St Thomas’ Church and Community Project Garretts Green

Promoting a Safer Church

This document includes our policies for safeguarding children, young people

and vulnerable adults.

PART 1 Safeguarding Children and Young People

St Thomas’ Church and St Thomas Community Project are part of Church of England Birmingham and this policy is informed by the Promoting a Safer Church policy statements.

[cofe-policy-statement.pdf (churchofengland.org)](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf)

This policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on 24th March 21

The policy sets out our values and principles and describes the practices implemented to meet our commitment to safeguard children and young people.

We believe every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. The Church of England - Birmingham is committed to keeping children and adults, who may be vulnerable, safe. We are committed to the safeguarding principles adopted by the House of Bishops:

1. **Introduction**

We are committed to :

* Promoting a safe environment and culture.
* Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
* Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
* Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
* Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
* Responding to those that may be a present risk to others.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the trustees of St Thomas Community Project Management Committee (STCP) will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and abide by it.

* *For the purposes of child protection a child is anyone under the age of 18 (age 25 if they have a disability). It may be therefore that a helper or even paid worker, under the age of 18, is covered by the policy themselves.*
* *Staff refers to workers who are paid, voluntary or on placement .*
* *“St Thomas” encompasses both the church and community project*

# Insurance

St. Thomas’ Church and St Thomas’ Community Project carries insurance covering Public Liability and Employers Liability

# Health and Safety

St. Thomas’ has a Health and Safety policy that covers general issues. The Church Wardens and the PCC are responsible for assessing and reviewing general health and safety practices on church premises. Appointed children’s and youth workers are additionally responsible for ensuring that risks are managed and minimised. (See Health and Safety Policy for details)

1. **Safe Recruitment**

All new and current children’s and youth workers (volunteers, paid employees and placements) will be recruited under the Safe Recruitment Policy

[Diocese of Birmingham | Safer Recruitment (cofebirmingham.com)](https://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/)

Applicants must provide information and documentation for a full DBS check to be conducted. Appointment will not commence until satisfactory disclosure has been received. DBS applications and returns are treated confidentially. DBS checks will be renewed every three years.

All new staff (paid or voluntary) will be required to serve a probationary period of 3 months under the supervision of an appropriate person appointed by the incumbent.

The incumbent will take up references on each new children’s and youth worker, including all volunteers.

The PCC and STCP will ensure that adequate training is undertaken.

# Other Organisations

Other organisations working with children on St Thomas’ premises will be made aware of our policy. The PCC requires that others who use our premises (or their parent body) have a policy that equals the guidelines set down in this policy.

1. **Planning activities and programmes for Children**

In planning activities and programmes for children the following points should be considered :

* Allow opportunities to review and discuss together how to minimise situations where abuse might occur.
* Ensure that all workers have clear roles and are provided with support and supervision.
* Plan activities so that at least two adults are present or a single worker is at least within sight and hearing of others; especially if this is the only activity taking place at the time.
* Ensure that adult to child ratios are complied with at all times.

For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every three children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every four children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years – one adult to every eight children (1:8)

For over 8s – one for the first 8, then one for every additional 10 children

* Ensure activity/group start and end times are known by children, parents and carers so that they can be dropped off and collected.
* Keep accurate attendance records.
* When planning offsite activities which involve transport refer to the guidance in the health and safety policy (section 10).
* Encourage staff to allow time to talk with children on an individual basis during group sessions, by finding space to one side of the general activity, so that children know adults are available and approachable.

**Photographs and Images** (any visual formats including video footage)

We recognise the benefits of photographing activities in order to promote, publicise and report on the work. We will not take or display images without written consent from the parent or guardian. If a child or young person does not want their photograph taken, then this will over-ride parental consent of permission.

If images are being taken at an event attended by a large crowd, such as a worship event, this is regarded as a public arena and permission from a crowd is not necessary.

Images will be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so. It is not appropriate for any adult to take photographs of children for their personal use.

1. **Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this code of conduct is to encourage good practice, maintain high standards and promote a safe and happy environment for children and staff.

