

Policy and procedures for the Safeguarding of Adults in our Church

The Parish of St George's, Stamford

Updated: 4th December 2023

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Version History

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2015-16	Updated contact details. Added reference to Supporting families etc., and confidentiality.
2016-17	-
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2019-20	Updated What do if sections. Added Expressing Concerns and Whistle blowing section. Added one to one section. Added transportation section.
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ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The PCC affirms the principles of the House of Bishops' Policy for Safeguarding Adults (contained in Promoting a Safe Church) and is committed to the discipleship, protection and safeguarding of adults.

- 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 parish 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 parish is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
- The parish adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese.
- Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

Our Parish Safeguarding Coordinator is Helen Leech

Tel: 01780 310020

Email: safeguarding@stgeorgeschurch.net

Our DBS identity checker is Joseph Caseley

Tel: 01780 481800

Email: Joseph.Caseley@StGeorgesChurch.net

This policy statement will be renewed annually and progress in carrying it out will be monitored by **Helen Leech**.

This statement was agreed by the Parochial Church Council.

Rector: Revd Canon Martyn Taylor

Churchwardens: Koleh Rees, Gordon McKechnie

Date: 4th December 2023

1. Procedures for implementing the adult Safeguarding Policy of St George's, Stamford

A copy of these procedures will be given to all clergy, staff (whether employed directly by the PCC or another body), volunteers and lay workers who have the responsibility for adults. **They should sign a declaration afterwards saying that they have read and understood them.**

2. Leadership

Adult pastoral care is under the overall direction of the Rector and The Associate Rector, delegated to The Assistant Pastor (for Pastoral Care and Small Groups), who is the leader of the pastoral care team.

In addition, there are leadership team members recruited for their experience in aspects of pastoral ministry. Contact Details can be obtained from the Church Office.

Contact details for the main leader

The contact for all pastoral groups is:

Ben Topham, Associate Rector

Address: St George's Church Hub (Office), Stamford, PE9 2BJ 01780 418000 or Home tel. no. (Out of hours) = 01780 433520

3. Gathering Together

The PCC actively encourages all regular attenders at public worship to also be involved in one small group activity during the week.

The purpose of small group ministry is to allow people to meet with others for discipleship, worship, prayer, and fellowship in a more intimate group than is possible in the context of public worship.

The PCC seeks to have a range of groups which allow all adults to be involved, whatever their knowledge of the Christian faith or level of vulnerability. Small group members are encouraged to support one another and offer practical support and assistance on the basis of mutual friendship and Christian love for one another.

Whenever individual pastoral ministry is required on a one-to-one basis this will always be undertaken by members of the pastoral care team under the agreed pastoral care structure.

Supporting families, parents, and carers.

It is suggested that vulnerable adult and child protection should be seen within the context of family, parents, and carer support. If one supports the family, parents, or carer, one supports the vulnerable adult or child or young person. The PCC supports this approach.

Confidentiality.

The House of Bishops' adult protection policy contains (at page 35) guidance on Confidentiality. While respecting the need for confidentiality it is legally possible, appropriate, and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting vulnerable adults. The PCC understands both the need for confidentiality and the requirement to disclose information to protect those who are vulnerable.

4. Safe Recruiting

When appointing/recruiting leaders and team members for pastoral work with adults, the PCC will follow the guidelines set out in "Safer Recruitment: Practice Guidance for the C of E 2016:

This means:

1. Providing a job/role description
2. Ensuring the potential volunteer provides a completed application form
3. Ensuring the potential volunteer completes a confidential declaration form, with policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders.
4. Conducting an interview
5. Taking up references from two referees one of whom should be current employer, previous church, or organisation at which the potential volunteer currently volunteers or has recently been a volunteer. At least one referee should be from outside the church.
6. Obtaining a DBS (criminal record) disclosure, unless the nature of the role is such that there is no entitlement to a DBS check
7. Offering the post, and confirm the appointment in writing
8. That the volunteer completes a volunteering agreement with induction.
9. Ensuring the volunteer is aware of PCC policies and procedures.
10. Provide safeguarding training and ongoing volunteer support

Safeguarding Guidelines relating to Safer Recruitment can be downloaded from:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance>

5. Support, supervision, and training

Those who undertake pastoral work will be given the opportunity to review their work with a member of the pastoral leadership team. This will enable them to comment on the work they are doing, give suggestions, review, and further develop their work, if they so wish, and to discuss training opportunities.

