

Policy and Procedures for the

SAFEGUARDING of ADULTS

IN OUR CHURCH



The Parish of

St Luke's Gamston and Bridgford

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 (2018) and complements our 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) updated in May 2017. More detailed guidance on dealing with specific issues in relation to adults is provided in Section 3 of "Safer Environment and Activities" (September 2019)

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 are themselves 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.

Examples of Abuse

UK Government guidance identifies the following examples of abuse in relation to adults:

(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 and acts of omission - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Signs of self-neglect, such as appearance, hygiene, health or surroundings.

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

(vii) Organisational – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment.

(viii) Domestic – usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors. Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

(ix) Modern Slavery – including human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slavemasters using whatever means at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

5. How we can promote good practice

Promoting a safer Church is less about procedures and rules when working together, both as helpers and those with differing vulnerabilities, 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 most of life choices and independence. Privacy and 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 also St Luke's Pastoral Care Policy).
- Including everyone in decisions affecting their lives.
- Creating an environment within the church to ensure that it can include everyone.

6. 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, day centres, Bible study groups, as 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 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 7)

- 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) or the Adults' Safeguarding Coordinator (Chris Gunnell 0115 974 3708 mob 07812 495504 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.

7. Confidentiality:

In dealing with allegations of abuse we work within a framework of confidentiality. Key principles relating to the sharing of information are:

- (i) 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 and the adult and overall safeguarding representatives. Do not promise that the information will remain confidential to you alone. Information disclosed belongs to the church, not the individual.

8. 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.

9. Adults' Safeguarding Coordinator responsibilities

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 will report to the PCC. The PCC will, via the Safeguarding Team, comply with its duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on the safeguarding of adults.

He/she.....

a. will be responsible for ensuring that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are made and kept up to date on all those who have contact with at risk adults in the course of their activities on behalf of St Luke's.

b will also ensure that anyone from outside the church who is organising an activity that involves adults and takes place on church premises is aware of and agrees in writing to abide by this policy statement.

c. in liaison with the Operations Manager and the Health and Safety representative at St Luke's, will regularly review the fabric of the building, including its accessibility, and the overall environment in which vulnerable adults are accommodated, and recommend any changes considered necessary

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

(revised March 2022 – Version 4)

ANNEX 1

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

A. Church organised:-

Prime Time (2-weekly)

B. Outside bookings but using church premises:-

CRUSE Bereavement Counselling (weekly)
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)

*Organised by Music for Everyone

All have been made aware of this document in signing their rental agreements