**Do:**

1. Hold the welfare of the child as top priority at all times
2. Treat children with respect
3. Respect a child’s right to privacy
4. Provide an example that you wish others (staff and children) to follow
5. Ensure a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed.
6. Ensure a culture of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice is challenged
7. Act with caution even in a group environment, at sensitive moments i.e. when a “one to one” conversation arises.
8. Ensure when in contact with children you remain visible to others at all times
9. Be wary of personal contact with a child outside a group session. Avoid situations where only the other person is present. Where it is deemed appropriate for one-to-one meetings between young people and a leader then it must be done publicly (i.e. local coffee shop or church premises) and with the knowledge and consent of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

**Do Not:**

1. Use physical or emotional punishment
2. Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
3. Use words or actions which humiliate, belittle or degrade individuals
4. Work with less than the recommended ratio of adults to children
5. Be in a situation where you are alone with a child or young person, there must always be another adult present
6. Leave a child or group of children unattended
7. The giving of gifts or rewards to children and young people can be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. But avoid showing favouritism; for example by giving individual children treats or treating them differently (this could be interpreted as grooming)
8. Do things of a personal nature which a child can do for themselves
9. Do not communicate with children we work with via your personal social media e.g. Facebook.

NB This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principal of this code of conduct is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or leave themselves open to allegation.

1. **Communicating and Gathering Digitally**

The safeguarding policy and code of conduct must be applied when meeting with groups of children and young people digitally; for example via Zoom.

Principally :

* do not meet alone; ensure there is another adult with DBS clearance “in the room”
* participants must be suitably dressed ie not in nightwear
* Be aware of who else is present in the background and what they are doing and saying.
* Remember in effect you are entering their home and they are entering yours.
* Passcodes for meetings should be used

1. **Steps to take if a child makes a “Disclosure”**

A child may disclose to you that they are being abused. Remember this will be a big, bold step for them and they have chosen to confide in you because they trust you and don’t know what else to do. How you respond is important so use the points below as a guide.

1. Keep calm, do not panic and try not to look shocked
2. Take seriously any concerns raised and accept what is said
3. Allow the child to speak in their own words
4. Listen carefully and try to remember what is said.
5. Do not push for information or ask leading questions
6. Reassure them that they were right to tell you.
7. Do not pass judgement
8. Do not promise confidentiality tell them you will need to tell someone else who needs to know and can help them.
9. As soon as possible note down all relevant information so that you do not forget anything. In these notes use the actual language used by the child not your own interpretation
10. This disclosure needs to be reported to the appointed person immediately (see flow chart on page 6). Confidentiality must be maintained, only the relevant people should be informed. However you may need to seek pastoral support for yourself.
11. Do not attempt to take action yourself.
12. **Steps to take if you suspect abuse**

During the course of your work with children you may have cause to be concerned about a child’s welfare and you may have reasons to suspect a child is being abused; for example from injuries or from their language and demeanour.

It is the duty of all staff to report any information relating to any child or young person who they think is being abused or is at risk of abuse. This applies whatever the situation in which the abuse or suspected abuse is thought to take place.

* Make an accurate note of your suspicions recording dates, times and places.
* Expect to have to handle your own strong feelings. The appointed person will advise where you can find pastoral support. The protection of the child is priority therefore do not delay (the responsibility to report children that are thought to be at risk rests with the individual who identifies the concern)
* Inform the appointed person. Do not inform any unauthorised people
* If you think the appointed person has not acted upon the information you have given them you have an obligation to report the matter further by seeking advice from the Bishops Child Protection Advisor (BCPA)
* If a child is in imminent risk of significant harm you should notify the police or social services immediately.
* Do not carry out any investigations yourself. Social Services are legally the only body allowed to deal with reported abuse and they will follow up every report. The police will also always be involved.
* Once reported you will have no control over what happens. You may be asked to attend a case conference.

**Procedures to follow if a child is at risk**

Share your concerns with the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and/or the parish priest/incumbent

Any discussion and decision should be recorded.

It may also be necessary if the situation is urgent to contact Social Services or the Police.

Seek advice from the Bishops safeguarding Adviser.

Any discussion and decision should be recorded.

Possible outcomes

1. Take no further action
2. Continue to observe and give the child the opportunity to confide in the worker. Review within an agreed timescale with the Bishop’s Safeguarding Adviser.
3. Raise concerns directly with parent(s)/carer(s). Review within an agreed timescale with the Bishop’s Safeguarding Adviser
4. Refer to Social services and / or police. Inform the Bishop’s Safeguarding Adviser within 24 hours

**Appointed persons and useful numbers**

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Revd Susan Larkin 07850 387183 revsusan@st-toms.com

Incumbent

Revd Paul Bracher 0121 783 2319

Bishops Safeguarding Adviser

Birmingham Diocesan office Steph Haynes 07342 993 844

ChildLine 0870 336 2915

Concerns about the Vicar or Parish Safeguarding Officer

If a concern is raised or an allegation is made has made against a member of the clergy or anyone holding a Bishops Licence (lay reader) the matter must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor who can be reached on 07432 993844. If there is a concern or an allegation is been made against the Parish Safeguarding Officers then the matter must be referred directly to the Incumbent.

1. **Steps to take if an allegation is made against you.**

All staff need to be aware of their vulnerability to allegations. Working within this code of practice reduces this risk. However, should a child make an allegation against a member of staff the appointed person should be informed immediately.

1. **Confession**

In a church setting it is possible that someone may confess to you a previous child abuse offence they have committed. You must follow the procedures laid down for reporting a suspected offence and inform the person that you will taking this action. Consideration must be given to whether children might still be at risk.

Having confided in you the abuser may need your support and pastoral care throughout the process of investigation.

It is also possible that someone may confess experience of past abuse and may need pastoral care.

# Pastoral Care

It is important the church can provide care and support to alleged abusers and alleged victims separately. This may include adult survivors who disclose previous abuse. The church’s practices on prayer ministry and counselling should be followed. This care and support may also need to be extended to the family. Remember staff may also need pastoral care.

See separate policy for visits undertaken by the pastoral care team

# Protection

If a known abuser is worshiping in the church sensible precautions must be taken to ensure they do not have the opportunity to be in close contact with children. Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work in children’s or youth groups but they may have other gifts that could be encouraged in ministry. The Bishop’s Advisor on Child Protection will be contacted for advice on how best to handle such a situation.

# Staff Training

* all staff will receive Safeguarding Children training according to their role, this should be renewed every three years. **This includes church wardens and all PCC members.**

Details of roles and training can be found and booked via the website.

<http://www.cofebirmingham.com/church-life/safeguarding/training>

* Training for working with children will be encouraged and resourced according to need and availability.

# Confidentiality and record keeping

All information concerning allegations or suspicions of abuse regarding children, families and workers will be kept confidential to the person initially involved in reporting their concern. The worker reporting the issue will not, in any circumstances, approach the alleged abuser. All written documents concerning allegations will be kept confidential and only disclosed to the agencies responsible for child abuse investigation.

All documentation, including notes taken, relating to anything reported to the police or social services will be kept confidentially and securely by the incumbent for an indefinite period.

1. **Review**

Safeguarding will be a standing item on every PCC meeting agenda and will be reported on at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

PART 2 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

St Thomas’ Church and St Thomas Community Project are part of Church of England Birmingham and this policy is informed by the Promoting a Safer Church policy statements.

[cofe-policy-statement.pdf (churchofengland.org)](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf)

This policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on 24th March 21

This policy sets out our values and principles and describes the practices implemented to meet our commitment to safeguard vulnerable adults.

1. **Introduction**

We are committed to :

* Promoting a safe environment and culture.
* Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
* Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
* Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
* Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
* Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the trustees of St Thomas Community Project Management Committee (STCP) will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and abide by it.

We believe every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. The Church of England - Birmingham is committed to keeping children and adults, who may be vulnerable, safe. We are committed to the safeguarding principles adopted by the House of Bishops:

**2.0** For adults, vulnerability is not an absolute. All adults will experience to a greater or lesser degree, vulnerability at different times in their lives.

St Thomas’ Church and Community Project believes that every adult has the right to enjoy a safe and secure environment in which they feel confident to seek help and support and where all aspects of their welfare will be protected. We are therefore committed to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults entrusted to our care at all times. Our prime aims are to :

* Protect all vulnerable adults in our care
* Protect and support all workers

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Community Project Management Committee (Trustees) will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and abide by it.

* *For the purposes of protection of vulnerable adults, a vulnerable adult is anyone over the age of 18 who may need substantial assistance on a day to day basis with performing functions or communicating with others by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or emotional trauma. It may also be that a helper or even paid worker is themselves covered by the policy, at different times in their lives.*
* *Staff refers to workers who are paid voluntary or on a placement*
* *St Thomas’ encompasses the church and the community project*
* *The term “adult” used in this policy refers to a “Non-vulnerable” adult*

**The definition of a “vulnerable adult” for safeguarding purposes is someone who meets one or more of the following criteria:**

* Lives in residential accommodation such as a care home or sheltered housing scheme
* Receives domiciliary care in his or her own home
* Receives any form of health care
* Is detained in a prison or remand centre or institution, secure training centre, attendance centre, or under the powers of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* Is in contact with the probation services
* Receives a service or participates in an activity specifically targeted at people with age-related needs, disabilities or prescribed physical or mental health conditions or expectant or nursing mothers living in residential care
* Is receiving direct payments from a local authority / HSS body in lieu of social care services
* Requires assistance in the conduct of his or her own affairs.
* Is experiencing serious emotional trauma

NB The definition for of a vulnerable adult is much narrower for DBS procedures and is directed more by the activity the worker/volunteer is engaged in

Each of the following is a regulated activity relating to vulnerable adults—

(a) the provision to an adult of health care by, or under the direction or supervision of, a health care professional,

(b) the provision to an adult of relevant personal care,

(c) the provision by a social care worker of relevant social work to an adult who is a client or potential client,

(d) the provision of assistance in relation to general household matters to an adult who is in need of it by reason of age, illness or disability,

(e) any relevant assistance in the conduct of an adult’s own affairs,

(f) the conveying by persons of a prescribed description in such Regulated activity (adults) 11 circumstances as may be prescribed of adults who need to be conveyed by reason of age, illness or disability,

(g) such activities :

(i) involving, or connected with, the provision of health care or relevant personal care to adults, and

(ii) not falling within any of the above paragraphs, as are of a prescribed description.

**3.0 Insurance**

St Thomas’ Church carries insurance covering public liability and emloyer’s liabilty.

# Health and Safety

St. Thomas’ has a Health and Safety policy that covers general issues. The Church Wardens and the PCC are responsible for assessing and reviewing general health and safety practices on church premises. Appointed paid and voluntary workers are additionally responsible for ensuring that risks are managed and minimised. (See Health and Safety Policy for details)

1. **Recruitment and selection**

All new and current workers (volunteers, paid employees and placements) will be recruited under the Safe Recruitment Policy

[Diocese of Birmingham | Safer Recruitment (cofebirmingham.com)](https://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/safeguarding/safer-recruitment/)

Applicants must provide information and documentation for a full DBS check to be conducted. Appointment will not commence until satisfactory disclosure has been received. DBS applications and returns are treated confidentially.

DBS checks should be renewed every 3 years.

All new staff (paid or voluntary) will be required to serve a probationary period of 3 months under the supervision of an appropriate person appointed by the incumbent.

The incumbent will take up references on each new worker, including all volunteers.

The PCC and STCP will ensure that adequate training is undertaken.

**5.0 Other organisations**

Other organisations working with vulnerable adults on St Thomas’ premises will be made aware of our policy. The PCC requires that others who use our premises (or their parent body) have a policy that equals the guidelines set down in this policy.

**6.0 Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this code of conduct is to encourage good practice, maintain high standards and promote a safe and happy environment for vulnerable adults and staff. Planning the work of groups including vulnerable adults should involve:

* Putting the welfare of vulnerable adults first.
* Treating everyone with respect and dignity
* Providing a role model of good and appropriate behaviour
* Setting and monitoring appropriate boundaries when working with vulnerable adults, based on respect for an individual’s right to privacy.
* Being aware that behaviour can be misinterpreted, even when well-intentioned.
* Challenging unacceptable behaviour
* Ensuring through appropriate training that volunteers and workers know what is expected of them.
* Allowing the volunteers and workers the opportunity to think through and discuss how things have been going.
* Creating opportunities for workers to share informal communication, build a sense of value, unity and co-operation through sharing their experience in an open environment of trust.
* Ensuring the workers and volunteers are kept informed of on-going developments and lines of responsibility and communication.
* Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering vulnerable adults to share in decision making.
* Ensuring that all workers have clear roles and are provided with support and supervision.
* Permitting group leaders to create opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work with vulnerable adults.