From time to time the church may hold training events on adult safeguarding, which all staff and volunteers will be required to attend. There will also be other training events organised by the Diocese of Lincoln which church staff, youth workers, volunteers and Safeguarding coordinators may attend. All volunteers must complete the minimum training required.

6. Code of Behaviour

The PCC commits to the following code of behaviour which those who work with adults are expected to follow:

You should:

- Treat all with whom you minister or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence, and choice.
- Provide a Christian example you wish others to follow.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Seek to help a person become Christ-centred and able to sustain themselves as a maturing Christian.
- Respect personal privacy.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Report all allegations/suspensions of abuse.
- Always seek to have a person of the same sex as the client in the room/car/etc. when alone with someone.
- Ask for support when you are aware that a situation may develop which you are not trained/equipped to deal with.
- Always inform someone else of your schedule when going out to make appointments and take due care of your personal safety.

You should not:

- Touch inappropriately.
- Engage in any pastoral ministry alone with a member of the opposite sex.
- Allow unknown persons access to vulnerable adults.
- Create a situation where someone becomes dependent on you.
- Show inappropriate favouritism or encourage inappropriate special relationships.
- Undertake any pastoral ministry while a client is under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs.
- Undertake any ministry that is beyond your competence or role (e.g., therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse or giving legal advice).
- Tell anyone they are healed or that they should reduce or stop taking any medication. (check first with their GP)
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

7. One to One Situations

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place on Church premises, in vulnerable adults own homes and residential facilities as this is often an essential element of a staff member or volunteer's role.

Many adults will be well known to staff members or volunteers and where there have been no previous concerns the level of risk to the staff member/volunteer or adult during visits will usually be low.

However certain procedures and explicit safeguards must in place. See one to one policy. These situations have the potential to make an adult more vulnerable to harm by those seek to exploit their position of trust. St George's Church staff and volunteers working with adults may also be more vulnerable too unjust or unfounded allegations bring made against them.

Both possibilities should be recognised so that if one to one situations are unavoidable, reasonable, and sensible precautions are taken. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security of adults and the St George's Church staff and volunteers who work with them.

This means that St George's Church staff and volunteers should:

Risk Assessments

- A '**Seeing people on Church premises, their own homes and residential facilities.**' Risk assessment has been completed to cover this activity.
- However, if there are any higher risks or concerns known before a visit is made, you are advised to undertake an additional risk assessment using the '**additional Risk Assessment template**'. In these circumstances, consideration should be given whether the visit is absolutely necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another adult. Especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable. These arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Any additional risk assessments are to be kept in the safeguarding filing cabinet once completed.

One To One Policy

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a staff member or volunteer, and irrespective of whether a risk assessment has been made:

- **Wherever possible carry a mobile phone on a home visit**, and/or ensure that someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return.
- **Wherever possible avoid calling unannounced** – call by arrangement if appropriate telephoning the person just before going.
- **If you are not known to the person you are visiting, carry identification**, photographic, if possible, (this could be a driving licence) or a note of introduction from the church.
- Always knock on the door before entering a room or home, respecting the person's home and possessions.
- **As a general principle, leave information about how and where you can be contacted (telephone or e mail) including a central contact point** e.g., the hub.
- **Always endeavour to be clear about what behaviour** from a vulnerable adult is acceptable and what is not.

- **Where you consider you should refer the person to another agency**, talk this through with the vulnerable adult, seeking his/her permission before passing on personal information. 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.
- **In the event of any issues arising, report them immediately.** If you are concerned about anything that happens, or is said in a meeting, follow normal safeguarding policy.

