



Cheltenham Minster (St. Mary) with St. Matthew

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Policy & Guidelines (November 2020)

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The Parish Safeguarding Officers for vulnerable adults in this church community are Emma Abbey and Paul Collacott.

Policy for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Introduction.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society, without compromising the authority of scripture on all related issues dealt with in this policy.

The Diocese of Gloucester has sought to raise awareness of the needs of vulnerable adults, both within society in general and more particularly within the church community.

Society is recognising that people are being harmed when they are vulnerable for various reasons, whether permanently or on a temporary basis, and this abuse can take place in their own homes, in residential care, at work or in other activities including those provided by the church. Some adults, who do not see themselves as 'vulnerable' under our working definition, may still find themselves exploited, bullied or abused. The safeguarding of adults when harm occurs is the responsibility of everyone. Awareness of the ways people can suffer from harm encourages church members to be vigilant both within and outside the church community.

This document is addressed to everyone in St. Mary with St. Matthew, but especially all ordained or lay members of the church staff who have some responsibility for the pastoral care of others or who expect to have contact with vulnerable people as defined in this policy.

This policy was adopted by the PCC of St. Mary with St. Matthew, Cheltenham at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on **16th November 2020**

Churchwardens: Bill Harvey
 Clare Salisbury

Policy for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

Vulnerability.

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities, and restrictions. At some time everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is "invulnerable"; some people may consider themselves to be strong, but when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear.

Some people, by reason of their physical and social circumstances, have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to try to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person, we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains their dignity.

Vulnerability is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labelled as 'vulnerable' in the same way as a child is regarded as such. Childhood is absolute; someone under a certain age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with vulnerability.

Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

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

Principles Underlying the Policy

The church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations which create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of the people involved. A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- have their privacy respected
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible
- be able to choose how to lead their lives
- have the protection of the law
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background
- be heard within an appropriate forum.

Policy on the Safeguarding of Adults in the Church

For the purpose of this document we define adults who may be vulnerable as:

"Any young person aged 17 (not included in the 'Working with Children and Young People' policy) or any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation."

We, the PCC and members of the church of St. Mary with St. Matthew, Cheltenham commit ourselves to:

1. recognising that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives;
2. a respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister;
3. the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, aiming to ensure their wellbeing in the life of this church;
4. promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust;
5. promoting the inclusion and empowerment of all adults who may be at risk;
6. taking individual responsibility to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of adults who may be at risk and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect. (Appendix B gives more details of the types of abuse and Appendix C the action to be taken.)
7. exercising proper care in the safer recruitment practices of all appointment processes of those who will work with adults who may be at risk;
8. supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst adults who may be at risk.

Cheltenham Minster with St Matthew's adopts the national Church of England guidelines and those of the Diocese of Gloucester.

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/safeguarding/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

Each person who works with adults who may be at risk will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church (at Appendix A).

This church appoints two suitable people as the Parish Safeguarding Officers. Each should complete the Social Service training for work with Vulnerable People. (See also Appendix D.)

This Policy will be reviewed each year and will be revised as necessary.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Specific Circumstances.

This policy lays down the general principles that we, as a church, seek to apply. However there are some groups for which more specific guidance is required. These include the bible study for pupils in years 12 & 13 (which falls just outside the Child Protection legislation), the Barnabas Group and Cameo (where people who are more likely to be vulnerable are brought to the church by volunteers) and pastoral carers (who work with or visit vulnerable people in their own homes). In 2020, the Church began a Saturday Kitchen for the homeless and those living on the street. In addition to the provisions below, this is subject to a separate policy, also approved by the PCC.

1. When working with older young people, the guidelines in our policy 'Working with Children and Young People', Appendix B should, where appropriate, be applied.
2. Prayer Ministers should be aware of this policy in conjunction with their own guidelines.
3. When visiting young people, vulnerable people of any age or people known to be potentially violent formally on behalf of the Church:
 - Two people should visit if possible.
 - If only one person can go, that person should be of the same gender as the person visited and the visit should be known about by a third party who should be informed when the visit is completed. (It would be best practice for the third party to be the person in the church to whom the visitor is responsible).
 - Particularly where difficulties are anticipated, a third party should be informed about the visit and a the visitor(s) should have a mobile phone which is on at all times. A clear exit from the venue should always be available.
4. If abuse is suspected in a care home, all the evidence should be written down and the advice of the Parish Safeguarding Officers should be sought.
5. If, while an individual is providing transport to someone, an incident occurs which might be construed as improper or harming to any party, the incident should be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officers as soon as possible.
6. Where frail or unsteady people are being brought to or from church by anyone who has been formally asked to do so by the Church:
 - A wheelchair should be used from the car to a seat in the church and back again to ensure the safety of both parties.
 - Any injury should be reported as soon as possible to the Church Office and recorded in the accident book.
 - If the person falls they should **not** be picked up (in case of further injury) but made comfortable and an ambulance called. If they insist on getting up they should be encouraged not to for their own safety and the safety of others.
7. No-one, whether independently or asked by any other church member, should transport in an ordinary car anyone who cannot support themselves when standing. The person should be able to transfer from a wheelchair to a car seat without being lifted.

