



**ST MATTHEW'S
& THE MINSTER**
CHELTENHAM

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Policy & Procedures (Revised November 2023)

**This policy should be read alongside the “Parish Safeguarding Handbook”
originally issued by the Church of England House of Bishops in 2018**

This is available online at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

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<p>The Parish Safeguarding Officers for Vulnerable Adults are Emma Abbey and Paul Collacott</p>
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Working with Vulnerable Adults: Introduction.

The heart of the message of Jesus is that He loves us and wants everyone to know about His love. As we work to share this Good News, we know that we have a responsibility to make sure everyone in the church family is safe to grow and thrive.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. That is why we have a safeguarding policy - to make sure every vulnerable adult connected to the church family of St Matthew's and The Minster is protected from harm and free to flourish. We must take safeguarding seriously because abuse is harmful and often has a long-term effect on those suffering that abuse.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society, without compromising the authority of scripture on all related issues dealt with in this policy. Society recognises that people can be harmed when they are vulnerable for various reasons, whether permanently or on a temporary basis, and this abuse can take place in their own homes, in residential care, at work or in other activities including those provided by the church. Some adults, who do not see themselves as 'vulnerable' under our working definition, may still find themselves exploited, bullied or abused. The safeguarding of adults when harm occurs is the responsibility of everyone. Awareness of the ways in which people can suffer from harm encourages church members to be vigilant both within and outside the church community.

There are three areas we need to consider in order to have a good safeguarding church culture:

- We want to make sure that all people, and in this context particularly vulnerable adults, are safe from abuse within the church
- We want to make sure that people who work alongside vulnerable adults are safe from allegation
- We want to make sure that we know how to respond to vulnerable adults who are experiencing abuse away from church

You need to read the "Parish Safeguarding Handbook" originally issued by the Church of England House of Bishops in 2018 alongside this policy because it gives more details and explanations about specific situations. It is available online here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

This policy should also be read alongside the companion policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People issued by St Matthew's and the Minster Cheltenham.

Further help and advice can be found on the Diocesan website. The safeguarding introduction page is to be found here:

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/safeguarding/>. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is Brett Riches, and the Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Melanie Biscoe. Their phone number is 01452 835516, or for out of hours concerns, 07944 680320 and their email is safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk. They are a useful source of wisdom and advice. Out of hours cover on weekends is provided by the **thirtyone:eight** organisation on 0303 003 111.

As we value and celebrate all our church congregation, from the very youngest to the oldest, we are reflecting the value God places on every single one of us.

This policy was adopted by the PCC of St. Matthew's and the Minster Cheltenham at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on **20th November 2023**

Churchwardens:

David Evans
Anna Laszlo

The revision and updating of this policy was agreed on **20th November 2023**

Signed:

Anna Laszlo

David Evans

Churchwardens

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

Vulnerability.

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities, and restrictions. At some time, everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is “invulnerable”; some people may consider themselves to be strong, but when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear.

Some people, by reason of their physical and social circumstances, have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to try to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person, we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains their dignity.

Vulnerability is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labelled as 'vulnerable' in the same way as a child is regarded as such. Childhood is absolute; someone under a certain age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with vulnerability.

Some of the factors that increase 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.

Principles Underlying the Policy

The church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations which create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of the people involved. A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- have their privacy respected
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible
- be able to choose how to lead their lives
- have the protection of the law
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background
- be heard within an appropriate forum.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

all those, ordained or lay, appointed to the Church Staff

all those volunteers working with vulnerable adults in the Parish

It is recommended that those who need to read this policy should also read the parallel policy on Safeguarding Children and Young Adults

In order to promote good quality work with vulnerable adults, the summary of the policy in this Parish is:

To seek to provide a caring, consistent and safe environment in which vulnerable adults can thrive.

The Parochial Church Council

The PCC accepts that safeguarding is everybody's business, but it is the particular responsibility of the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC:

Therefore, the PCC will ensure that:

- there is a standing "Safeguarding" item on the PCC agenda;
- the standards and appropriate procedures in the recruitment, training and support of all those involved in the care of vulnerable adults (as outlined in Appendix A) and the Guidelines to encourage good practice (in Appendix B) are adhered to;
- the Rector, Churchwardens, PCC and Safeguarding Officers have completed the levels of training required of them by Diocesan policy and undertake to renew their training before its expiry dates;
- the PCC has adopted the Safeguarding Dashboard offered by the Diocese and undertakes to work to be compliant in all aspects;
- the Rector and the Parish Safeguarding Officers are responsible for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy;
- the policy is reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised;
- a copy of this policy is available for inspection at the church reception;
- the Diocesan poster about safeguarding is displayed where people can easily see it along with information about the Parish Safeguarding Officers;
- all church users should be regularly reminded that this policy exists (alongside the parallel safeguarding policy for children and young people) and have the opportunity to view it;
- the PCC Secretary, the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC will ensure the provision of personal liability insurance for all paid and voluntary workers;
- the PCC will ensure that when letting the premises to any other groups, they will be asked to complete the Diocesan safeguarding agreement.