Transport

Further guidance can be found in the transportation of adults' section, but staff members and volunteers should note the below for one-to-one situations:

- Before offering transport to an adult in a one-to-one situation, the 'Transport (Adult Cars) Checklist' should be completed, and the staff member or volunteer should sign the 'Driver Agreement (Adults or children)'.
- Vulnerable adults will give permission to being transported themselves, and discretion used in consulting first with their careers.
- Children should not be transported by private car by staff or volunteers without permission or an escort.

8. Transportation

Transport arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of carers or individual adults if they make arrangements among themselves. They are the responsibility of the PCC if the PCC organises them. Transport or travel between church activities will usually be the responsibility of the PCC. Transporting vulnerable adults on behalf of the church is a regulated activity.

Guidance for transporting vulnerable adults on behalf of the church

- An additional risk assessment shall be completed before the transport arrangement takes place if it is not covered under the existing '**Lifts to activities and appointments**' risk assessment.
- The relevant '**Transport Check list**' shall be followed depending on mode of transportation.
- Driving shall be restricted to those who have gone through St George's Church safer recruitment procedures and be aware of St George's Church safeguarding policy.
- Drivers shall complete a '**driver agreement**' if the transportation taking place by car.
- Vulnerable adults will give permission to being transported themselves, and discretion used in consulting first with their careers.
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist those being transported stay in the same groups on the outgoing and return journey. This will avoid anyone, at worst, being left behind.
- It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular individual e.g., where there has been a disagreement, or they have romantic feelings for a driver.
- If carers do some transporting, ensure they are made aware that such arrangements are their own responsibility and not the organisation.

9. Photography and Videos

Working with adults may involve the taking or recording of images. Images count as sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). As with all such data, they should take place with due regard to the need to safeguard the well-being of adults and should only be used with the consent of the person in the image.

Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken.

Consent for wide-angle group images in a public space

Consent is not needed if adults appear in wide-angle group image in a public space. A church is not a public place in this sense but there may still be occasions when it would not be reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every individual adult who appears in the photograph.

In these circumstances, organisers should make clear to all adults that these kinds of images will be taken, and for what purposes. A verbal notice can be given out at the beginning for the leader of the service or event, asking that any adult who objects to images should either move from view of the camera or approach the leader afterwards to ensure that any image they object to is not used. Consent can also be implied; if an activity leader invites people to be part of a group photograph, then those who gather for the photograph have given their consent by virtue of having done so.

This means that St George's Church staff and volunteers should:

- Seek Consent from the adult, letting them know how their image will be used. As with children, consent can be implied. If they lack capacity to consent do not use their image.
- Remember that consent for the use of the photograph or film is only for that one purpose and should not be reused in any other promotional event without further consent.
- Be able to justify images of adults in their possession.
- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations or which show a single adults with no surrounding context.
- Ensure the adults understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that are appropriately dressed.
- Report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found.

St George's Church staff and volunteers need to remain sensitive to any adults who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings. It is not appropriate for St George's Church staff and volunteers to take photographs of adults for their personal use on personal phones or cameras.

This means that St George's Church staff and volunteers should not:

- display or distribute images of adults unless they have consent to do so.
- Use images which may cause distress.
- Take images 'In secret' or taking images in situation that may be construed as being secretive.

Storing photos/videos

We will store photographs / videos of children securely, in accordance with our Safeguarding & Data Protection policies and GDPR. Photos/videos will be stored for a period of 5 years.

-Hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer and electronic photos/videos should be kept in a protected folder with restricted access.

-Photos/videos should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones. If such storage is unavoidable, the images should be kept in a password protected folder or on a device protected with a code or some other secure method of access such as fingerprint identification.

-Avoid, if possible, using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children on behalf of the church – use only cameras or devices belonging to St George's Church. This may not always be achievable, but it is best practice. If personal equipment has to be used for church purposes, delete the photographs of individual children once they have been used for the purpose for which they were taken.

