

Policy and procedures for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People in our Church.

The Parish of St George's, Stamford

Updated: December 2023

Date of next review: November 2024

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Version History

Year	Changes
2014-15	Published.
2015-16	Updated contact details.
2016-17	Added toileting section.
2017-18	Added one to one situations section. Updated contact details.
2018-19	Added Photography section. Added Abuse and Neglect of Children section. Added procedures for lost children, and for children attending sessions without consent. Updated the safe recruiting, toileting sections, and clarified section 12 also applies for additional activities. Updated the registration section to include reference to our transport policy for sessions and referenced GDPR. Referenced private arrangements in the use of social media section. Added Policies on responding to domestic abuse and the recruitment of ex-offenders.
2019-20	Updated toileting section to reflect the move to a new building for St George's Church Place. Updated What do if sections. Added Expressing Concerns and Whistle blowing section. Added transportation section.
2020-21	Added Young Helpers policy. Updated contact details. Updated social media and Photography sections.
2021-22	-
2022-23	Updated toileting, Registration, photography sections. Updated expressing concerns and whistle blowing section.

The Parish of St Georges, Stamford

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on:
4th December 2023.

The PCC affirms the principles of the House of Bishops' Policy for Safeguarding Children (contained in Protecting All God's Children) and is committed to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of the children and young people in its care.

The PCC will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. The coordinator will ensure that any concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the **Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser**. The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, if not a member of the PCC, will have the right to attend its meetings and will report to it at least annually on the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that a person is nominated to act as somebody to whom children may talk to about any problems, if they so wish. This person will, if possible, be somebody who is accessible to the children and who does not have responsibilities for children within the parish.
- Display in church premises where children's activities take place this policy statement with contact details of the Coordinator and DBS Checker, along with the Childline and Parentline contact details.
- Ensure that all those authorised to work with children or who are in a position of authority are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice inline with Church of England national policy, and are trained, resourced, and supported. This will include providing them with a copy of this policy.
- Ensure that only authorized people work with children and that all work with children is carried out within appropriate accountability structures.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Review the implementation of the child protection policy, procedures, and practices at least annually.
- Work to create a culture of informed vigilance which takes children seriously.
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities to ensure their full integration and protection within the church community.
- Ensure that a health and safety policy and the appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed periodically.
- Act promptly on allegations or suspicions of abuse using the procedure laid down by the Diocese of Lincoln.
- Respond promptly to any complaints received regarding children's work or the safeguarding of children.

- Ensure that all new PCC members have access to this policy (***via MyChurchSuite or paper copy available in the Church office***) and are made aware of the need to read and familiarise themselves with the following House of Bishops policies so that they are aware of their responsibilities:

1. **Promoting a safer Church**
2. **Protecting all God's Children**
3. **Parish Safeguarding Handbook**
4. **Key Roles and responsibilities of Church Office holders**
5. **Responding Well**
6. **Safer Recruitment**
7. **Responding to Domestic Abuse**

- Cooperate fully with investigations by statutory agencies and will not conduct its own investigations.

- Seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse.

- Care for and supervise any member of the church community known to have offended against a child while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. The PCC has a duty to ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored using the authorised agreements from the House of Bishops policy. The PCC should ensure that those in ministry in the parish are aware of any license requirements and how and when to liaise with statutory agencies.

Our Parish Safeguarding Coordinator is **Helen Leech**

She may be contacted by:

Tel: 01780 310020 Email: safeguarding@stgeorgeschurch.net
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Our DBS identity checker is **Joseph Caseley**

He may be contacted by:

Tel: 01780 481800 Email: joseph.caseley@stgeorgeschurch.net
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Our Children and Young people advocate is Helen Leech. Contact details as above

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

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 Child 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 children or young people. **They should sign a declaration afterwards saying that they have read and understood them.**

2. Safe recruiting

When appointing/recruiting leaders and helpers for work with children and young people, 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. Providing 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>

Young Helpers

Helping in activities for children can be an excellent opportunity for people under 18 to participate in church life.