The PCC commits to:

- recognising that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives;
- respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister;
- the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, aiming to ensure their wellbeing in the life of this church;
- promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust;
- promoting the inclusion and empowerment of all adults who may be at risk;
- taking individual responsibility to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of adults who may be at risk and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect;
- exercising proper care in the safer recruitment practices of all appointment processes of those who will work with adults who may be at risk;
- supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst adults who may be at risk.

Staff and Volunteer Recruitment, Induction, Training & Support

Recruitment

Whenever we appoint a new member of staff or volunteer to a role which includes direct work with vulnerable adults, we will follow best practice and adopt “Safer Recruiting” procedures. The person responsible for the recruitment will have completed the “Safer Recruitment” training available on the Church of England on-line training portal. Please see Appendix A for a clear guide to the steps to take when recruiting someone to work with vulnerable adults.

There are occasions when someone volunteers as “an extra pair of hands”, not on a rota but as a one-off at a special event. These people will not necessarily go through the normal recruitment procedure. They will only be allowed to undertake this role if the Activity Leader is confident that they are able to do so having consulted with one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers if possible.

Induction and probation

To make sure new staff/volunteers feel confident that they know what is expected of them, there will be an induction process for them. The induction will be relevant to the role they are undertaking. It may include opportunities to shadow others already doing the task and supervisory observation by the Activity Leader. Induction must include the expectation that the person has read the Safeguarding Policy and a follow up discussion about it with the person responsible for the appointment. Paid and voluntary appointments are subject to the successful completion of a six-month probationary period.

Training and support

All staff and volunteers are expected to complete the on-line Diocesan training. Everyone will complete the Basic Awareness course and, depending on role, some will also complete the Foundation Course. These courses can be easily accessed via the Diocesan website training portal: safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org. The online courses must be refreshed every three years. The Safeguarding officers are responsible for tracking renewal dates.

Re-submissions of applications for DBS disclosure

Paid employees and volunteers will re-submit applications for DBS disclosure every five years (according to diocesan policy) as part of the ongoing strategy to protect children and young people.

Working with young volunteers

We are always really pleased to encourage young people to get involved in serving the church family. This might be in a variety of settings, including those where vulnerable adults are present, for example at Saturday Kitchen. We have a duty of care to young volunteers as well as a need to ensure that they act in accordance with our safeguarding policy. Separate guidance for activities with young volunteers is found at Appendix E of the parallel policy for working with Children and Young People.

Running activities and groups with vulnerable adults

We encourage the highest standards in working with vulnerable adults.

Risk assessments

Every activity must have a risk assessment. It is the responsibility of the Activity Leader to write these. There are Diocesan templates for this held by the Rector's PA/Church Office. For regular groups and activities, the assessment should be reviewed annually to make sure it is still relevant. Staff and volunteers arranging activities away from the church premises need to ensure they cover more detail as potentially there are more risks or hazards away from the building.

There must be adequate provision of first aid. An up-to-date list of those with relevant qualifications will be clearly accessible with the First Aid box (to be stored in the kitchen, Tyndale Room and Ministry Office).

What to do if a vulnerable adult discloses abuse

The recommended guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse will be followed. All those in positions of responsibility in the Parish and, in particular, all those involved with activities involving vulnerable adults must be familiar with the action to be taken if abuse is suspected. (See Appendix C)

If allegations of abuse are made the Diocese and the Parish shall co-operate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations. Neither the Diocese nor the Parish will conduct investigations.

Parish Safeguarding Officers

Parish Safeguarding Officers for vulnerable adults will be appointed by the PCC who will ensure that they have appropriate training and that they are affirmed and supported by the church leadership.

The role and responsibilities of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is outlined in Appendix D.

All adult activity leaders and helpers will be made aware of the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer and in what circumstances the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be contacted.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers will routinely offer support and advice to those with concerns and ensure the policy is being followed.

Diocesan Safeguarding Team

The contact details of the Diocesan Safeguarding team are found on page three of this policy. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team are available by email and phone to answer questions and advise actions. They work with thirtyone:eight, a national independent Christian safeguarding organisation, to provide advice and guidance, as well as out of hours cover on Thursday – Sunday every week. (The contact details for thirtyone:eight are also on page three of this policy). An Information Sharing Agreement between the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and thirtyone:eight will allow us to receive a copy of any advice thirtyone:eight may offer the parish church/caller.

The normal route to contact the Diocesan Advisers/thirtyone:eight is via the Parish Safeguarding Officers. If the Parish Safeguarding Officers are not available and a case is urgent, an individual should contact either the Diocesan Team or thirtyone:eight directly.