10. Health and Safety and First Aid

Health and Safety will be managed as part of all activities. All buildings where activities take place will be inspected by an appropriate person at least annually and the results will be noted and reported in writing to the PCC. Health and Safety issues observed by those working with adults should be reported to the Assistant Pastor for Pastoral Care and Small Groups

A First Aid kit will be available on site and will be checked quarterly and updated as necessary.

If there is an emergency involving injury to a vulnerable adult:

- Stay calm.
- Provide immediate first aid when needed.
- Alert others to the need for help.
- Ensure that somebody is supervising the other children or young people.
- Call an ambulance if needed.
- Contact the next of kin of the person.
- Provide an appropriate handover and information about the situation to the next of kin.
- Complete the accident book.
- Consider whether there are implications for the Health & Safety policy and/or practices and report these to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

11. Abuse and Neglect of Adults²⁰

All adults, including vulnerable adults, have a fundamental human right to choose how and with whom they live, even if this appears to involve a degree of risk. They should be supported to make those choices, to live as independently as possible and treated with respect and dignity.

Who Abuses Adults?

Potentially anyone, adult, or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son, or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer.
- Neighbours.
- Paid carers.
- Workers in places of worship.
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service.
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.

Relatives who are Main Carers

Carers can experience considerable stress, exhaustion and frustration without respite or support. This can lead to unintended poor care or abuse. Relatives who are the main carers may also be subject to abuse by those for whom they are caring. This abuse is often endured for long periods and unreported²¹.

Institutions

All people living in institutions are more likely to have a degree of vulnerability. The Care Quality Commission²² in England has responsibility for inspecting and regulating the quality of care in institutions such as residential care homes, domiciliary care services and hospitals. In addition, the Local Government Ombudsman²³ deals with complaints that relate to adult social care.

The HM Inspectorate of Prisons²⁴ in England inspects prisons. Some members of the parish may be visiting adults in institutions - hospitals, prisons, and residential homes. If, as part of these responsibilities, they have concerns about the care being given and/or the way that someone is being treated, the DSA should be contacted. You can also refer directly to the institution or raise concerns with the appropriate inspection and/or complaints body.

Definitions of Adult Abuse

The UK central government document "[Care and Support Statutory guidance](#)" categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- **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 pressurised 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 or 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.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Domestic abuse** that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit, and humiliate, often behind closed doors.
- **Organisational abuse** including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Modern Slavery** including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment²⁵.

²⁰ Further information is available in the [Type of Abuse Fact Sheet](#).

²¹ Further information is available from the [Carers Trust](#).

²² [The Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#). Also note that [The Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman \(PHSO\)](#) deals with complaints that relate to the NHS, including GP services.

²³ [The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

²⁴ [The Prison and Probation Ombudsman](#)

²⁵ [The Clewer Initiative](#) is currently supporting parishes to recognise and raise awareness of all aspects of modern slavery. For additional further information see anti-slavery partnerships at [Unseen](#).

12. What to do if- you are worried about the safety of an adult

1. Respond well to the victim/survivor, if it is a direct disclosure, to ensure they feel listened to and taken seriously. Explain what will happen next and check out support requirements. They should be informed that the information they disclose may be shared with statutory agencies, if there is a current risk to children, young people, or vulnerable adults. Confidentiality should never be promised to anyone disclosing a concern or making an allegation. Only tell those who need to know.

2. At any time if you feel out of your depth, ask if the adult would mind a 2nd worker listening with you.

3. Emergency: If you are worried that an adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm or a crime is being committed, you should follow this advice:

- Call the police or an ambulance on 999.

4. Non-emergency: If you are worried about an adult but you do not think they are at risk of immediate harm you should seek advice. If you think a crime has been committed and it is not an emergency, then contact police on 101.

Discuss your concerns with the **(Church Safeguarding Team):**

- Parish Safeguarding Coordinator/ Ministry Lead (unless they are the subject of the concern), or the rector / clergy (unless they are the subject of the concerns). They must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) within 24 hours.