8. All those speaking at our services, including preachers, leaders, the music group, the drama group and anyone giving notices or displaying notices on the board or on "the screen" should be careful not to put *undue* pressure on their hearers. This is particularly relevant to discussions of giving (whether of time or money or other things).
9. Casual callers and the homeless should always be seen by a member of staff or a churchwarden. All members of the congregation should be made aware of the separate policy, guidelines and notes issued by our church.
10. When the church premises are hired to an outside agency, this agency must either provide a copy of its safeguarding policy or agree to adopt that of St Mary (Minster) with St Matthew.

Appendix B: Types of Abuse.

Abuse might occur in any of the following ways. Someone may be subjected to more than one form of abuse.

- **Spiritual Abuse** – Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, teaching or prayer ministry, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.
- **Physical Abuse** – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Psychological Abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, inappropriate blaming controlling or isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks and including misuse of email, internet and text messaging.
- **Financial or material Abuse** – including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission** – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate healthcare, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** – including discrimination on the bases of a person's race, sex, disability or sexual orientation. Examples of discrimination include: harassment, hate crime, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional Abuse** – the mistreatment or 'abuse' by a 'regime' or individual/s within an institution, e.g. a hospital, care home or day centre, or a church. It occurs where the individual's wishes or dignity are consistently or repeatedly compromised to ensure the smooth running of an institution or organisation.

Appendix C: Action to be Taken when Abuse is Suspected or if there is a Need To Safeguard.

The suspicion that a person is vulnerable to abuse or in need of safeguarding may vary from vague disquiet to clear evidence, with many intermediate levels. Information may come from different sources e.g. the individual him/herself, church or family member, fellow worker, member of staff.

Anyone with such suspicions or who has received definite information should act to safeguard the person involved. They should be aware of and record in writing any information that has been shared and the context of it. This record should be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Advice on what to do if a vulnerable adult wants to talk

Be aware that people often have difficulty expressing matters about abuse toward themselves or others.

- Let them know that you are willing to listen to anything they have to say.
- **Do not** promise them confidentiality. Explain that some things are so serious that you are required to report them to the Parish Safeguarding Officers, who may need to discuss the information with agencies such as NHS services or adult social care.
- Listen carefully to what they wish to share.
- Accept what they have to say, keep calm, and give them your full attention.
- Do not force information from them but enable them to say all they want to.
- Be sensitive to the possibility that they may have been, or feel threatened.
- Reassure the person of your support.
- Inform the person of the steps you are going to take with them or on their behalf and that you will let them know the outcome.

Recording the facts

- As soon as possible record the interview. Write an account of what you have heard or been told for future reference and keep it safe. This shouldn't be a long detailed narrative, but the key points, and what you remember someone saying or doing. It can be helpful to include direct quotes from the interview.
- If you suspect that there is a need to safeguard the person, make notes of the facts that lead you to this conclusion.

The next steps

As far as possible, encourage the abused person to seek help, possibly from the Parish Safeguarding Officers and assure them of your support in the process. The person who first suspects, or is told of alleged abuse or a need to safeguard is responsible for ensuring that the vulnerable person is heard. If that person refuses any help, advice should be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

If the person making the disclosure of abuse would like the support of an independent advocate an appropriate referral will be made. The Rector, Pastoral Minister or Parish Safeguarding Officers will be able to make such a referral.

If there is no clear way forward, the Safeguarding Officers will contact Social Services (phone: 01452 426868) or Police (phone 0845 090 1234) for advice according to the circumstances.

Where abuse arises with a 17-year old, the procedures for 'Working with Children and Young People', should be applied. The Parish Safeguarding Officers for Children and Young people should be involved and the Child Protection Unit informed.

If a member of staff, lay or ordained, is accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour the Parish Safeguarding Officers must inform the Bishop's Officer immediately. Any member of the Church with such information may go directly to the Bishop's Officer, but must also inform the Parish Safeguarding Officers of their actions.

While no one should act without due consideration, if the evidence is clear it is important to act without delay to avoid further abuse or harm. In cases where a criminal act is suspected and/or the person is thought to be in danger of imminent harm, the person with these concerns should contact the Police (phone 111). Following contact being made with the Police the Parish Safeguarding Officers will be informed immediately of this action. In all other cases the Parish Safeguarding Officers will contact Social Services (phone 01452 426868) or the Police non-emergency (phone 0845 090 1234). Any person with concerns about potential abuse may contact Social Services or the Police direct, but must then inform the Parish Safeguarding Officers of their actions.