A five-year age gap between these young people and the children they are helping with shall be put in place, and they will be supervised by an adult who has been safely recruited, and who can take overall responsibility for the leadership of the group.

An older child who is helping out cannot be considered to be the equivalent of an adult. Therefore, two adults should be present with children at all time, following lone working guidance.

3. Support, supervision, and training

All those involved in working with children and young people will ensure that there is always more than one responsible adult available so that there is mutual supervision. Should one of the adults become ill or get called away, the other adult will call for additional help. In emergency situations where an individual cannot avoid working with children on his/her own because an unforeseen situation has arisen, he/she will inform the Ministry Leader (or priest) of the situation, if at all possible, at the time it arises, and a note will be kept by the Safeguarding Team.

Those who work with children and young people will be given the opportunity to review their work with the Ministry Leader. 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 will hold training events on Child Protection 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 should attend. All volunteers must complete the minimum training required.

4. Minimum staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels set out in Protecting All God's Children will be maintained. These are as follows:

Age	Number of Leaders
0 to 2 years	1 leader to every 3 children
2 to 3 years	1 leader to every 4 children
3 to 8 years	1 leader to every 8 children
8 +	1 leader for the first 8 children followed by 1 to 12

Notwithstanding these minimum levels, each group should have at least 2 adult workers present in each group and a gender balance should be maintained in mixed gender groups.

In an emergency, and where two workers are not present then assistance will be sought from the church family. In this instance the lack of workers will be reported to the Ministry Leader in order to seek advice from the PCC on recruiting volunteers. In Children's ministry where there is a lack of workers two groups will combine. In Youth Ministry, particularly Pathfinders, young people will be escorted back to the church if there is not sufficient supervision.

Additional adult support may be required if children are being taken off site and are undertaking physical activities or if necessitated by other circumstances. This will be assessed by the leaders of these activities. Decisions about supervision and support levels for specific activities should always be included in the event planning and the risk assessment where one is required to be completed.

Adults who assist very occasionally or as a one-off must be responsible to an appointed leader. The same applies to young people under the age of 18. Adults who assist more regularly will be appointed formally using the safer recruitment procedures.

5. Code of Behaviour

The PCC commits to the following Code of Behaviour which those who work with children and young people are expected to follow:

You should:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Provide a Christian example you wish others to follow.
- Provide an example of good conduct that you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that there are at least two adults present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect personal privacy.
- Be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a responsible way.
- Report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance.
- Only use social media and email in accordance with paragraph 14 below.

You should not:

- Ever hit a child or young person.
- Play rough, physical, or sexually provocative games.
- Touch inappropriately.
- Show favouritism to any one child, young person, or group.
- Give lifts to children on their own or on your own. If it is unavoidable ask the child to sit in the back of the vehicle and inform another adult where possible.
- Invite a child or young person to the youth leader/worker's home alone unless responding to an emergency situation, in which case the relevant people should be contacted.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g., initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.
- Allow unknown adult's access to children. A known person should always accompany visitors.
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children/young people.
- Befriend children, young people on social media;
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

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' child protection policy contains (at page 33) guidance on Confidentiality see also appendix 1 of Promoting a safe church. 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 children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The PCC understands both the need for confidentiality and the requirement to disclose information to protect those who are vulnerable.

Regulated activity (helping with toileting).

In all Children's crèche (0-4's) sessions where the parents are not present

-Only leaders/volunteers with appropriate DBS clearance listed on **the 'permitted volunteer list'** are able to help, following our code of behaviour for leaders/volunteers.

-They must inform the session leader they are taking the child(ren) to the toilet.

- If the child requires more help (or nappy changing), 1-2 leaders/volunteers shall take the child to the rear downstairs toilet or ladies' toilet.

-On a Sunday morning a mobile changing set is provided for use in the session room if staffing levels do not allow two leaders to take the child to the toilet. Assistance can be requested from the Children's & Families Minister.

