

Introduction

Theology – why does safeguarding matter in a Christian community?

Jesus talked of the kingdom of God belonging to children; he gave them status, time and respect. Jesus also showed himself to be compassionately on the side of those without power, reaching across social barriers with the inclusive love of God.

A Christian approach to safeguarding children, adults who may be vulnerable and those in abusive relationships therefore asks both individuals and communities to create a safe environment for them, to act promptly on any complaints made, to care for those who have been abused in the past, and to minister appropriately to those who have abused.

Purpose – why these policies, procedures and guidelines?

- The Diocese of Southwark, as part of the Church of England, is committed to establishing an environment where:
 - children and young people are nurtured and protected
 - all people, and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety
- The diocese is committed to working in accordance with the national legal¹ and procedural² framework for safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable, and Church of England policy and practice³
- The Diocesan policies and procedures provide protection for children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the diocese
- They provide staff and voluntary workers with procedures that they should adopt:
 - to create a safe environment for children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable; and

*1 The Children Act 1989 and 2004
Human Rights Act 1998 and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by UK government 1991)
Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA)
Sexual Offences Act 1997, 2003, 2000 (Amendments)
Data Protection Act 1998
The Care Standards Act 2000*

*2 Safe from Harm: Code of Practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations, published by the Home Office in 1993
Every Child Matters Change for Children programme
Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (HM Government, 2006)
No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse*

*3 Protecting all God's children: the child protection policy for the Church of England, 3rd edition, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2004
Promoting a safe church: policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2006
Responding to domestic abuse: guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility, published by the Archbishop's Council in 2006*

*See Section 9
A range of
theological
perspectives*

*See Section 9
A summary of the
law,*

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- in the event that a child or young person or adult who may be vulnerable may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm
- The Diocesan policies and procedures foster and encourage consistency of practice across parishes and in all aspects of Diocesan life in relation to standards for working with children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable, and in supporting their parents and carers.

Vulnerability - who is included?

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one of us has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time we will all be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. In supporting a vulnerable person we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity. An adult cannot be labelled as 'vulnerable' in the same way as a child may be regarded as such. Childhood is absolute: someone who is not yet eighteen years of age is, in the eyes of the law, a child. Adult vulnerability is not absolute in this way. Some of the factors that increase adult vulnerability include:

- a sensory or physical disability or impairment
- a learning disability
- a physical illness
- mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties in old age
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement, previous abuse or trauma.

In order to focus those people for whom the church should have a particular care, the following working definition of an adult who may be vulnerable may be helpful:

“Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness, or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

Who are the policies, procedures and guidelines for?

- They apply to all clergy and licensed ministers, all staff employed by the diocese, and all paid or unpaid workers in parishes
- They apply to all parishes in the diocese.

How should parishes apply them?

Parishes need to:

- adopt their own policies for Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Adults who may be vulnerable and Responding to Domestic Abuse
- appoint at least two designated Parish Safeguarding Officers¹ per church, to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement the contents of this manual
- adopt and implement the Diocesan procedures and guidelines.

P denotes a Diocesan Procedure, which is non-negotiable and you must adopt in order to comply with the law and/or national and Church of England policy

G denotes a Guideline, which is the Diocese's recommendation for best practice.

See Diocesan templates Section 2 & 10

See Section 3

What happens if a parish does not comply with the Diocesan Policies and Procedures?

- It is a condition of parish insurance policies that the parish takes all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring to children and adults who may be vulnerable. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice your insurance
- To satisfy this condition, you therefore have a duty to adopt 'best practice', by following the Church of England current and ongoing guidelines in safeguarding; the contents of this manual interpret these for parishes in the Diocese.
- For parishes which are required to register with the Charity Commission, incidents that cause a significant loss of funds or pose serious risks to a charity's beneficiaries, resources or reputation should be reported to the Charity Commission as soon as possible. Serious incidents include not having a policy for safeguarding its vulnerable beneficiaries; no vetting procedure for trustees and members of staff
- Apart from these insurance and Charity Commission requirements, serious damage may be done to children and adults who may be vulnerable, their leaders, and the reputation of your church, if best practice is not followed.

¹ In exceptional circumstances, churches may choose to appoint just one Parish Safeguarding Officer

Some definitions – what do the terms mean?

Child/children	All children and young people under the age of 18 .
Vulnerable adult	Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
Safeguarding children	Promoting the welfare of children, and keeping children safe from harm, such as illness, abuse or injury. This includes taking all reasonable measures to create a framework where people are confident to undertake activities in which the risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised; and, when there are concerns about children and young people’s welfare, taking appropriate actions to address those concerns.
Safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable	Promoting the welfare of adults who may be vulnerable, and keeping them safe from harm, such as illness, abuse or injury. This includes in all activities taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the welfare of adults who may be vulnerable are minimised; and, when there are concerns about the welfare of adults who may be vulnerable, taking appropriate actions to address those concerns.
Child protection	Protecting children from mistreatment, abuse and harm.
Adult protection	Protecting adults who may be vulnerable from mistreatment, abuse and harm.
Child abuse	Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. This could be physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect. Abuse happens to children of all ages, from any social background or ethnic group. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.
Mistreatment	A violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. The term covers abuse (including imbalance of power), bullying and harassment. Harm is what results from mistreatment or abuse. Children and vulnerable adults may be mistreated in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or by a stranger.
Domestic abuse	Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
Alleged perpetrator	Someone against whom allegations of sexual or violent behaviour have been made, and who is being investigated by statutory agencies.
Offender	Someone who has been convicted and found guilty of a criminal offence (including those cautioned).
Others posing risk	Those against whom concerns have been substantiated, but found not guilty of a criminal offence, or with insufficient evidence to proceed.
Victim	Someone, child or adult, who has suffered and may still be suffering abuse or mistreatment from an adult or another child.
Adult survivor	An adult who suffered abuse in childhood or as an adult, and who may still be suffering from the effects of abuse.

See Section 9
(What is child abuse and neglect?)

See Section 9
(What is mistreatment, abuse and harm?)

See Section 9
(What is domestic abuse?)