

## Diocese of Southwark policies

### Safeguarding policy statement of the Church of England: *Promoting a Safer Church (2017)*

The Church of England safeguarding policy statement (2017) offers six overarching policy commitments:

- promoting a safer 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 who may pose a present risk to others.

This policy applies to all church bodies\* and church officers\*\*. Full understanding of and adherence to this policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of and respect for the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults as people of faith in the life of the Church.

The six policy commitments are based on five foundations:

- Gospel
- human rights and the law
- core principles
- good safeguarding practice
- learning from the past.

The full document is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

*\*Church bodies include PCCs, Diocesan bodies, cathedrals, religious communities, Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) and the National Church Institutions.*

*\*\*A church officer is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.*

## Section 2: Diocesan policies

### **The Diocese of Southwark safeguarding policy: Promoting a Safer Church**

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy, our Diocese is committed to:

- promoting a safer 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 who may pose a present risk to others.

The Diocese will support all our worshipping communities to:

- create a safe and caring place for all
- have a named Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) to work with parishes to implement policy and procedures
- safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse
- display on Diocesan premises and on the Diocesan website the details of whom to contact with safeguarding concerns or support needs
- listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse
- take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops' guidance, including immediately notifying statutory agencies
- offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, and when or where it occurred
- care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties
- support parishes to ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually
- review safeguarding progress across the Diocese annually.

#### **The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is:**

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*A template for a parish safeguarding policy is available at  
[Section 10, Appendix 1 of this manual](#)*

*An A3 policy poster for display locally is available at:  
[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/  
PromotingASaferChurchPosterA3.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/PromotingASaferChurchPosterA3.pdf)*

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## Church of England policy on domestic abuse

(From '[Responding Well to Domestic Abuse: Practice Guidance](#)', second edition 2017)

The Church of England is committed to raising awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community.

### It will work to ensure that:

- the safety of individuals suffering abuse or seeking help is the first priority, and to be aware of the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good safeguarding practice
- teaching and worship reflect awareness-raising about domestic abuse, use appropriate language and say clearly that domestic abuse is wrong
- inappropriate behaviour is challenged. This needs to be done extremely carefully, in a way that does not place any individual including a victim at increased risk
- clergy and clergy spouses have the same access to support and resources as others who are experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, the Diocesan Bishop will appoint a Bishop's Visitor whose role is to support the clergy or clergy spouse at the time of the breakdown of the relationship, and for as long as possible after, as required.

### It is committed to all church bodies:

- adopting and publishing a local policy on domestic abuse, including who to contact if there are concerns
- having clear procedures in place to respond to concerns about domestic abuse in line with [Responding Well to Domestic Abuse: Practice Guidance](#) and [Responding to, Assessing and Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations Against Church Officers: Practice Guidance](#)
- ensuring signage is in place in local venues to demonstrate that a church or setting is willing to talk with everyone about domestic abuse and how to access support
- appointing a named individual who has responsibility for domestic abuse and violence and who is a point of contact for any advice and support. This may be the DSA, Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or the nominated safeguarding lead
- training those in leadership positions, safeguarding roles and with pastoral roles on domestic abuse
- discussing domestic abuse and violence in appropriate contexts such as marriage preparation, youth groups, ordinand training and in church settings
- organising and promoting training and awareness-raising sessions
- working with statutory agencies and other support bodies; supporting and publicising their work.

## Section 2: Diocesan policies

### Diocese of Southwark domestic abuse policy

**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
- work to protect those experiencing domestic abuse from actual or potential harm
- recognise equality among people and within relationships
- refuse to condone any form of abuse
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly 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 child 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 respond to domestic abuse by:**

- in all our activities:
  - valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse, whilst refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse
- in our publicity:
  - raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public 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
  - 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
  - identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and procedures regularly.**

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*A template for a parish policy on domestic abuse is available at  
[Section 10, Appendix 2 of this manual](#)*

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