In all Children's (4-11's) sessions where parents are not present

-Only leaders/volunteers with appropriate DBS clearance listed on **the 'permitted volunteer list'** are able to help, following our code of behaviour for leaders/volunteers.

- They must inform the session leader they are taking the child(ren) to the toilet.

- If the child just requires escorting to the toilet, only one leader/volunteer is required.

- The leader/volunteer does not need to enter to the toilet. They will wait by door leading to the toilet's corridor in the Main Hall.

-If the child requires more help (or nappy changing), 1-2 leaders/volunteers shall take the child to the rear downstairs toilet or ladies' toilet. **Assistance can be requested from the Children's & Families Minister.**

In all Children's (0-11's) family and all-age session where parents are present

-Parents are responsible for helping their children with going to the toilet in activities which are family focused, but which children attend with their parents.

-However, leaders/volunteers with appropriate DBS clearance will have oversight following the above guidance.

In all Youth sessions (11-18's)

-Young people are to use the nearest toilets to the activity areas.

-Staff with support from volunteers during sessions will monitor the movements of young people at risk, and if they move into an unsupervised part of 1 Cheyne Lane following good & safe practice shall intervene.

6. Registration

A registration form will be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. This does not include activities such as church services, which would take place regardless of whether children are present. Neither does it include activities which are family focused but which children attend with their parents.

The form will include the following information:

- *Name and address*
 - *Date of birth*
 - *Emergency contact details*
 - *Medical information*
 - *Any special needs or learning difficulties*
 - *Any activities that the child or young person is unable to take part in*
 - *Consent for emergency medical treatment*
 - *Consent for photographs and videos if relevant*
 - *Consent for communication for young people aged 13 upwards*
- Young people aged 11 upwards to complete 'Code of conduct'. No child under 11 may attend a session without a parent signing in and out their child and collecting a 'collection ticket' where applicable.
- All personal details and hard copy registration forms will be stored securely, not used for any other purpose, and shredded or disposed of securely when out of date or no longer in use in accordance to our 'Data Privacy Notice'.
 - These details will also be held on the church's secure online database, where parents will be able to log in and check/edit the information held on their children. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that contact and medical information for their child is kept up to date, and a reminder about this will be sent by email at the start of each school year (**September**).

Contingency plan for dealing with children/young people turning up without invites and parental permissions to non-family / non-all age sessions

Mid-Week/Sunday Groups

a) Arrival with a parent/guardian

1. Ask the parent/guardian to complete a '**Registration Form**' for that child.
2. Ask the parent to complete any session permission forms that are needed E.g., **St George's Football Club** if their child plans on returning to the group.

B) Arrival without a parent/guardian

1. If on a Sunday Morning at a children's or youth group, the leader shall take the child back to church to find their parents/guardian to complete a '**Registration Form**' and explain how registration normally works.
2. If at a mid-week youth group, the leader shall telephone the parents/guardian to notify them that the child is at the group. The leader shall obtain details of any particular needs the child may have.

Events in Church or at another venue

a) Arrival with a parent/guardian

1. The leader shall check with the event/session leader if there is capacity for the child to join the event. It should be explained to the parent/guardian that there may not be a space for their child to join the event.
2. If there is space, ask the parent/ guardian to complete the '**Event Permission Form**' for that child. The leader shall obtain details of any particular needs the child may have.
3. Explain to them their responsibilities to escort their child to and from the session, ensuring their road safety, any specific requirements and safety points to all attendees for the event. ***(This will include timing, activities, refreshments and emergency contact details and Leaders leading the trip).***

b) Arrival without a parent/guardian

1. The leader shall check with the event/session leader if there is capacity for the child to join the event.
2. The leader shall obtain the parent(s)/guardian's telephone number to notify them that their child is at the event, and for their permission for the child to attend if there is space. The leader shall obtain details of any particular needs the child may have.
3. Explain to them their responsibilities to escort their child to and from the session, ensuring their road safety, any specific requirements and safety points to all attendees for the event. ***(This will include timing, activities, refreshments and emergency contact details and Leaders leading the trip).***

