

Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults

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St Mary Magdalene Stoke Bishop

Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults

Section A: Introduction

The following policy and procedures were agreed by the PCC on 2 March 2016 and will be reviewed annually to ensure that the PCC can meet its obligations to safeguard vulnerable adults.

Incumbent

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

Date

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is 'invulnerable'; some people may consider themselves to be strong but, when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity. 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 eighteen 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;
- a learning disability;
- a physical illness;
- mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute;
- an 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, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Section B:

Statutory Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

From 1 April 2015 the following definition will be used:

An adult who:

has needs 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.

Section C:

Summary of the Policy

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.

As members of this parish we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.

We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.

We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.

The PCC commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.

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.

We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.

The PCC is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.

The PCC adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese of Bristol.

Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

Section D:

Implementation of the Policy

We will:

Seek to work in a non-abusive way that respects the rights of individuals to enjoy privacy, dignity, independence and choice.

Actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable people through the services we provide.

Ensure rigorous recruitment practices to deter those who actively seek vulnerable people to exploit or abuse, including taking up references and using DBS checks.

Actively promote an organisational culture within which all those who express concern will be treated seriously and will receive a positive response.

Ensure that staff and volunteers understand that vulnerable people can be abused and that they know what to do if they think that someone is being abused.

Ensure that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate training and support.

Have an internal policy, procedure and guidance on how leaders, staff and volunteers will deal with allegations of abuse, including allegations against their own organisation's staff and volunteers.

Ensure that the procedure links to the local inter-agency procedure.

Work in cooperation with the local Adult Services and the police when they are investigating an allegation of abuse.

Identify a 'lead officer' who takes responsibility for training staff and volunteers and updating procedures.

Ensure that confidentiality and information sharing related to the protection of vulnerable adults and perpetrators of abuse are maintained through agreed protocols.

Section E:

Health and Safety

General

Risk assessments should be completed for all groups and for any unusual activities.

An up to date First Aid Kit should be available at all times. This will be maintained by the Office Staff.

All accidents should be recorded in the Accident Book, indicating what happened, when, who was present and who was affected by the accident. The report should be signed and dated and a copy held in the church office.

Premises

Church buildings will meet Health and Safety standards and should allow people with disabilities to participate as much as possible. We will undertake a regular audit of our buildings in order to ensure that premises enable the church to carry out its duties under the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005. Issues of access, visibility, audibility and toilet facilities are among the items that will be addressed.

Insurance

A comprehensive insurance policy will be in place.

Organisations which use the building may need to have their own additional insurance arrangements.

Section F: Procedure for the appointment of paid and volunteer staff

St Mary Magdalene Stoke Bishop adheres to the Diocese of Bristol "Safer Recruitment Policy" August 2014:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Safer-Recruitment-Policy.pdf>

1. All paid and volunteer jobs within the church which bring people into contact with adults who may be vulnerable will have a description of the post and what is involved in doing it.
2. Job descriptions will be prepared by the person(s) responsible for the particular area of work.
3. The PCC is responsible for 'employing' all workers (whether paid or volunteer).
4. There will be appropriate application forms for all paid and volunteer posts. Information on such forms will be treated as confidential and stored securely in a locked cabinet.
5. References must be taken up. Where anxiety is raised, further advice may be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
6. Suitable candidates for volunteer posts will have worshipped at St Mary's for a minimum period of six months except in exceptional circumstances (the incumbent and Parish Safeguarding Officer will be consulted in all instances). Candidates will be interviewed by the appropriate Church leader, and the responsibilities of the candidate and of the church will be made clear.
7. All appropriate criminal record checks will be undertaken before the applicant starts in post.
8. The person appointed will sign the job description form.

9. The Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Recruiting team will inform the PCC about all appointments.
10. There will be a probationary period of 3 months for all paid and volunteer staff, including those employed on a permanent basis, with a review before the period comes to an end. Those involved in temporary posts should be offered a debriefing meeting and a note made of any safeguarding concerns.
11. Anyone working in a continuing way will have an annual review with the appropriate group leader.
12. Training and support will be available for those working with adults who may be vulnerable. This will include information about the Safeguarding policy and will be updated at least every three years in line with the Diocesan Training Plan.

Section G:

Dealing with suspicions or allegations that a vulnerable adult may have been harmed

St Mary Magdalene Church will have a Parish Safeguarding Officer appointed by the PCC.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer's name will be displayed on the Safeguarding noticeboard, which will be in a prominent position, and clearly labelled.

St Mary Magdalene Church will adopt a culture of listening to anybody making an allegation or raising a suspicion, taking account of their wishes and feelings, and taking any allegations seriously.

Any concern that a vulnerable adult has been harmed or abused should be reported without delay. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and when it is necessary to inform Social Services or the police.

How to react to a disclosure

It can be very difficult for somebody to tell someone else that they are being abused. If you are the person someone has chosen to tell, you owe it to them to react appropriately.

Here are some guidelines:

- Always take the allegation very seriously, even if you believe it to be untrue.
- Listen carefully and do not stop a person who is revealing painful events.
- Do not promise confidentiality - make it plain that you may have to tell someone else
- Do not ask leading questions (who, why, where) or push for un-offered information - this could make it impossible to pursue the case later.

- Do not artificially prolong a discussion.
- Reassure the person that he/she was right to tell you.
- Explain what you are going to do next.
- Make careful notes of the conversation as soon as possible, recording in particular the DATE, TIME, LOCATION and whether OTHER PEOPLE were present.
- REMEMBER – it is NOT your business to investigate or check out a story; that is for the Police or Social Services.

What to do if you suspect abuse

The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that their concern is taken seriously.

If you suspect abuse or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place you should:

- inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of your concerns / or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer if the Parish Safeguarding Officer is unavailable. In an emergency call 999 directly, or if you have an urgent concern, inform Bristol Care Direct and notify the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Keep a written record of your concerns and conversations.
- Maintain a high degree of confidentiality and only those who need to know should be informed of the circumstances.
- If you have suspicions concerning the clergy or other licensed staff the Parish Safeguarding Officer will follow the Diocese of Bristol allegations management procedure.

**IF YOU SUSPECT A VULNERABLE ADULT IS BEING, OR IS
AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED, THE ONE THING YOU MUST
NOT DO IS NOTHING**

Useful contacts:

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Stephanie Wren Tel: 0117 968 7651 Email: stephwren1@gmail.com

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Leanne Smith Tel: 0117 906 0132 (office hours) Email: leanne.smith@bristoldiocese.org

Out of Hours: For any urgent out of hours concerns. CCPAS helpline (0845 120 4550) CCPAS staff will advise on whether an issue should be reported to a Local Authority, Police or other agency and on immediate management of any concern. Please note that out of hours use of this number is for urgent safeguarding concerns which cannot wait until the next working day only. When calling, please state that you are calling from a Church within the Diocese of Bristol. This will enable CCPAS to ensure that relevant information is passed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or to other Diocesan staff as required to support you. Further information about CCPAS is available at www.ccpas.co.uk/provide/helpline

Bristol City Council

Bristol Care Direct:

Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm (0117) 922 2700

Out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Team (01454) 615 165

For an on-line contact form go to: www.bristol.gov.uk/caredirect

Further guidance and resources

The following websites provide useful guidance:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/37405/promotingasafechurch.pdf>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/safeguarding-children-vulnerable-adults/national-policy-practice-guidance.aspx>



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