

Policy for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Scope

We welcome all people, irrespective of age, ability or background, to participate fully in the life of our churches. We value the contribution brought by every person, and wish to encourage and nurture them in a safe and supportive environment. We acknowledge that some people, especially children (see Safe to Grow policy) and vulnerable adults, need special consideration in order to ensure that they are kept safe and able to contribute as fully as they wish to.

Policy

The protection of vulnerable adults is the responsibility of every church member. We seek to involve vulnerable people in all aspects of the church's life, and therefore all members will be involved with them in various aspects of the activities we undertake together. We are committed to providing any additional training and support which are needed by those who are particularly involved in supporting people who are vulnerable

Implementation

1. A vulnerable adult is:
 - 'a person aged 16 years or over, who is in receipt of, 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
 - (16 and under 18 will be also covered by the Safe to Grow child protection policy) [See Specific Notes Section 1]
2. While the whole church has a responsibility for the protection of vulnerable adults, certain activities are regulated [See Specific Notes Section 2]. This covers the following activities with vulnerable adults:
 - a. Those of a specified nature, eg teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, guidance, assistance, or transport;
 - b. Those undertaken in a specified place, eg adult care homes;
 - c. Those undertaken frequently (ie once a month or more), intensively (ie on three or more occasions in a period of 30 days), or overnight (ie including some part of the time between 2am and 6am).
3. Any individual who is involved in a regulated activity with a vulnerable adult
 - must have a CRB check and Vetting and Barring registration which includes vulnerable adults.
 - They must have gone through an appointment procedure within the church, which will include an interview and the taking up of at least two references.
 - They will receive regular oversight and supervision of the work they are undertaking by another named coordinator approved by the church.
 - All such individuals are expected to be familiar with the church's policies on the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

[See Specific Notes Section 3]
4. Every church member must be aware that any vulnerable person might be suffering abuse or exploitation by a third party. Such abuse may include (but is not limited to) physical, emotional, sexual, financial, institutional and spiritual abuse, neglect and discrimination. Where they have a suspicion this

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must be captured in writing using the Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Report or similar BEFORE any discussion takes place, and then discussed soon as possible with the vulnerable adult (if possible), the individual involved, their coordinator, the minister and Adult Protection Coordinator, and the outcomes recorded on the Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Report. As these individuals are adults, if at all possible any suspected abuse should be discussed with them, and their views taken into account. However, there remains a duty to breach confidentiality, even against the wishes of the individual, where either the individual themselves or a third party are at risk.

5. Where any concern, uncertainty, query or suspicion about the protection of vulnerable adults or the behaviour of those working with them, exists in the mind of any member or any other person, this must be captured in writing using the Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Report or similar, BEFORE any discussion takes place, and then discussed soon as possible with the vulnerable adult (if possible), the individual involved, their coordinator, the minister having pastoral oversight and Adult Protection Coordinator, and must be documented using the Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Report.
6. If the adult is in immediate danger or in need of medical attention or if a crime has been committed contact the Emergency Services - Police and/or Ambulance Service.

You can download a [Referral form](#) to report abuse (32kb)

Contact one of the following agencies depending on the circumstances:

- Older people/adults with physical disabilities: telephone 0800 085 6666
- Adults with learning disabilities: telephone 01793 466724
- Adults with mental health problems: Under 65s: telephone 01793 715000, Over 65s: telephone 01793 327800
- During office hours (Monday to Friday 9.00am-5.00pm): Vulnerable Persons Unit, Swindon Police: telephone 01380 734212
- Out-of-hours emergency duty service: telephone 01793 436699
- Police out of hours: telephone 0845 408 7000

If you are not sure who to contact please telephone 0800 085 6666 and [Careline](#) staff will assist you.

7. There is a duty for any information regarding an individual who may pose a risk to a vulnerable adult to be passed on to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) after consultation with the individual's coordinator.
8. When working with vulnerable adults, the following guidelines should be observed:
 - a. With the exception of those circumstances outlined in 4 above, matters discussed with the individual should be treated confidentially and with sensitivity.
 - b. While we aim to treat all people with respect, and to act towards them in ways which are non-judgemental, these behaviours are even more important when dealing with vulnerable adults.

