

St Peter's Church, Bishopsworth, Bristol.

Policy for the Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

The PCC of St Peter's Church recognises that we are all in need of protection from harm. It therefore follows that as a Christian community it is the responsibility of us all to protect those less able to protect themselves. Whilst it is our intention to promote processes and procedures to facilitate this goal, our greatest strength in combating harm that may befall the vulnerable lies in our awareness of dangers and our willingness to report concerns and take action if necessary.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding at St Peter's is predominantly about the prevention of harm to children and vulnerable adults within our church community. (A child is any individual under the age of eighteen years).

All children are vulnerable to harm caused by others. Their vulnerability is absolute. . For some adults their vulnerability emerges at various points in their lives. For others it may be a permanent state in which they find themselves.

Some factors that may give rise to, or increase a person's vulnerability are:

- * Sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- * A physical illness.
- * A learning disability.
- * Mental health issues.
- * An addiction.
- * Frailty due to age.
- * Domestic violence.
- * Other unpredicted and challenging life events.

Abuse of the vulnerable may take many forms as listed below

- * Physical abuse.
- * Emotional abuse.
- * Neglect.
- * Sexual abuse / exploitation.
- * Financial or material abuse.
- * Spiritual abuse.
- * Domestic abuse.
- * Online abuse.
- * Modern Slavery.
- * Discriminatory abuse.
- * Organisational abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities.

John Hooper is the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). This is a voluntary role with delegated responsibility for issues relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The PSO can be contacted by telephone on 0117 9646341. Contact details may also be found on the church notice board in the café area of the church and on the main notice board to be found in the church halls.

Where practicable the PSO should not work consistently in activities involving vulnerable groups.

The PCC and incumbent are responsible for safeguarding practice within the Parish. Members should be aware of all activities involving vulnerable individuals, and are responsible for the appointment of leaders and helpers running and supporting each group or activity. In practice recruitment for voluntary roles is overseen by the PSO and activity leaders. Information and recommendations are passed to the PCC for final ratification.

Safeguarding is a standing PCC agenda item. This reflects its importance in church life, and encourages the discussion and dissemination of related information as necessary.

New activities or initiatives may not commence without reference to St Peter's Safeguarding Policy and current Diocesan policy and procedures.

Whilst the PSO and PCC are responsible for policy and procedural detail it remains fundamental to the safety of each vulnerable individual that all others including group leaders, volunteers, and the wider congregation should remain alert to what may be happening around them and be prepared to report concerns to appropriate individuals as necessary.

It is the responsibility of all external bodies hiring or using church premises to ensure the safety of all children and/or vulnerable adults who may attend their function or event. Notices to this effect will be found in our various halls and rooms and in the contracts agreed between the parties and St Peter's Church.

Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.

The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times. Where appropriate, relevant staff will have passed DBS checks and all reasonable steps will have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

Procedures.

Raising Concerns:

Concerns should be shared as soon as possible with the PSO. Contact details may be found in this document or on the church notice board as described.

Where the PSO cannot be contacted, or the concerns relate to the PSO himself, the **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** may be contacted by telephone on **0117 9060132**.

Where a serious situation arises out of office hours contact may be made with **Social Services duty social workers by telephone on 01454 615165** (for adults and children).

During office hours, **for concerns relating to children call Social Services on 0117 9036444**. If appropriate, call the **Police**.

Safer Recruitment.

All persons recruited to either a paid or voluntary role within the Church of England must adhere to the Churches recruitment policy.

Those who work with children, and/or, vulnerable adults may be required to undertake a **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service)** check **prior** to taking up their role.

Suitable training will be offered to all those working with children or vulnerable adults.

The Recruitment Process.

If the need to recruit personnel should arise an appropriate person or persons should draw up a role description. This should detail the “where, when, and what” of the role to be filled, including the skills required.

The PSO in discussion with appropriate group leaders should decide upon the detail of the application process including eligibility for a DBS check, and the need for an interview. All procedures and expectations should be made clear to applicants.

A successful applicant should **not** commence in role before the completion of the agreed process.

Once appointed, staff and volunteers should serve a probationary period of three to six months. Group leaders should monitor and support personnel during this time and advise the PCC as necessary..

Training.

Those working with children, and/or vulnerable adults, should be offered basic safeguarding training as a condition of their appointment.

Refresher courses should be offered every 3 years.

Some personnel with specific supervisory responsibility will be required to complete higher level training.

It is expected that all PCC members and Church Wardens should take part in training at an appropriate level. If unsure please discuss this with the PSO.

In addition, detailed documented information relating to roles, responsibilities and procedures should be available to all.

Ministering to those who may present a risk.

Everyone is welcome in church. However we must recognise that some will have been convicted or received a caution at some point in their lives. Others may have been alleged to, or actually caused harm to a child or a vulnerable adult, but not been charged with an offence.

Where such information is known, the PCC in liaison with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will seek to devise an agreement with an individual which will outline required behavioural guidelines and boundaries intended to reduce the risk of harm. The agreement will also explore and specify pastoral support measures available to the individual and will be monitored by the PCC.

This policy has been devised with reference to:

* The Bristol Diocesan Safeguarding website.

* The House of Bishops Publications:

“Promoting a Safe Church.” (C of E policy statement for the safeguarding of children., young people and vulnerable adults).

* Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

Key telephone numbers.

Childline: tel. 08001111

Modern slavery helpline. tel. 08000121700

www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding/policy-practce-guidance

Police. non emergency: 101 emergency: 999

Local related contact details:

www.bristoldiocese.org

Bristol City Council Children’s Services (first response in office hours) 0117903 6444

Bristol Drugs and Alcohol Project Charity 0117 9876000

Samaritans tel. 0117 9831000

Social Services duty social worker 01454615165

Further support agency contact details may be found in the “Parish Safeguarding Handbook” to be found at the safeguarding notice board adjacent to the café area within the church.

Policy reviewed July 2019.

This policy to be signed on behalf of the PCC.

In signing this policy we formally adopt the House of Bishops publication “Promoting a Safer Church”.

September 2017