5. If the 'Church Safeguarding Team' or the DSA are not available within 24 hours, contact Adult Social Care and/or the police directly, if the concern is that an adult is being abused. Advise the 'Safeguarding Team' as soon as possible that you have made a referral; they will advise the DSA. If in doubt don't delay – seek advice from statutory agencies.

6. If you are concerned about someone you know, and it is safe to do so, speak to them and explain why you are concerned. Listen to what they say and ask what they would like you to do about the concern. Always try and get them to agree to getting help-but if they don't agree a referral still may need to be made anyway (*if a crime has been or is being committed or someone is at risk of significant harm*).

7. Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards. Always sign and date the record. Keep it factual. Pass on a copy to the 'Safeguarding Team'.

The records should be kept secure and confidential using the Cause for concern form. The same procedure is to be followed in non-recent abuse.

Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

Whenever an adult reports that they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing harm to others, the initial response should be limited to listening carefully to the adult. If someone makes a disclosure this might be the only time, they will tell someone.

Respond

Do:

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like who, what, when where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer assurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell the 'church safeguarding team', DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Tell the adult what you are going to do next.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g., that you won't share the information, or that the subject of concerns or allegations will be punished).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate or contaminate any evidence.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do not talk to other workers outside of the safeguarding team about your concern.
- Do a physical or medical examination.
- If the child or young person makes a disclosure by email or other electronic means do not respond using electronic means but report the disclosure to the 'safeguarding team'.

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible using the cause for concern form.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place, and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report

- If there is immediate danger to an adult contact the police.
- Otherwise report to the ministry lead/ Safeguarding Officer/rector immediately.
- Within 24 hours the PSC/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA.
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours.

If there is any doubt seek advice from Adult Social Care or the police.

13. What to do if- a person posing a risk has asked to, or has, joined the church

The House of Bishops Safeguarding policy states *'The Church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community whom may present a known risk'*.

This means that there are likely to be those with criminal convictions for sexual offences and other forms of abuse attending church. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are reasons for considering that they still might pose a potential risk to others. This is not an uncommon situation.

Where people may pose a risk to others their position in St George's will need to be carefully and sensitively considered/assessed to decide whether they pose a present risk to others and to put in place arrangements to ensure that these risks are mitigated. In these circumstances it is not only about monitoring individuals but offering them support to lead a fulfilled life. As such the church has an important role contributing to the prevention of future abuse.

If the 'safeguarding team' become aware that a person who poses or may pose a risk wishes to join St George's, they will contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory (DSA) Team immediately and they will help lead the process.

The DSA team will undertake a risk assessment and manage the development of a Risk Management Plan, known as a Safeguarding Agreement.

The process will involve the person posing a risk and the 'Church Safeguarding Team' and, if involved, statutory agencies. Who is involved will depend on the case. The Safeguarding Agreement will be periodically monitored and reviewed by the DSA team in collaboration with others.

If a person is assessed as posing a risk to children or adults, the DSA, together with any statutory agencies involved, will support the parish to:

- Form a small group of people to offer pastoral support, friendship and to monitor the person posing a risk.
- Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality unless there is a breach of the agreement, and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- Require the person to worship elsewhere if his/her victim or members of the victim's family worship at St George's.
- Ensure the person posing a risk is never offered any official role or office in the church or allowed to take up such a role, for example that of churchwarden, the leading of services, or any in which a child or vulnerable adult may, as a result, place trust in that person.
- Consider whether, with the person's agreement and that of any statutory authorities involved, the congregation should be informed.
- Meet with the person posing a risk and allow them to contribute to the drafting of a Safeguarding Agreement, setting out the parameters of his/her behaviour in the church setting.

Should the respondent refuse to sign the agreement the DSA will advise St George's and will liaise the relevant agencies, as required, to seek a resolution. Should the agreement be breached, then the DSA must be informed immediately who will liaise with the statutory agencies, as required.