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- c. Communication with vulnerable adults needs to be undertaken with sensitivity, taking care neither to talk down to them or patronise them, but also not to communicate at a level which is inappropriate for their needs.
 - d. Whenever dealing with vulnerable adults it is important to allow them to express their wishes and determine what action they will take as far as this is possible.
9. Those working regularly with vulnerable adults should meet with their coordinator on a regular basis. Necessary training should be identified on an ongoing basis.
10. Each church should have an Adult Protection Coordinator who oversees the safeguarding process. This person may (but does not have to) be the same individual who oversees safeguarding children. The appointment must be ratified annually by the church AGM.
11. If a Criminal Records check or Vetting and Barring referral comes back with any substantial report, the individual's activity coordinator will meet with the individual concerned, the minister and the Adult Protection Coordinator. Possible outcomes include a written risk assessment and supervision arrangements or the individual not being allowed to undertake regulated activities.
12. The following documents are confidential, must only be seen by those who need to know, and must be held in a safe or locked cabinet in the Partnership Office.
 - CRB check reports (Section 3, Section 10)
 - Vetting and Barring Registration results (Section 3, Section 10)
 - Character and job references (Section 3)
 - "Concern" (Section 3) and "suspicion" (Section 4) review records on the Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Review sheet
 - Records of information (Section 6) passed to the ISA
 - ISA Referral review meeting (Section 10) records and risk assessments.

References

This document is drawn from the following sources

Statutory:

<http://www.swindon.gov.uk/sc/sc-adults/Pages/sc-adults-protectionvulnerableadults.aspx>

Swindon [Referral form](#)

No Secrets (Swindon Borough Council)

http://www.swindon.gov.uk/de/no_secrets_2010.pdf

No Secrets (Department of Health) link to

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4008486

The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2002. <https://opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20020446.htm>

Contains legal definition of vulnerable adults (but see Specific Notes to Section 1)

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Lord Chancellor's Department (1997) 'Who decides: making decisions on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults'. <http://www.dca.gov.uk/menincap/menifr.htm>

Lord Chancellor's Department (1999) 'Making decisions'.
<http://www.dca.gov.uk/family/mdecisions/indexfr.htm>

Vetting and Barring England & Wales (ISA) <http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/>,

latest guide March 2010, http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/PDF/VBS_guidance_ed1_2010.pdf

Fact Sheet3 http://www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk/PDF/283896_ISA_A4_FactSheetNo3.pdf
Gives help in defining Regulated and Controlled activities

Denominational:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/admin/protection/safechurch.html>

and direct links to

Promoting a safe church

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/37405/promotingasafechurch.pdf>

and

Safeguarding Guidelines relating to Safer Recruitment

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1161891/safeguarding4.pdf>

Bristol diocese and Anglican guidance

Safe to Belong (BUGB Publication BU322, £7) from

<http://www.baptist.org.uk/Resources/a-z.asp?section=69>

Baptist guidance

Safeguarding Adults, 2010

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/safe-update-4-1110-adults.pdf>

Methodist guidance

Life Together- A resource for local churches considering their response to the abuse of adults in the church http://www.urch.org.uk/what_we_do/resources/docs/life_together.pdf

URC guidance

West Swindon and the Lydiards Church Partnership

Child Protection Policy "Safe to Grow"

<http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/policy/safetogrow.html>

Exceptional Circumstances/Incident Review sheet

http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/policy/s2g_27exception.pdf

Specific Notes

Section 1:

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Instead of struggling with the legal definition from The Police Act 1997, and the difficulty we would face in identifying those people “in receipt of benefits”, those in certain types of “Residential accommodation” or those “receiving domiciliary care”; we have chose to go with the wider and more precautionary wording from No Secrets (the Government's Guidance on Adult Abuse) as:

'a person aged 16 years or over, who is in receipt of, 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'.

Though the No Secrets has 18, the original advice from the Lord Chancellor's department has "aged 16 years or over"; and though it overlaps with child protection, does raise the issues of adult responsibilities in those 16-18. We'd treat people aged 16-18 as adults for most purposes. Clearly for vulnerable people aged 16 to 18 both of our policies will apply. The main difference in procedure, comes in the event of a query or concern about abuse - children might not be involved in discussions involving them, adults must be involved in such discussions, so those 16-18 should too.

Section 2:

Help in defining what “specified” activities are regulated or controlled is from the ISA Fact Sheet No 3

Most of the interaction with vulnerable adults in our context is unlikely to be specified and hence controlled or regulated. However this provides essential background context.

Section 3:

In our context we do not expect many (if any) people to be in regulated contact with vulnerable people. If any people who by reason of their pastoral or other responsibility might reasonable be expected to come into contact with vulnerable people, even occasionally, we will ensure they are CRB checked and registered with VBA