carers should be consulted as appropriate.

- All those who drive vulnerable adults on church-organised activities should normally be over 25 and should have held a full driving licence for over two years.
- All cars that carry vulnerable adults must be comprehensively insured. The insured person must make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during church activities. They must inform their insurance company that lifts may be given. There are separate requirements governing minibuses.
- All cars that carry vulnerable adults should be clean and in a roadworthy condition.
- All passengers as well as the driver must wear seat belts. If there are no seat belts vulnerable adults should not be carried.
- Take care in assisting vulnerable adults to board or leave vehicles, taking account of the guidance on touch.
- At no time should the number of passengers in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There must be a seat belt for every passenger.
- Recognize that people are vulnerable when receiving a lift as they cannot leave a moving car or effectively resist inappropriate approaches.
- If lifts are also provided to a CP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities this is regulated activity and attracts a DBS check with barring information.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Any driver who has an 'unspent' conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport vulnerable adults.

## What to do if a vulnerable person appears to be at risk

- The church does not itself investigate situations of possible risk to vulnerable adults from others but church members are entitled to clarify whether they consider there may be such a risk.
- If you have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected it may be appropriate to refer them to the local authority adult protection service.
- The consent of the person concerned is normally needed. However, if they are not able to give informed consent or are being intimidated, they can be referred without consent.
- If in doubt whether a referral is appropriate, consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or the local authority adult protection service.



- Make a record of the concerns and the action taken as soon as possible after the event and make sure a copy is on file.
- An abuse of power is a safeguarding issue.
- If there is a suspected criminal offence the victim should be encouraged to report the matter to the police and assisted in doing so if necessary.
- Refer on and work with existing statutory and voluntary services.
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## Visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (including residential and nursing homes)

- Always do an assessment of risk to both the vulnerable adult and other interested parties, including yourself, before visiting someone in their own home.
- If there are concerns or risks known before the visit is undertaken, give careful consideration to whether the visit is absolutely necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another adult. Don't take unnecessary risks.
- Always carry a mobile phone on a home visit and ensure that someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return.
- Don't call unannounced. Call by arrangement, if appropriate telephoning the person just before you go.
- Always carry identification with you or a note of introduction from your church.
- Always knock on the door before entering a room or home; respect the person's home and possessions.
- Don't take or offer sweets, drink or other food items to people you are visiting.
- Never offer 'over the counter' medicines to the people you visit or administer prescribed medicines even if asked to do so.
- As a general principle, do not give those you visit your home phone number or address. Instead, where possible leave information about a central contact point.
- If you don't know the answer to a question or feel out of your depth, seek advice and if appropriate refer the person to another agency. Know where you can access information about other relevant services.
- When referring someone on to another person or agency, talk this through with the vulnerable adult. Ask him or her permission before passing on personal information. Make the link with the new person by yourself or if it is more appropriate for the vulnerable adult to do so themselves make sure they have all the information they need and that their contact will be expected.
- Be clear about your boundaries: keep to agreed limits on how much time you will spend with someone and how often you come. Don't take on extra responsibilities on a bit by bit basis. Be realistic about the amount of time you have; don't say yes to every request for help.

- Set a pattern and expectations about communications between visits. Beware of over frequent texting or emailing and exchanges late at night.
- Avoid handling money for vulnerable adults; if it is unavoidable provide receipts and discuss with PCC treasurer.
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable – and what is not – from the vulnerable adult.
- A record of pastoral visits and home communions must be kept by the church with particular reference to safeguarding concerns and actions taken. See guidance on Recording Pastoral Encounters.

## Conflicts and disagreements

- Recognise that churches have duties of care to both perpetrators and victims or survivors if they are both parishioners.
- Bullying or harassment either by or of anyone in the church community is not acceptable.
- Recognise that vulnerable adults may be perpetrators as well as victims of abuse.
- Be fair, sensitive and confidential.
- Set a good example: challenge inappropriate behaviour but do so courteously.
- Be aware of your own power, even if you don't feel powerful.
- Ask for help if you feel out of your depth.
- Think before you act.
- Listen to your instincts.
- It will usually be necessary for a different team or individual to support a perpetrator from that supporting the victim.
- In some cases it may be appropriate to consult a trained mediator. The Diocese has access to these.
- In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to ask the perpetrator to move to a different church. This should then be carefully facilitated. The Archdeacon may need to get involved.

## Needs of carers

- Many carers are not aware that they are carers and may benefit from links with organisations for carers which can offer help and advice.
- Local carers' organisations are able to advise churches on caring issues.
- Remember the needs of carers – treat them as individuals, include them as appropriate, offer breaks and short times apart and practical assistance if feasible.
- Carers are entitled to an assessment of need from local authorities but this does not carry a guarantee of services to meet the needs identified.

<b>STATUTORY AGENCIES:</b>	
Thames Valley Police (all non-emergency Enquiries)	Tel: 101
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or MASH) <a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/report-child-abuse">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/report-child-abuse</a>	Tel: 0845 0507666 Tel: 0800 833408 (out of hours emergency)
<b>DIOCESAN CONTACTS:</b>	
John Nixson, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	Tel: 01865 208290
<b>PARISH CONTACTS:</b>	
Revd Dr Jonathan Mobey, Rector	Tel: 01235 799376
Revd Pam Rolls, Associate Minister	Tel: 01235 834475
Heather House, Safeguarding Officer	Tel: 01235 819743
Judy Gold, Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Tel: 01235 833372
<b>CHARITIES:</b>	
Action on Elder Abuse <a href="http://www.elderabuse.org.uk">www.elderabuse.org.uk</a>	Tel: 0808 808 8141
Mencap <a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk">www.mencap.org.uk</a>	Tel: 0808 808 1111

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: