



Vulnerable Adult Policy

May 2017.

Theological Approach

From beginning (in the cry of a baby) to end (in the cry from the cross), the life and death of Jesus Christ illustrates the willingness of God to be vulnerable in order to share to the full our world of pain, poverty, suffering and death. In his earthly ministry, Jesus constantly showed himself to be compassionately on the side of the outcast, the marginalized and the stranger, reaching across social barriers with the inclusive love of God. This was wholly in line with the Hebrew Bible's priority concern for orphans and widows, its obligation to provide a voice for the voiceless, and its prophetic call for justice to 'roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (Amos 5.24).

The risen Christ's commission to his followers ('As the Father has sent me, so I send you' [John 20.21]) requires the Christian Church to exercise that same concern for those whom some in society treat as the outsider and the stranger, to reach across barriers of exclusion and demonstrate a love which shows itself in compassionate pastoral care and in the quest for justice in all our relationships. The heart of Christian pastoral care is this: love for God and love for our neighbour, the social expression of which is justice in all human affairs.

Everyone needs the sustaining reassurance that they are treated with the respect that is due to all human beings made in the image of God and precious to God. Those who have challenging personal situations must receive the resources they need to live independent lives with dignity. Everyone needs to know that they can live safely in a non-threatening environment.

Christian pastoral care takes place in the context of the present world, which in gospel terms is provisional. We live in the time' between God's living Word to us in Jesus Christ, and the coming of God's kingdom in its fullness, when there will be no more pain, no more tears, no more social exclusion, and no more death. In this world the Holy Spirit sustains our ministry — enabling us to do what we can within the constraints of fallenness and sin, and yet holding out the living hope that the day will come when God will be all and in all.

(Taken from the House of Bishops document 'Promoting a SafeChurch')

Principles Underlying the Policy

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. The Church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers.

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;
- should be appropriately supported so that they are able to choose how to lead their life;
- have the protection of the law;
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background;
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication;
- be heard.

The House of Bishops Policy Statement on safeguarding adults in the Church of England

The Church of England is committed to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety. Everyone, whether they see themselves as vulnerable or not, will receive respectful pastoral ministry recognising any power imbalance within such a relationship.

All church workers involved in any pastoral ministry will be recruited with care including the use of the Disclosure and Barring disclosure service when legal or appropriate. Workers will receive training and continuing support.

Any allegations of mistreatment, abuse, harassment or bullying will be responded to without delay. Whether or not the matter involves the church there will be cooperation with the police and local authority in any investigation.

Sensitive and informed pastoral care will be offered to anyone who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired: help to find appropriate specialist care either from the church or secular agencies will be offered.

What does the term Vulnerable Adult mean?

The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult', referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper who decides? issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"

In other words the people who are most likely to be the subject of mistreatment, are those people who:

- Are very frail
- Are older people
- Have a mental illness including dementia
- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have a serious physical illness

What we mean by 'Abuse'

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately, or unknowingly, causes him or her harm, endangers their life, or violates their rights.

Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological, and financial or may arise through neglect.

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

Abuse concerns the misuse of power; control and/or authority and can manifest itself as:

- Domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Racially or religiously motivated assaults
- Discrimination and oppression
- Institutional abuse

Abuse can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, place of employment, community setting and in public places (including churches and ancillary buildings).

Any act of abuse, whether a single act or repeated, is a violation of the individual human and their civil rights.

Issues of Spirituality

Within faith communities harm may be caused to vulnerable adults by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include:

- The misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline
- Oppressive teaching
- Obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries
- The denial of the rights to faith and religious practice

Any concerns in relation to these matters should be to these matters should be dealt with via the procedures outlined in guidelines in this Policy.

Spiritual growth and well being among vulnerable adults can be enhanced by:

- Making reasonable arrangements for them to attend acts of worship
- Providing for dietary, dress and other requirements of faith
- Enabling adequate and reasonable access to them by representatives of their faith community
- Accepting the integrity of the person's religious belief and spirituality.

Abuse can take various forms:

Physical Abuse

This is the ill treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury. It includes:

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Forcing
- Withholding or misuse of medication.
- Squeezing
- Drowning
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Restraining
- Biting
- Suffocation
- Killing

Emotional Abuse

This is the use of threats or fear to negate the vulnerable person's independent wishes, it includes:

- Lack of privacy/choice
- Denial of dignity
- Deprivation of social contact/deliberate isolation
- Made to feel worthless
- Lack of love or affection
- Threats
- Humiliation
- Verbal attitude
- Blaming
- Controlling
- Pressuring
- Coercion
- Fear
- Ignoring the person

Financial Abuse / Legal Abuse

This is the wilful extortion or manipulation of vulnerable adults' legal or civil rights including misappropriation of monies or goods, it may include:

- Misuse of finances/lack of money
- Theft or fraudulent use of money
- Misuse of property or possessions
- Exploitation
- Embezzlement

Neglect

This is any pattern or behaviour by another person, which seriously impairs the individual, this can include:

- Failure to intervene in situations where there is danger to the vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk
- Not giving personal care
- Deliberate withholding of aids such as hearing
- Withholding food, drink, light and clothing
- Restricting access to medical services
- Limiting choice

- Denial of social, religious, cultural contacts,
- Denial of contact with family
- Left alone unsupervised

Misuse of Medication

- Withholding medication
- Deliberate poisoning
- Inappropriate use of medication

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual act carried out without the informed consent of a vulnerable adult is abuse. It includes contact and non-contact abuse.

Non-contact abuse may include:

- Sexual remarks and suggestions
- Indecent exposure
- Intro to indecent material
- Teasing

Contact Abuse may include:

- Indecent assault
- Sexual intercourse
- Touch
- Being forced to touch another

Perpetrators of abuse may be:

- Neighbours
- Carers – informal/formal
- Volunteers
- Care practitioners
- Clergy
- Church members
- Member of a community group such as a place of worship or social club
- People who deliberately exploit vulnerable people
- Members of church visiting teams
- Relatives and other family members
- Visitors
- Professional staff
- Other service users
- Strangers
- Professional church workers

From time to time Organisations can and do abuse and cause harm by the way they conduct their day to day practice - churches and Christian groups need to be aware and sensitive to this.

Factors which may lead to abuse

Abuse can occur in any setting no matter where a person lives or where they are being cared for. Abuse can occur in residential or day care settings, in hospitals, in other people's homes churches and other places previously assumed safe, and in public places.

Abuse is more likely to occur if the vulnerable adult: -

- Rejects help
- Has a communication difficulty
- Has challenging behaviour
- Behaves in an unusual way
- Is not helpful or co-operative
- Is behaviourally disturbed or there are major changes in personality behaviour

Research has shown that mistreatment is more likely to occur if carers:

- Feel lonely or isolated and have no one to talk to
- Are under stress due to poor income or housing conditions
- Have other responsibilities i.e. work, family
- Are showing signs of physical or mental illness
- Are becoming dependant on alcohol or drugs
- Family relationships over the years have been poor
- Live where family violence is the norm

Other factors to look for include:

- Carer has their own problems
- Carers perceives the dependant adult as being deliberately awkward
- Vulnerable adult has few/no social contacts
- Vulnerable person cannot converse normally

Indicators of abuse

The lists below are purely indicators. The presence of one or more does not necessarily confirm abuse.

Physical Abuse:

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising or burns of unusual location or type
- Finger marks
- Being excessively withdrawn and or compliant
- Appearing frightened of / avoiding physical contact

Emotional Abuse:

- Person in state of neglect
- Difficulty in making choices because they have never been allowed to make them for themselves
- Low self esteem
- Making derogatory statements about a person's ability when they are present

Individual features:

- Very eager to please and appear subservient
- Unusual weight gain / loss
- Inappropriately dressed
- Change in appetite
- Tearfulness
- Unkept / unwashed

Financial Abuse:

- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets
- Inability to budget and pay bills that is out of character with previous behaviour
- When a trustee of have the 'Power of attorney' not making appropriate arrangements for the use of that money or property. Refer them to the good practice guidance we have written.

Neglect:

- Excessively and inappropriately craving attention
- Marked change in relationship between vulnerable adult and others
- Poor physical state of person and / or their home

Sexual Abuse:

- A change in the person's usual behaviour
- Withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone
- Overt sexual behaviour / language by the vulnerable person
- Self inflicted injury
- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothes

Abuse can be intentional or unintentional, passive (e.g.) neglect, or active (e.g.) hitting. It may be part of a significant pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident. It can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, community settings - anywhere.

A single act of abuse or repeated acts of abuse is a violation of the individual's human and civil rights.

Guidelines for parishes & clergy when working with vulnerable adults

All volunteers who are official church volunteers are to carry identification for their role and official records of their function is to be kept in the parish.

Where people are visiting residential homes, etc, these homes should be given a basic copy of Diocesan policy and a list of volunteers expected to visit that institution.

Where people visit vulnerable people on their own, volunteers should keep a detailed record of the visit.

The following is a list of people who are likely to need registration under the policy:

- Those who visit residential homes for the elderly
- Those who take Communion to the sick in their home, institution or hospital
- Those who are involved in luncheon clubs
- General community groups (a clause should be added to the hire of hall agreements to include vulnerable people)
- Those who visit people living in sheltered accommodation
- Those who undertake pastoral visiting in the parish
- Those who offer transport services
- Those likely to come into regular contact on their own, e.g. Verger

Recruitment and Selection – Appointment of Volunteers

Prospective appointees should:

- Be treated as job applicants and have a clearly defined role and job description.
- Complete an application form and have an opportunity to discuss the requirements of the role.
- Name two referees - Prospective candidates must give the name of two referees in order to help assess their suitability for the role. Written references must be obtained and then checked for validity.

If a decision is made to appoint the appointee should

- Obtain a DBS check. Reviewed every five years.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) should:

- Decide on the candidates' suitability. This is based on their personal qualities in relation to general experience, aptitudes, skills, motivation and willingness to be trained.
- Be prepared to say "No" if the candidate is unsuitable.
- Give the volunteer an agreement to ensure mutual understanding of the role
- Ensure that the volunteer receives the correct training for the role undertaken and also ensure that that training is kept up to date.

The adult Protection Procedure identifies three distinct roles in the protection of vulnerable people. This comes from the Government's paper on Vulnerable Adults *Safe from Harm*:

- Alerters
- Investigators
- Managers

Lay people and Clergy act as Alerters. Their duty is:

- To report suspected acts of abuse
- To be alert to what abuse means and take seriously what they are told

- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice
- To work strictly in accordance with anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist and anti-disability practices
- To ensure the safety of the person you suspect is being mistreated as well as your own safety
- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation.
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully rather than question directly
- Be sympathetic
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed

Tell the person that:

- They did right to tell you
- You are treating this information seriously
- It was not their fault

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events as they may not tell you again
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential, i.e. information will only be passed to those people who have "a need to know"
- Make promises that you cannot keep (such as "This will not happen to you again")
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental (e.g. "Why didn't you run away?")
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn't have a "need to know" i.e. do not gossip

Recording

At the first opportunity make a note of the disclosure and date and time and sign your record.

You should aim to:

- Note what the people actually said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Separate out factual information from your own opinions.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink, so that the report can be photocopied.
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

Lay people should then inform the Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding officer or the Vicar. The Vicar will inform the Protection for All Adviser who will inform the Archdeacon.