Discuss your concerns with the:

- Parish Safeguarding Coordinator/ Ministry lead (unless they are subject of the concern) or the rector / clergy (unless they are subject of the concerns) **they must contact the DSA within 24 hours.**

14. Expressing Concerns and Whistle blowing (Co-workers, Co-voluntary workers, clergy)

We adopt the Diocese of Lincoln ‘Expressing Concerns and ‘Whistleblowing’: policy and guidance’.

“The pattern of living that is revealed through Jesus in his relationships with others means that abuse of any kind is emphatically contrary to the will of God and an affront to human dignity. This places a heavy responsibility upon the Church and its members to do everything possible to prevent or halt it.” – Responding Well to Domestic Abuse 2017, (section 1.2, pg. 8)

The above statement is held true by us all committing to the premise that Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: given this, encouraging people to express concerns appropriately and in a timely fashion is an important aspect of a strong safeguarding culture. Additionally, ‘whistleblowing’ has been recognised as having an important place in developing a strong safeguarding culture within organisations. At the simplest level, anyone can spot a genuine concern. At a more fundamental level, organisations – including the church – can become hierarchical and opaque and focus more on protecting the organisation rather than responding appropriately to the concern being raised. This can make it difficult for people within an organisation to share their concerns. A strong whistleblowing policy recognises the importance of authorising those who may or may not hold positions of structural influence within the organisation to feel confident enough to speak out, should they believe that safeguarding concerns are not being properly followed up. It ensures that they will be listened to, their concerns will be investigated, and they will be protected from any negative consequences.

The aim of this policy and associated guidance is to provide a clear and transparent way for anyone involved in the diocesan office, parish, church, benefice, or church project within the Diocese of Lincoln to raise genuine concerns regarding poor practice that impacts upon the safety or wellbeing of all those to whom they seek to minister within local parishes, church led projects or through the diocesan office. This whistle blowing policy also aims to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.

This policy and guidance provide a simple set of steps to deal with concerns, ensuring that people are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns appear to be unfounded.

The policy and guidance applies to everyone involved in the diocesan office and parishes, churches and benefices in the Diocese of Lincoln, and all workers who are involved in either a paid or voluntary basis.

Like all safeguarding policies, this policy should be easily available for all – for instance at the back of church and on the church and diocesan website. It should not be necessary for someone who wants to see this policy to ask a leader within the church to provide it.

Our Commitment:

The diocesan office and each parish, church, benefice, or church project within the Diocese of Lincoln

- Recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Recognises that no other concern or responsibility, however genuine, outweighs the need to prioritise the welfare of children or of adults at risk of abuse, at all times.
- Welcomes, encourages, and urges anyone who is concerned about any aspect of our safeguarding practice or provision to raise those concerns, as outlined in the Guidance below.
- Welcomes, encourages, and urges anyone who is concerned about any safety and welfare of a child or adult to report those concerns.
- Undertakes to treat all such concerns seriously.
- Guarantees that no-one who raises any concern in good faith, even if those concerns are ultimately found to be unfounded, will face any adverse consequences whatsoever.

Whistleblowing Procedure

If you have concerns:

- that your church is not following correct safeguarding practice and efforts to raise this has met with resistance
- Or
- that specific concerns that you have raised have not been properly followed up in line with safeguarding guidance

You should

- Raise your concerns formally by telephone, in person or in writing with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser making it clear that you are doing this as a whistle-blower. safeguarding@lincoln.anglian.org or ring 01522504050
- If your concerns relate to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, then you should raise your concerns with the Diocesan Secretary David.Dadswell@lincoln.anglican.org or ring 01522504032
- If you are unable to take your concerns to either of these then you should approach the Independent Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Safeguarding Panel pat.obrien@lincoln.anglican.org or ring 01522504039; leave your contact details and the Chair will get in touch with you.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness. If you agree to this, you will be offered help and support.

What will happen after you have raised your concern?

