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**Promoting a Safer Church**

**A Policy Statement for safeguarding adults**

**1. Introduction:**

This document is provided for anyone within St Luke’s who, on behalf of the church, has regular contact with vulnerable adults. It is based on the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook and complements our church’s Policy Statement for safeguarding children and young people and adults working with them and our Pastoral Care Policy. The overall policy of the Church of England for safeguarding is set out in **“**Promoting a Safer Church” (PSC).. More detailed guidance on dealing with specific issues in relation to adults is provided in Section 3 of “Safer Environment and Activities” .

Copies of these publications are available in the church office and familiarisation with them is strongly recommended. They can also be found on the national Church of England website by clicking here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>

**2. Definition**

The Church of England gives a working definition of a vulnerable adult as “Any adult aged 18 or over, who by reason of mental or any other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently. or for the time being, unable to take care of him/herself, or to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation”.

**3. Our commitment**:

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

**4. Who abuses adults?**

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include: relatives of the vulnerable person (sometimes a relative who is a main carer); neighbours; paid carers; workers in places of worship; people who themselves are vulnerable and/or are users of a care service; confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.

Endeavours should be made to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community who may pose an identified risk or is the subject of concerns or allegations. They should also be monitored. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will take the lead in such instances.

**5 Examples of Abuse**

The UK Government document “Care and Support Statutory Guidance” categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

**(i) Physical -** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

**(ii) Psychological -** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

**(iii) Sexual -** including rape and sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.  
**(iv)** **Financial or Material –** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**(v) Neglect or acts of omission -** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**(vi) Discriminatory –** Including racist, sexist, based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

**(vii) Organisational –** including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

***(viii) Domestic*** *–* usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of

behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control , limit and humiliate, often behindclosed doors.

# (ix) Modern Slavery *–* including human trafficking, forced labour and domestic

servitude and traffickers and slavemasters using whatever means at their disposal

to coerce,deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and

inhumane treatment.

**6. How we can promote good practice**

Promoting a safer Church is about procedures and rules when working together, both *as* helpers and those with differing vulnerabilities, but equally to provide the right environment for everyone to grow in the church community. It is important that there is agreement on standards of conduct and how activities are to be carried out. This is particularly necessary if some adults involved in the activity cannot speak for themselves. Respect and consideration should be developed, ensuring that everyone is able to make the mostoflife choices and independence. Privacyand confidentiality are important to everyone, and especially people who are dependent on others for aspects of their everyday living.

St Luke’s is committed to:

* Helping in such a way as to maximise a person’s independence. People with additional needs lead active and fulfilled lives, but some may need support and resources to do so.
* Respecting the person and all their abilities.
* Recognising and acknowledging the choices people make.
* Giving people the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances.
* Caring pastorally for those who have been subjected to abuse, and for any family members affected if they are also part of the church community (see St Luke’s Pastoral Care Policy).

Creating an environment within the church that ensures the inclusion of all involved in decisions affecting people’s lives

**7. Our duty to alert others when we have concerns or suspicions that abuse has occurred:**

Everyone should be aware of situations where those who might be at risk are exposed to unacceptable risks.

Those who work most closely with vulnerable people in social gatherings (such as lunch clubs, Bible study groups, oras pastoral visitors) are in a unique position to get to know them.

We have a duty to alert others when we or others, including the alleged victim,have concerns or suspicions that abuse has either occurred, or is suspected.

Under no circumstances should anything be done that might be interpreted *as* an investigation of an allegation, as action of this nature may damage or confuse evidence should a formal investigation by either the police or local authority be made*.*

**Our key responsibilities when we become aware of or are concerned about possible abuse or neglect. ( Note also para 8)**

## To take allegations seriously, however insignificant they may seem.

## Where the concern comes directly from the vulnerable adult allegedly abused, to accept it and avoid making comments other than to comfort or be sympathetic.

## To ensure the immediate safety/welfare of the alleged abused.

## To report concerns/allegations immediately and clearly to our incumbent (Rev Mark Fraser 07394 929737), or the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Sheila Street 0115 937 2295 mob 07800 563 899 [street\_sheila@hotmail.com](mailto:street_sheila@hotmail.com)) or the Adults’ Safeguarding Coordinator (Chris Gunnell 0115 974 3708 mob 07812 495504 [c.gunnell@ntlworld.com](mailto:c.gunnell@ntlworld.com)); they will take the next steps. If it is not possible to contact any of these, ring the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on 01636 817200 without delay and seek advice.

* To then make *a* careful factual record of the allegations or concerns, clearly separating fact from opinion. Record the time, date, location, those present, and how the allegation/concern was received (eg in face to face conversation, by telephone, letter etc). and pass it to the 3 St Luke’s contacts listed above.

**8. Confidentiality:**

In dealing with allegations of abuse we work within a framework of confidentiality.

Key principles relating to the sharing of information are:

1. Information should not be shared any more widely than is necessary to secure protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. However……

(ii) any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be shared with the incumbent , the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Adults’ Safeguarding Coordinator. Do not promise that the information will remain confidential to you alone as information disclosed belongs to the church, not the individual

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**9. Video Conferencing**

If a member of the church staff uses the church Zoom account for a pastoral conversation with a vulnerable adult, then two people must be part of the call. Usually the second person will be someone known to the vulnerable adult. As a church we do not ask pastoral helpers to use Zoom or any other video conferencing platforms to contact vulnerable adults for 1 on 1 pastoral conversations.

**10. Adults’ Safeguarding Coordinator**

We are required by the Diocese to appoint a representative/coordinator for the safeguarding of adults. He/she may or may not be the same person who oversees child protection arrangements, but will need to work closely with other members of the Parish Safeguarding Team and the Pastoral Care Team and will report to the PCC. The PCC will, via the SafeguardingTeam, comply with its duty to have regard to House of Bishops’ guidance on the safeguarding of adults.

This document will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose and up to date.

It is also available on the church website: [www.st-lukes-gamston.org](http://www.st-lukes-gamston.org)

Revised version

Approved by PCC September 2022)

**ANNEX 1**

**Regular non- Service events at St Luke’s likely to involve at risk adults**

1. Church organised:-

Food, Fellowship and Faith

Prime Time

1. Outside bookings but using church premises:-

Valley Gardens Community coffee mornings

Rock Choir (weekly, not all year)

\*East of England Singers (weekly, not all year)

\*Open Voices (weekly)

NHS Diabetes Education (by arrangement)

Slimming World

\*Organised by Music for Everyone

All have been made aware of this document through signing their letting agreements

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