The PCC and CPMC will through its officers and committees seek to minimise the situations where abuse of vulnerable adults may occur. It will:

* Provide a safe physical environment for work with vulnerable adults - e.g. fire, hygiene, equipment, etc. Accident books will be maintained and accidents logged. Risk assessments will be carried out where necessary and made available on request.
* Review access to our premises for vulnerable adults; and arrangements/timings for dropping off and collecting to/from activities.
* Plan activities which allow at least two adults to be present or at least within sight or hearing of another group; especially if this is the only activity taking place at the time on church premises.
* Keep clear records of members attending a group. This enables us to account for clients and volunteers attending sessions and clear opening and closing times establishes the time limits for responsibility.
* Plan the transporting of vulnerable adults so that as far as possible there are at least two passengers in the vehicle. Where this is impractical, ensure same gender.
* Have two or more adults when taking a group off site premises.
* Take appropriate steps to keep vulnerable adults safe in the event of a known abuser attending church having regard to any guidance offered from the Diocese. Known abusers will not be allowed to work with vulnerable adults.
* Build in a process for review and training for workers.

This code of conduct is about work with vulnerable adults which ensures that they feel able to talk openly in a safe environment. Encourage workers to make time to talk with vulnerable adults on an individual basis during group sessions, by finding space to one side of the general activity. Vulnerable adults need to know that workers are available and approachable. Create a safe and caring environment that enables vulnerable adults to raise concerns about any behaviour or attitudes they do not like.

Avoid:

* Spending excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others
* Showing favouritism towards an individual
* Meeting vulnerable adults outside the context, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of their carer.

Do Not:

* Engage in or encourage sexually provocative activities
* Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
* Allow people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
* Make any sexually suggestive comments, even in fun
* Let any allegations a vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
* Rely on your good name as protection
* Do things of a personal nature for a vulnerable adult which they could do for themselves

Do :

* Take reasonable precautions when giving lifts to vulnerable adults for example have a non vulnerable adult with you or inform someone else of your actions.
* Hold the welfare of a vulnerable adult as a top priority
* Treat vulnerable adults with respect
* Ensure a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised or discussed
* Ensure a culture of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice is challenged

NB This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle of this code of conduct is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or leave themselves open to allegation

**7.0 Visiting Policy**

See separate policy for visits undertaken by the pastoral care team

1. **Communicating and Gathering Digitally**

The safeguarding policy and code of conduct must be applied when meeting or communicating with vulnerable adults digitally; for example via Zoom, Facetime etc.

Principally :

* participants must be suitably dressed i.e. not in nightwear
* Be aware of who else is present in the background and what they are doing and saying.
* Remember in effect you are entering their home and they are entering yours.
* Passcodes for meetings should be used

1. **Reporting Suspected Abuse**

It is not the responsibility of any worker to decide whether or not abuse of a vulnerable adult has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities and agencies.

It is the duty of all volunteers or employees to report any information relating to any vulnerable adult who they think is being abused or is at risk of abuse. This applies whatever the situation in which the abuse or suspected abuse is thought to take place.

Disclosure may take place in a pastoral setting between an individual and a worker. While a person's right to confidentiality is of the highest importance, it is not absolute. There are occasions when confidentiality should not be maintained. If a vulnerable adult may possibly be at risk from the person making the disclosure, a report must be made to social services or the police, together with an assurance that no matter what is disclosed the person will be helped, within the constraints imposed by the law and subject to the paramount need to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults. The incumbent should consult the bishop's representative in order to obtain expert professional advice about how the person concerned can best be helped.

***NB. it is not the role of workers to do any investigation.***

* Allegations against a volunteer/employee must be reported immediately to the incumbent who will suspend the volunteer/employee until further notice while an investigation is carried out. Where the allegation is against the incumbent it must be reported to the bishop's representative.

* All information concerning allegations or suspicions of abuse regarding vulnerable adults will be kept confidential to the person initially involved in reporting their concern to the Incumbent. The worker reporting the issue will not, in any circumstances, approach the alleged abuser. All written documents concerning allegations will be kept confidential and only disclosed to the agencies responsible for the investigation.

