

A Brief Guide to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults for Leaders & Helpers



Getting Started

- ✓ check if you need to have a DBS check and follow your church's safer recruitment process
- ✓ have you got your 'A Small Guide to Safeguarding' and 'A Brief Guide to Abuse' and seen your parish safeguarding policy?
- ✓ do you know who your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator is?
- ✓ have you completed safeguarding training? basic awareness, foundations, domestic abuse
- ✓ has the PCC agreed to your activity?
- ✓ have you had sight of the risk and health & safety assessments for your activity?
- ✓ do you have access to First Aid help?
- ✓ do you know your venue's Fire Evacuation Drill?
- ✓ do you have access to a telephone - or other means of summoning help?
- ✓ if your role involves driving/offering food – does your church has further guidance for these?

Make Safeguarding Personal

Working Safely

DO

- ✓ Treat EVERYONE with respect and dignity
- ✓ Challenge any abusive, bullying, sexual, racist or discriminatory behaviour
- ✓ Create an inclusive environment where *everyone* can participate in and contribute to *all* aspects of church life/your activity
- ✓ Be aware of the dangers of dependency - seek advice if you think this might be happening
- ✓ Be aware of your own limits – don't over commit or undertake things beyond your competency - seek advice when needed
- ✓ Respect personal space and privacy
- ✓ Give the person space and time to talk
- ✓ Listen attentively and communicate in ways the person can understand
- ✓ Check before touching anyone and keep to a minimum - avoid touch that could be misinterpreted or perceived as sexual or that isn't initiated by the person
- ✓ Support and encourage the person to make their own choices – respect their values and decisions
- ✓ Check what help the person wants – don't presume you know
- ✓ Support the person to be as safe as they want to be
- ✓ If you think a person needs more help and support, seek their consent, or advice from your parish safeguarding co-ordinator, before referring to outside agencies

DO NOT

- Act or speak in ways that are abusive – e.g. forms of physical punishment, making sexual suggestions, showing favouritism or ridiculing a person
- Make the person feel judged negatively or treated harshly for the choices they make or the things they tell you
- Treat an adult in a child-like manner
- Give or receive money or significant gifts - your intentions may be misunderstood, or your offering misused



No Decision About Me Without Me

Visiting

- Find out as much as you can about a visit before you go so you can assess the risks and decide if it's safe to go alone - be alert to the increased risks of visiting a vulnerable adult, or an adult determined to lack capacity, on your own
- Make an appointment – don't just turn up
- Carry ID with you – preferably something from your Church 'authorising' you
- Tell someone when and where you're going – and when you get back
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe - don't go in or leave as soon as possible
- Be aware of your exit routes and have a way to summon help or raise the alarm – e.g. a charged mobile phone, an agreed emergency 'code' to alert someone else
- Never:
 - Buy for, offer or administer medicines
 - Accept anything other than small token gifts
 - Take with you anything you don't need for the visit
- Regularly review visits with co-leaders and seek support or supervision when a relationship is complex or problematic
- If a visit has concerned you make a record – always share safeguarding concerns

If things don't go to plan this is a great learning opportunity – always talk things through with your co-workers and the vulnerable adults you're working with

Activity Log

- Keep a record of who is present each time the activity takes place
- Keep a journal, (store in accordance with your Church's Data Protection Policy), of anything out of the ordinary that happens or you notice – accident, incident, if a leader needs to deviate from these guidelines in the best interests of the person etc
- Keep a visit log – preferably a team log

Use The Church of England's Safer Environment & Activities Guidance and code of Safer Working Practice at <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance> as a reference guide to safer practice

Respond Well

DO

- ✓ Keep calm, listen carefully to what the person is saying and give them time to talk
- ✓ Accept without judgement or comment and take seriously what the person is saying
- ✓ Reassure the person that the abuse is not their fault
- ✓ Let the person know who you need to tell and why – be as clear as you can be about the next steps

DO NOT

- Show shock or disbelief
- Push the person into giving details of the abuse – your role is to listen to what they want to tell you, NOT to investigate
- Ask the person direct or leading questions – this could be harmful to the investigation
- Jump to conclusions or use words the person has not already used
- Discuss what the person has told you with others who should not be involved - friend/colleague/partner – only talk to others on a 'need to know to keep someone safe' basis
- Make a comment about or alert the alleged abuser – or anyone else who may tell them

Record

- **ALWAYS** make a record of what the person has told you and pass it to your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Keep the record factual – who, why, what, where, when, how – sign and date it
- Agree with the person that what you've written is accurate – unless this is unsafe or may cause more harm or unnecessary delay

Report

NEVER promise to keep a secret – but always maintain confidentiality

ALWAYS report any concerns, disclosures and allegations however 'small' they may seem

TELL your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator ...



... or Vicar, or when the concern is about them/you can't get in touch with them/you don't want to tell anyone at your church, tell the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

If you need immediate advice and can't wait to get in touch with any of the above call the duty social care team or police on 101

If a situation is not safe and someone is in danger or needs immediate help call the police on 999

**Ensure you know how to contact your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Vicar
Police and Local Authority Social Services**

Other Useful Contacts:

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer:	07324 993844	Elder Abuse:	https://wearehourglass.org/action-elder-abuse-now-hourglass
Domestic Abuse:	0808 2000 247	NSPCC:	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/
Samaritans:	116 123	ChildLine:	0808 11 11