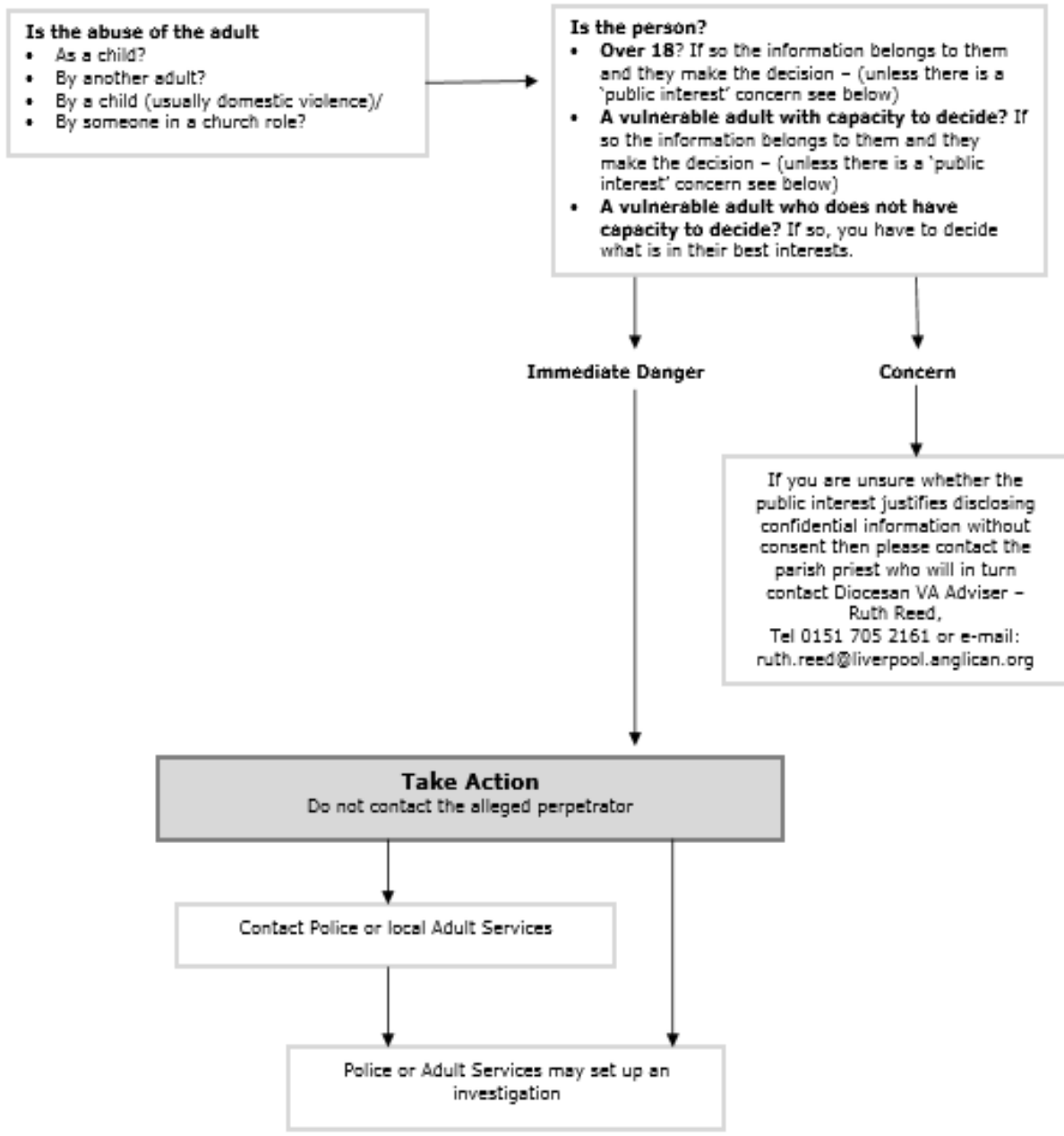
Contacts:-

Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding officer :-

Aidan Holmes 07563736150

Diocesan VA officer Ruth Read 0151 705 2130

Vulnerable Adults Abuse Referral Flow Chart



A 'public interest concern' – how to decide
 "The key factors in deciding whether or not to share confidential information are necessity and proportionality, i.e. whether the proposed sharing is likely to make an effective contribution to preventing the risk and whether the public interest in sharing information overrides the interest in maintaining confidentiality. In making the decision you must weigh up what might happen if the information is shared against what might happen if it is not and make a decision based on professional judgement".
Section 3.40 information sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers. HMSO 2010

Contact Details: Diocesan VA Adviser – Ruth Reed Tel 0151 705 2161 or e-mail:
 ruth.reed@liverpool.anglican.org