1. You will receive written confirmation within five working days that your concerns have been received.
2. If the concerns you have shared relate to the safeguarding of a child, young person or vulnerable adult **and these concerns have not previously been reported** then the concerns will be passed on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for immediate follow up in line with safeguarding procedures.
3. If you are concerned that safeguarding concerns about specific children, young people or adults and/or the behaviour of church officers which you have already reported have not been properly followed up, an initial investigation will be carried out by the person to whom you reported your concerns to establish how the concerns you raised were responded to.
4. You should receive an initial response within 5 working days, as to whether the person to whom you reported your concerns believes your concerns to be reasonable and as to whether the use of this policy is appropriate in these circumstances.
5. You may be contacted and asked for clarification or further details.
6. If the senior member of staff decides that your concerns are reasonably founded they will take immediate steps to ensure that the concerns you raise are appropriately investigated to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded.
7. They will also instigate an investigation as to why the concerns you raised in the first place were not responded to appropriately. They may commission a member of staff or external consultant to complete this where appropriate.
8. They will inform the chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel and the relevant department head that a whistleblowing issue has arisen.
9. Disciplinary action will be taken in line with disciplinary procedures if the investigation finds that is appropriate.
10. If the investigation identifies practice, systemic or organisational errors or issues prompt action will be taken to rectify these.
11. When the investigation is completed, you will be told the outcome (although there may be some aspects which will remain confidential, for instance the outcome of disciplinary proceeding).
12. If you are unhappy with the outcome then a desk review of the investigation should be passed onto the independent chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) (if they were not already the recipient of the disclosure), or another independent member of the panel. They will then meet you to discuss the outcome.

15. Identity checking for DBS (criminal record) checks

The role of identity checker is an important one because the identity checker verifies the identity of the person applying for the DBS check. The identity checker will always be a person who has undergone a DBS check. Identity checking will be carried out in accordance with DBS and Diocese of Lincoln guidelines.

16. Implementation of the policy

The Safeguarding Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring the policy to see that it is being put into practice. She will be supported by the PCC* members, who have the ultimate responsibility for safeguarding

17. Procedure for regular reporting to the PCC

The Safeguarding Coordinator will report annually to the PCC on adult safeguarding matters or after any incident with vulnerable adult protection implications (taking care to preserve confidentiality as necessary). The PCC will be kept informed on at least an annual basis of the scope of current adult pastoral activities as this is necessary for them to fulfil their duties as charity trustees and also for insurance purposes.

These procedures and guidelines were reviewed and agreed by the Parochial Church Council.

Signed:

Rector: Revd Canon Martyn Taylor

Churchwardens: Koleh Rees, Gordon McKechnie

Date: 4th December 2023

Language

The term “**vulnerable adult**” refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Please note that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect

. Some factors that increase vulnerability include:

- • A mental illness, chronic or acute
- • A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- • A learning disability
- • A physical illness
- • Dementia
- • An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- • Failing faculties of old age
- • Those who are homeless
- • Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- • Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- • Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- • A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma

These factors may not exist in isolation; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia; or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.

Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- All survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- Domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- Working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- Valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- Raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- Ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- Working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- Identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one please contact Helen Leech, Parish Safeguarding officer

Policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders

It is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed. This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

1. As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, we aim to comply fully with the Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against anyone who is the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. We are committed to the fair treatment of our volunteers & staff, potential volunteers & staff or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical / mental disability, or offending background.
3. This policy will be made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
4. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all to achieve the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applicants from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview on the basis of their aptitude, skills, qualifications and experience in relation to the requirements of the post.
5. A DBS check is only requested when it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS check is required, the recruitment information will contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
6. Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We guarantee that this information is only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
7. We ensure that all those who are involved in the recruitment process will have suitable guidance to enable them to identify and assess the relevance of the offence in relation to the position applied for. We also ensure that they receive appropriate guidance on the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. At interview or in a later separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position applied for could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
9. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
10. We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the offence and the relevance of the offence in relation to the position applied for. The factors taken into account will include the responsibilities of the position, the vulnerability of the customer group, the nature of the offence(s), the number and pattern of the offences (if there is more than one), how long ago the offence(s) occurred and the age of the offender when the offence(s) occurred.