Under **no** circumstance will the Parish Safeguarding Officers carry out an investigation. Their role is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion of abuse or the need to safeguard a vulnerable adult and provide the information to Social Services or Police, whose task it is to investigate the matter under the relevant Acts of Parliament.

The PCC will support the Parish Safeguarding Officers in their role and accept that information they may have in their possession will be shared on a strictly need to know basis.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers are:

Emma Abbey (01242) 253242

and

Paul Collacott (01242) 242245

Appendix D: Diocesan Guidelines for those in positions of trust or exercising pastoral ministry with adults who may be at risk.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Exercising any kind of ministry involves developing an understanding of ourselves and how we relate to others, how we increase the well-being of others and how we ensure our, and their own, well-being and safety.
- 1.2. People in positions of trust necessarily have power, although this may not be necessarily apparent, and respecting professional boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts making this guidance even more necessary.
 - Particular care should be exercised when ministering to people where there is a close personal friendship or family relationship.
 - Awareness of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seeking advice or supervision when these concerns arise should be developed.
 - Healing ministry should only be undertaken by designated trained diocesan staff/clergy with expertise in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.
 - Clergy and other people with pastoral responsibilities must recognise their limits and not undertake a role that can be confused with a professional role – a role that is beyond their competence or qualification (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic abuse, or their perpetrators or giving legal advice). In such instances, the person should be referred to someone with appropriate expertise and/or a professional agency/body.

2. Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

- 2.1. Conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters. People need to be aware that innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the motives and needs of that person should be questioned, and the ability to assist effectively reviewed.
- 2.2. Clergy and those with pastoral roles should consider in advance:
 - the place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, appropriate personal attire;
 - the balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby);
 - the physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past;
 - whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction;
 - the propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone, especially in the evening and the personal safety and comfort of all participants;
 - establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration;
 - • the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

3. Record keeping and privacy

- 3.1. It is a good idea to keep a note of a meeting or visit
- The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of suspicion of abuse or mistreatment
 - Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
 - Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years).
 - The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation.

4. Working with colleagues

- 4.1. The standards maintained within a pastoral relationship are equally relevant in relationships with colleagues. Harassment or bullying should never be condoned. All workers need to be aware of the possibility of stress within the work place. The needs of family should be acknowledged and all who work together should acknowledge the boundaries between work and home, allowing sufficient time for relaxation and holidays.
- 4.2. Everyone who works with vulnerable people should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to discuss their work. Such mentoring is especially necessary for those undertaking a continuing individual pastoral ministry of counselling, or when their ministry takes them outside normal church work.
- 4.3. When leaving office or relinquishing any task, those in church roles should relinquish any pastoral relationship except with the agreement of any appropriate successor.

5. Sexual conduct

- 5.1. The sexual conduct of those in church roles may have an impact on their ministry within the Church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- 5.2. A power imbalance is inherent in pastoral relationships and conduct should be of the highest standards at all times. Individuals should avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted. Responsibility should be taken for words and actions if there may be physical contact with another adult (eg a hug may be misunderstood) or discussions about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.

6. Financial integrity

- 6.1. Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.
- 6.2. Those working in a church role:
- Should never seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.

- Should never be influenced by offers of money.
- Should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Should ensure that money received by the church is be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gift received should be disclosed to the incumbent so it can be decided whether it should be accepted.
- Should take care not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk.

Appendix E: Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officers

The reason to have Parish Safeguarding Officers in each church is to ensure that others share with the staff the responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults. They will be persons to whom staff, leaders and volunteers may turn for support and advice, particularly if they have concerns about an adult or the behaviour of other workers.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers are jointly responsible with the Incumbent for the protection of vulnerable adults who come into the care of the church and for implementing this Policy.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers should:-

- Be familiar with both the Diocesan Policy and that of this Parish.
- Be familiar with the work of the church with vulnerable adults (aged 17 and over).
- Be aware of volunteers working with vulnerable adults.
- Be alert to unusual behaviour, inappropriate action or relationship on the part of any church worker (lay or ordained) with a vulnerable adult or vice versa.
- In the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know who to approach depending on the individual circumstances.
- Ensure that the church understands how vulnerable adults are best protected and assist the PCC in working towards best practice.
- Ensure that any record keeping conforms to the church's data protection policy
- Attend training in adult protection, seek advice and information on latest best practice and keep the staff and those who work with vulnerable adults updated as appropriate.
- Be clear about the insurance cover for the church so that appropriate action can be taken if necessary.
- Ensure that the Diocesan safeguarding policies are followed, including safer recruitment, modern slavery.