8. Activities away from the church premises or additional activities on church premises

Adequate arrangements will be made for children's and young people's activities which take place away from church premises, or additional activities on church premises as follows:

- Consent to attend an additional activity must be obtained in advance from a parent/guardian/carer.
- Details of the event must be given in advance and consent forms received in advance of the event taking place.
- Arrangements for sleeping are to be allocated on single sex basis, and parents are to be informed of any other sleeping arrangements in advance.
- Details of the arrangements will be given to the Safeguarding Team.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken, or existing risk assessments checked that they cover the activity, and confirmation obtained that the event is covered by PCC* insurance.
- A detailed programme and list of contacts should be left with someone in the parish
- A leader will be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

7. 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 young people (11-18) on behalf of the church is a regulated activity.

Guidance for transporting young people (11-18) on behalf of the church:

- A risk assessment shall be completed before the transport arrangement takes place using the template.
- The relevant '**Transport Check list**' shall be followed depending on the 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
- Consideration given to permission from parents or carers using the permission form, and the need for escorts.
- 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 out-going 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.
- At collection or dropping off points no child or young person should be on their own and the driver should make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult.

8. Health and Safety and First Aid

Health and Safety will be managed as part of all activities. All buildings where activities with children and young people 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 or other appropriate church organisation. Health and Safety issues observed by those working with children and young people should be reported to the Safeguarding Team.

A First Aid kit will be available on site and will be checked quarterly and updated as necessary. An accident book is maintained at all places where activities with children and young people take place.

If there is an emergency involving injury to a child or young person:

- 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 parents/guardians of the child or young person.
- Provide an appropriate handover and information about the situation to the parents/guardians.
- Complete the accident book.
- Consider whether there are implications for the Health & Safety policy and/or practices and report these to the Safeguarding Team.

Lost Children and Young Person Procedure for sessions where parents are not present

Basic steps: Gather, sweep, contact child/young person & parent/guardian.

Sunday & Mid-Week Groups

1. The leaders shall gather all the children/ young people together from the group in a central location. 2 leaders are to remain with the group. One of the two leaders is to phone the missing child/young person. *[Contact details can be found in the group folders.]*
2. 1 x Leader is to search the front of the building.
3. 1 x Leader is to search the back of the building.

If the child/young person is not found at this point proceed:

4. 1 of the 2 leaders with the main group of children/ young people is to telephone the parent/guardian to ask if this is normal behaviour for the child. ***[No more information than this question & the fact the child has gone missing.]***
5. 2 x Leaders who previously searched the front & back of building to start a local area search.
6. ***If child / young person still not found telephone the police on 999, and the parent/guardian.***

Events in Church

1. The leaders shall gather all the children/ young people together from the group in the south or north transept. 2 leaders are to remain with the group. One of the two leaders is to phone the missing child/young person. *[Contact details can be found in the group folders.]*
2. 1 x Leader is to search the front of the Church- ***exit from the main door.***
3. 1 x Leader is to search the back of the Church- ***exit from the South door.***

If child/young person is not found at this point proceed:

4. 1 of the 2 leaders with the main group of children/ young people is to telephone the parent/ guardian to ask if this is normal behaviour for the child. ***[No more information than this question & the fact the child has gone missing.]***
5. 2 x Leaders who previously searched the front & back of building to start a local area search.
6. ***If child / young person still not found telephone the police on 999, and the parent/guardian.***

Events at another venue

1. The leaders shall gather all the children/ young people together from the group in a central location. 2 leaders are to remain with the group. One of the two leaders is to phone the missing child/young person. *[Contact details can be found in the group folders.]*
2. **Notify Venue leaders.**
3. 1 x Leader is to search the front of the building.
4. 1 x Leader is to search the back of the building.

