

# Parish Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

**Parish of St Hilda, Warley Woods**

---

agreed by the Parish Church Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

**All forms of domestic abuse are wrong  
and must stop.**

**We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:**

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

**We recognise that:**

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

**We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:**

**In all our activities** – valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**In our publicity** – raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**When concerns are raised** – ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help and working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

**In our care** – ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse and identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone  
please contact:**

Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator 07942 919 308

email: [sthildasafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:sthildasafeguarding@gmail.com)

or/ Revd. Jenni Crewes, Vicar 07377 363 915

**Other Useful Contacts:**

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	07342 993 844
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid	0808 800 0028
West Mercia Women's Aid	0800 980 3331
Staffordshire Women's Aid	0300 330 5959
Black Country Women's Aid	0121 552 6448
Respect Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327
Galop (LGBT+) Helpline	0800 999 5428
Hourglass (formerly Action on Elder Abuse)	0808 808 8141

## St Hilda's Parish Procedures for Responding to Domestic Abuse

Agreed by the Parish Church Council on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### Content:

- A) What is Domestic Abuse? *pages 1-2*  
 B) What to do when someone discloses domestic abuse to you *page 3*  
 C) Some 'Do's and 'Don'ts if someone discloses domestic abuse to you. *page 4*

### A) What is Domestic Abuse?

**Definition used by the UK Government:** any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse perpetrated by those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

**Domestic abuse and violence can include the following types of behaviours:** *(this is not an exhaustive list)*

**Destructive criticism and verbal abuse:** shouting, mocking, accusing, name calling, verbal threatening, making the person feel guilty, ridiculing every aspect of a person's appearance or skills.

**Pressure/ emotional tactics:** sulking, threatening to withhold money, disconnecting the telephone, taking the car away, taking the children away, threatening to report to welfare agencies unless the person complies with demands, threatening or attempting suicide, withholding or pressurising the person to use drugs or other substances, lying to friends and family about the person, telling the person they have no choice in any decisions, making the person do illegal things, making the person drop any charges that have been brought, playing mind games, keeping the person deliberately short of sleep, being obsessively or irrationally jealous.

**Disrespect:** persistently putting the person down in front of other people, not listening or responding when the person talks, interrupting the person's telephone calls, taking money from the person's purse without asking, refusing to help with childcare or housework.

**Breaking trust:** including – lying, withholding information, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreements.

**Isolation:** monitoring or blocking the person's telephone calls, telling the person where they can and cannot go, preventing the person from seeing

friends and relatives, shutting the person in the house, controlling what the person can read or their social media or internet access.

**Harassment:** following the person, checking up on them, not allowing them any privacy (for example opening their mail), repeatedly checking to see who has telephoned the person, embarrassing the person in public, accompanying them wherever they go, using contact with children to harass or pass messages.

**Threats:** angry looks, actions or gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting the person down, destroying possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a knife or gun, threatening to kill or harm the person and the children, threatening to kill or harm family pets, suicide threats, threatening to leave.

**Sexual violence:** using force, threats or intimidation to make the person perform sexual acts, having sex with the person when they don't want it, forcing the person to look at pornographic material, forcing them to have sex with other people, any degrading treatment related to the person's sexuality, knowingly passing on sexually transmitted infections, controlling access to contraception.

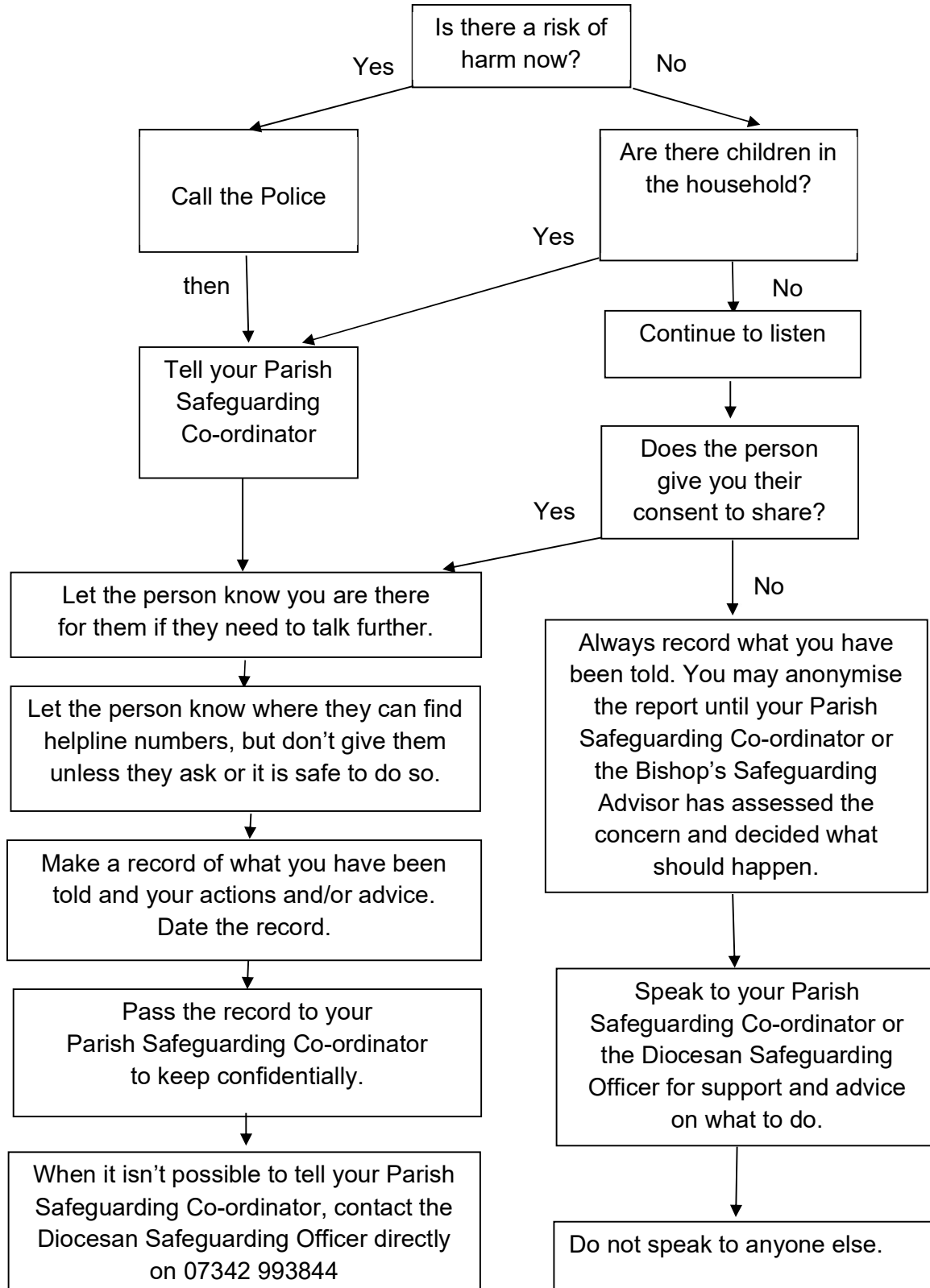
**Physical violence:** punching, slapping, hitting, biting, pinching, kicking, pulling out hair, pushing, shoving, burning, strangling, giving too much, too little or the wrong medication.

**Economic abuse:** preventing the person from getting a job, making them ask for money, giving the person an 'allowance', taking the person's money, not letting the person know about or have access to family income, forcing them to take out loans, unauthorised use of the person's money, valuables, property, pension etc, demanding to know every penny the person spends.

**Denial:** saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying the person caused the abusive behaviour, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and asking for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again, shifting responsibility for the abusive behaviour.

**Spiritual abuse:** telling the person God hates them, refusing to let the person go to church or worship, using faith as a weapon to control or terrorise the person for the perpetrator's personal pleasure or gain, using religious teaching to justify the abuse or to compel forgiveness.

## B) What to do when someone discloses domestic abuse to you



**C) Some 'Do's and 'Don'ts if someone discloses domestic abuse to you****DO:**

- Maintain confidentiality and be aware of who might overhear you speaking to the victim.
- Inform the person of the Church's safeguarding procedures and that whilst strict confidentiality will be observed, you will need to inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who may need to speak with the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor.
- Tell the person that you must keep a record, which can be anonymised and will be shared with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator in strict confidentiality.
- Take time to listen, and believe.
- Affirm the strength and courage it takes to survive and to speak about the abuse.
- Reassure the person that abuse is wrong and not their fault.
- Be sensitive to background and culture.
- Be aware of protective factors such as support from friends and family.
- Encourage the person to focus on their own needs. They may not have done this for a long time.
- Ask the person what they want to happen and what they need from the Church. Offer support in relation to need, which lets them keep in control.
- Agree safe ways to contact and keep in touch.

**DON'T**

- Ignore what someone is telling you.
- Promise to keep the abuse a secret.
- Share any information about the person with the alleged perpetrator.
- Discuss with other Church members who could inadvertently pass information to the alleged perpetrator.
- Make judgements about the person or the level of abuse.
- Investigate or ask for proof.
- Recommend any form of relationship counselling.
- Ask the person to forgive the alleged perpetrator.