



Parochial Church Council of South Petherton

with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks

Charity Registration No 1128940

Safeguarding Policy

October 2017

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. (For the avoidance of doubt, meanings of key words such as 'child' and 'vulnerable' are given in Appendix 1).

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. Our benefice is working towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers and volunteers.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

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

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

The Benefice will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust, and will work with the Diocesan Team, and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past.

This statement of principles applies to children, young people and adults.

We are committed to:

- the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults;
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults;
- the establishment of a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support;
- the promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adult should not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable. Hence the need for an interview and references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of our benefice that:

- all those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have a DBS check if they reach the criteria;
- those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

The Benefice accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

The term 'complaint' can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties. We recognise that there is a period of time while the matter is being investigated that can be difficult for both the person making a complaint and for the person complained about. We will seek advice from and work with the Diocese to best manage the situation to meet the support needs for both parties until investigations are completed.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to our notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and other appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

Working with others from the Diocese, we will facilitate provision of pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and / or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work sensitively to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and to receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

Working with others from the Diocese, we will facilitate provision of pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm, through the drawing up of a safeguarding agreement, in conjunction with appropriate persons, under the guidance of the Diocese.

The Benefice of South Petherton with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies.

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Safeguarding Policy - Description and Definitions

Safeguarding

The term safeguarding covers vetting and safer recruitment, safer working practices, responding to concerns, working with partner agencies, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed.

Child

There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the United Kingdom. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the United Kingdom government in 1991, states that a child “means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

For our Safeguarding Policy, ‘child’ is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. We recognise that children approaching their later teen years may prefer to be referred to as ‘young people’ hence the words ‘child’ and ‘young person’ (and likewise ‘children’ and ‘young people’) may be used interchangeably throughout our policy document.

“*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010*” states:

The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders’ Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989 & 2004.

Vulnerable Adult

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 defines a vulnerable adult as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation in any care setting. This includes individuals in receipt of social care services, those in receipt of other services such as health care, and those who may not be in receipt of services.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labelled as ‘vulnerable’ in the same way as a child is regarded as such. Childhood is absolute: someone who is not yet 18 years of age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with vulnerability.

Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

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

Regulated Activity (adults)

The Regulated Activity definition has been changed and tightened. In future, Regulated Activity for adults will be defined by the role and not by the characteristics of the recipient – i.e. their type or level of vulnerability.

Within a Church setting, those undertaking Regulated Activity with adults will be limited to the small number of roles where the person concerned is involved in the activities set out below.

Differing from the children's definition, there is no frequency test for these activities. If the worker is expected to do them as part of their role at any point, then the role becomes Regulated Activity. An Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List check must be applied for.

Apart from the work of health or social work professionals, the activities are:

- help with washing/dressing; eating/drinking; toileting; or teaching someone to do one of these tasks;
- help with a person's cash, bills or shopping because of their age, illness or disability (a good example is helping someone to pay a household bill) - posting the letter for the housebound person is not Regulated Activity but taking the money from them to take and pay at the PO counter is Regulated Activity - this would not usually be part of any church role but is included here for the small minority of exceptional occasions;
- helping someone in the conduct of their affairs (for example, a Power of Attorney for someone who is not a relative or friend - this would be very unlikely in a church context;
- driving someone (because of their age, illness or disability) to/from places in order to receive health, personal or social care (note: not as family or friend but as part of the church role).

Regulated Activity (children)

For regulated activity with children the Supervision and Frequency criteria needs to be met:

- Supervision. The question of whether or not a worker (or volunteer) is supervised is important. The Government has not provided a formal definition, but rather left it to each organisation to implement its own definition. In most church situations, one worker will not be acting as the formal supervisor of another worker. The more usual pattern would be for people to co-work. It is also important to recognise the definition of supervision. The church defines supervised activity as:
 - where the supervisor, who has been safely recruited, is always able to see the supervised worker's actions during their work
- Frequency is defined as where the activity meets one or more of the following:
 - *Frequently* - at least once a week
 - *Intensively* - 4 days in a 30 day period
 - *Overnight* - between the hours of 2am and 6am.