If child/young person is not found at this point proceed:

5. 1 of the 2 leaders with the main group of children/ young people is to telephone the parent/guardian to ask if this is normal behaviour for the child. ***[No more information than this question & the fact the child has gone missing.]***
6. 2 x Leaders who previously searched the front & back of building to start a local area search.
7. ***If child / young person still not found telephone the police on 999, and the parent/guardian.***

9. Use of social media, email and texting

For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face to face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms. Churches' engagement with social media should be carried out with a constantly updating understanding of how to use it responsibly. All those involved in working with children and young people will exercise care in the use of social media and respect the principles set out below. It is important to balance user-friendly workability, and good quality youth work and ministry, with keeping children, young people safe.

All communication by electronic means or by texting will take place on St George's owned devices and shared accounts only. For any electronic type of communication relating to children under the age of 11 it must be conducted via their parents.

The rest of the principles relate to communication with children and young people aged 11 and over. The key point is that communication should be in a context of transparency and accountability.

- Electronic communication and texting on behalf of St George's Church should only be used for reasons relating to work and not for general socialising purposes.
- Other leaders should be aware of the situations in which these means of communication are being used.
- Leaders, workers and volunteers should not invite young people from church activities to their personal social networking page but may respond to requests where appropriate, as long as the **young person is 18 yrs. or over.**
- Communication on social media and texts with **young people under age of 18yrs** will only be through a St George's group account and not through individual pages.
- **There should be no social media communication on an individual basis with yp under 13years.**
- Where possible, group pages should be used on social media for communicating.
- Care should be exercised in posting to social media as comments made on the spur of the moment may not always come out as intended and can be passed on extremely quickly around a large audience.
- Communication by electronic means or texting with young people should never take place during school hours and should be kept within the **hours of 9am – 9pm.**
- Where possible, email and messaging should take place to and within groups rather than individuals.
- Leaders, workers, and volunteers should **not** give personal mobile phone numbers to young people.
- Do not use visual media (e.g., Skype, Facetime) for conversations with young people that can enable access to personal information. Instead use only video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom) following the online youth Risk Assessment.
- Only St George's Church email addresses shall be used for communication with young people. Another leader shall have access to these email accounts.
- Records of communications will be kept just as they would be for written communication
- The principles for the use of social media will be communicated to children and young people.

10. Photography and Videos

Working with children and young people 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 children and young people, and should only be used with the consent of the person in the image:

- Children under the age 11 (Year 6): consent should be gained their parents via a permission form.
- Young People aged 11+ (Year 7-12): consent should be gained from parents via a permission form, and the young people themselves verbally during sessions where they are taken.
- Young People aged 17+ (Year 12-13): consent should be gained from the young people themselves verbally during sessions where they are taken.

Please note that the above list shows 'all you need to do', rather than 'all you might want to do'.

Consent for wide-angle group images in a public space

Consent is not needed if children 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 child who appears in the photograph.

In these circumstances, organisers should make clear to all participants and parents that these kinds of images will be taken, and for what purposes. A verbal notice can be given out at the beginning of the session, asking that any parent who objects to images being made of their child should either remove their child 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

- Let parents and young people know how, where, and in what context an image may be used.
- Be able to justify images of children and young person in their possession.
- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations or which show a single child or young people with no surrounding context.
- Ensure the child/young person 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 children or young people 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 children 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 children or young people unless they have consent to do so from parents/carers.
- 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, the delete the photographs of individual children once they have been used for the purpose for which they were taken.

Guidance on photos/videos by parents and others at activities

There will be circumstances in which parents and other attendees at activities want to take photographs. For youth events in particular, many young people will have a camera on their mobile phone and will regularly post images of themselves and their friends on social media.

- Decide on the activity approach to photographs/filming for 'attendees.
- Clarify and promote the photography rules to all participants.
- Warn parents, attendees and young people that there can be negative consequences to sharing images linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media – and care should be taken about 'tagging';
- Children who are in care should not be photographed as this could put them at risk;
- For young people, you may wish to consider a discussion amongst your group regarding how they wish the images they take of each other to be used, and what restrictions they feel should be observed. This will be more meaningful and effective with young people than a set of rules imposed by adult leaders.