If you suspect abuse or if an allegation is made to you

* Do not delay; the responsibility of reporting vulnerable adults thought to be at risk rests with the person who identifies the concern, no matter what their role in the organisation.
* Consult the person to whom you are answerable, unless this is the person being accused. In which case consult the incumbent.
* If the allegation is made against a worker, the incumbent may chose to suspend the accused and the accuser pending an investigation.
* Do not inform any other unauthorised people.
* Do not do any investigating yourself. Social Services are legally the only body allowed to deal with reported abuse and they will follow up every report. The police will also always be involved.
* Make an accurate note of your suspicions recording dates, times and places. Use the actual language used by the person making the accusation, not a tidied up version.
* Once reported you will have no control over what happens
* You may be asked to attend a case conference,
* You must not take responsibility for making a judgement about the allegation. The vulnerable adult will have needed much courage to get this far. The protection of the person involved is the priority.
* Expect to have to handle your own strong feelings. You may well need support.
* In the event of an incident having occurred within church, different people must support the alleged victim and alleged abuser. The Bishop's Advisor should be consulted for further guidance. In the event of the allegation being made against the incumbent or church worker, the Bishop’s Advisor should be consulted as soon as possible for advice and they will inform social services.

1. **Staff Training**

* all staff will receive Safeguarding training according to their role, this should be renewed every three years. **This includes church wardens and PCC members.**

Details of roles and training can be found and booked via the website.

<http://www.cofebirmingham.com/church-life/safeguarding/training>

* Training for working with vulnerable adults will be encouraged and resourced according to need and availability.

**11.0 Concerns about the Vicar or Parish Safeguarding Officer**

If a concern is raised or an allegation is made has made against a member of the clergy or anyone holding a Bishops Licence (lay reader) the matter must be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor who can be reached on 07432 993844. If there is a concern or an allegation is been made against the Parish Safeguarding Officers then the matter must be referred directly to the Incumbent.

1. **Record keeping**

All documentation, including notes taken, relating to anything reported to the police or social services will be kept confidentially and securely by the incumbent for an indefinite period.

1. **Responding Well**

A report of the House of Bishops called **Responding Well** has highlighted how sexual abuse can mark a person for life.  A survivor of sexual abuse may become an apparently capable and confident adult, able to handle demands and challenges most of the time; but they can find that suddenly this ease slips and they feel unsure and overwhelmed when meeting challenges and conflict.  It is not easy to predict when this unease may surface.  At such times, adults can value and be strengthened by the opportunity to speak in depth and in confidence to a sensitive listener.  There may be people with this need in our church and project.

Therefore we acknowledge that sexual abuse takes place and can have negative and life-long effects on those abused and we have responsibility to make known that listening support for an individual is available and to report and refer as appropriate to statutory bodies. To help in this, the Bishop is establishing a panel of "diocesan listeners".

# An individual can reasonably expect the following from meeting a diocesan listener:

* a listener who shows sensitivity and help to the person to share their experience and that this experience is taken seriously
* a listener who values the person as someone of worth to God and to others
* guidance if there is a need to find help from professional counselling
* information about how to raise concerns about the perpetrator of the abuse if the person chooses to report concerns
* permanent confidentiality that is restricted only by the requirements of the law

The priest or chosen lay person contacts the Bishop’s Chaplain in the first instance with the name, contact details and permission of the person concerned.   Arrangements will then be made for one of the Diocesan Listeners to make direct contact with the person concerned and arrange a time for meeting.

In some cases, following an initial or meetings, the diocesan listener may need to suggest that the person asks for further help from a professional counsellor.

The Bishop's Safeguarding Adult Adviser should be informed by parishes through the Bishop's Office of those cases which may give rise to the need to refer to statutory bodies or which involve clergy and employers.

Further information about responding well can be found in the following documents which are filed on the office desk top under Project/ policies :

Responding Well part A Context

Responding Well part B Good Practice

**Procedures to follow if a vulnerable adult is at risk**

Share your concerns with the Parish Vulnerable Adults Co-ordinator and/or the parish priest

Any discussion and decision should be recorded.

It may also be necessary if the situation is urgent to contact Social Services or the Police.

Seek advice from the Bishop’s Representative

Any discussion and decision should be recorded.

Possible outcomes

1. Take no further action
2. Continue to observe and give the vulnerable adult the opportunity to confide in the worker. Review within an agreed timescale.
3. Raise concerns directly with relatives or carer(s). Review within an agreed timescale.
4. Refer to Social services and / or police. Inform the Bishop’s representative within 24 hours

**Appointed persons and useful numbers**

Vulnerable Adults Parish Co-ordinator

Jan Beare 0121 258 2294 (home)

0777 340 3706 (mobile)

Incumbent Revd Paul Bracher 0121 783 2319

Bishops Representative

Birmingham Diocesan office Steph Haynes 07342 993 844

Police 0345 113 5000 or dial 101

Social Services 0121 303 6541

Age UK 0800 169 6565