11. One to one situations

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place. It is however, appropriate to state that where there is a need, agreed with a line manager and parents/carers, for a St George's Church staff member or volunteer to be alone with a child or young person, certain procedures and explicit safeguards must in place. **See one to one policy.**

One to one situations have the potential to make a child/young person more vulnerable to harm by those seek to exploit their position of trust. St George's Church staff and volunteers working in one-to-one settings with children and young people may also be more vulnerable too unjust or unfounded allegations bring made against them.

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

There are occasions where line managers will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one-to-one work. These assessments should take into account the individual needs of the child/young person and the individual worker and arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Pre-arranged meetings with children and young people should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the line management.

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

- Ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed.
- Avoid meeting with a child or young person in remote, secluded areas.
- Always inform other colleagues and parents/carers about the contact(S) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.
- Avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy.
- Always report any situation where a child or young person becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.
- Carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child or young person when in one-to-one situations.

One To One Policy

St George's Church staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with young people and ensure that there are at least two adults present when working with young people. This is to ensure the safety of both the young person and the St George's Church staff and volunteers.

However, there can be benefits to working with young people on a one-to-one basis. In the event that there is a need for a St George's Church staff member or volunteer to be in a one-to-one situation with a young person, the following guidelines are to be adhered to.

-Ensure that a St George's Church staff member knows when and where this meeting is taking place. To determine the appropriate person, see your line manager. Report to the person 'Next in line' when planning to be in a lone working situation with a young person.

-Meet in a public, open place. Meet in a place where there are likely to be other adults present. Make it as easy as possible for others to see you. Appropriate meeting places may be coffee shops or cafes.

-Do not meet a young person's, or your own home. Unless in extreme circumstances there should be no need for a worker to be alone in a home with a young person. Keep meetings public.

-Keep records of the meeting, see meeting record template. Record when and where the meeting took place and what happened in the meeting. These records need to be kept and be available for inspection where necessary.

-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.

12. Abuse and Neglect of Children¹⁷

The abuse of children and young people can take many forms. They have the same right to protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection.

Statutory Definitions

The UK central government document "[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)" categorises and defines child abuse in terms of:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating.
- **Emotional abuse** including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying).
- **Sexual abuse** including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

- **Neglect** including failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and/or access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Domestic Abuse

Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse¹⁸, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games, and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Online Abuse

With the ever-growing use of the internet, mobile telephones and online gaming (e.g. Xbox/ PlayStation), there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones, online gaming sites and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.

Electronic Images

The downloading, keeping, or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences. Such offences are sometimes referred to as non-contact sexual offences. However, it must be remembered that children will have been abused in the making of the images. The texting of sexual messages and photographs (sometimes referred to as 'sexting'-[see Fact Sheet - Sexting](#)) can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

¹⁷ Further information is available in the [Types of Abuse Fact Sheet](#).

¹⁸ This is because impairment caused by seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another (e.g. witnessing domestic violence or abuse) is included in the definition of 'harm' in the Children Act 1989, ([for more information see the Responding Well to Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Guidance](#)).

13 What to do- if you are worried about the safety of a child or young person

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 child or young person would mind a 2nd worker listening with you.
3. **Emergency:** If you are worried that a child or young person 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 a child or young person 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 Children's Social Care and/or the police directly, if the concern is that a child is being abused. Advise the 'Church 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 'Church 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 a child or young person 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 child or young person. 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 child 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 'church safeguarding team'.

Record

- Make some very brief notes using the cause for concern form at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- 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 a child 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 Children's Social Care or the police.

14. 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 'church 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.**

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. Procedure for regular reporting to the PCC

The Safeguarding Coordinator will report annually to the PCC on child protection matters or after any incident with child protection implications (taking care to preserve confidentiality as necessary). The PCC will be kept informed on at least an annual basis of all regular and one-off children's 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

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.