Document Storage

All documents relating to vulnerable adults and the volunteers working with them will be stored on Share Point. This is a backed up, on-line portal. It is a document storage system with access controls. The four parish safeguarding officers, - two for vulnerable adults and two for children and young people, - and the Operations Manager have “write access” to the safeguarding folder. The Rector and Children’s and Youth Ministers have “read access”. Documents relating to recruitment, training certificates and DBS checks, risk assessments and registers are held in different folders as appropriate.

On occasions, there will be details of very sensitive situations about which records need to be kept. These will be password protected. Only the Parish Safeguarding Officers and the Rector will have access to all the passwords and to this information. Individual members of staff may be given appropriate access to records for cases in which they are personally involved.

People attending church who may pose a risk to others

Where people may pose a risk to others, their position within the congregation needs to be carefully and sensitively considered. A full list of the circumstances of such people can be found in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, Section 10, pages 34-38. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure risks are mitigated and also to support them to worship appropriately.

As soon as we know a person who may pose a risk to others is in our congregation, we will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. Similarly, we may be notified by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers of people posing potential risks. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers will be responsible for undertaking a risk assessment in each case and, along with the church wardens, Rector and Parish Safeguarding Officers, form a

plan, called a Safeguarding Agreement, if this proves to be necessary. The Safeguarding Agreement will, amongst other things, cover;

- forming a small group of people around the person to offer friendship, monitoring and support
- ensuring that the person is never offered an official role within the church which may lead others to consider him/her trustworthy
- attending designated meetings or services only
- maintaining a high level of confidentiality.

The Safeguarding Agreement will be signed by the person concerned with the full involvement of the churchwardens. This is because churchwardens can direct parishioners where to sit and have a duty to maintain good order in a service. If necessary, churchwardens can eject a person causing a disturbance.

The Rector and church staff will be informed that this person is within the congregation.

If a person refuses to sign the agreement, then further advice will be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and, possibly, statutory agencies, such as the police.

The Safeguarding Agreement will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is still relevant.

Responding to Survivors of Abuse

We understand that the impact of abuse can be devastating for survivors. It takes great courage for someone to come forward and talk about their experiences and we acknowledge that historically, the Church of England has not responded well, respectfully or kindly to survivors.

At St Matthew's and the Minster, if someone makes an allegation of abuse against someone within our church family, we will follow it up according to the process outlined in Appendix C. We can never promise to keep a disclosure of abuse confidential, but we undertake to keep the survivor informed of our actions at every stage so that they know they are being taken seriously and to tell them what is happening. If statutory agencies are involved, we will be guided by them in the information which can be shared.

We promise to treat every survivor with dignity and respect. This means that we will ask them who they would like to have supporting them and walking with them through their journey. We understand that they may find counselling helpful and will listen to how they would like this to be set up. If there are practical arrangements which could be made to help them continue to feel part of the church family safely, - for example sitting with a certain person or in a certain area of the church, entering the church building with a supporter, not being alone in the service, we will do all we can to enable this to happen.

Appendix A: Recruitment of Workers

We will follow best practice in recruiting staff and volunteers and will adhere to the Diocesan Safer Recruiting Guidelines.

Anyone who is responsible for recruiting staff or volunteers will have completed the Church of England on-line safer recruiting training. Safer Recruiting Guidelines refer to the following categories of people:

all candidates for Church Staff appointment, ordained or lay;

all candidates wishing to work with vulnerable adults in the church community, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

In brief, the process is:

The person responsible for the recruitment has undertaken the Church of England on-line safer recruitment training

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Job description for the role is agreed and circulated to applicants

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Application form completed. A number of posts require the submission of a Church of England declaration form relating to previous offences at the same time as the application form is completed. It is worth noting that the PCC has adopted a statement on the employment of ex-offenders (September 2021) which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

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Interview

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DBS check undertaken

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References taken up

Templates for these forms are held by the Rector's PA and can be found on Share Point.

Job description

Having a job description is a helpful way to think about the suitability of a person to undertake any role. It takes away the bias of a friend or known personality being considered purely on the basis of connections. Job descriptions should be an up-to-date simple written description of the role. They should be clear about the expectations of the role, the time commitment and the experience required.

Application form

This should be self-explanatory. If the role is to go to competitive interview, any advertisement should include closing date and the date of planned interviews. It should also include a statement for signing which confirms the applicant has read, agrees with and undertakes to abide by the church safeguarding policies.

Interview

For most voluntary roles, this need not be a formal process but the purpose must be clear. This is to understand why the person wants the role and whether they have the skills and experience it requires.

For paid roles, the interview must be more formal. There will be a panel with prepared questions for the applicant. When relevant to the vacancy, applicants' previous experience of work with vulnerable adults will be explored as part of the interview process to assess the applicant's suitability. As a minimum this will cover:

- previous work in the church (whether our church or others);
- work with voluntary organisations
- previous experience working with vulnerable adults
- reasons for being interested in working in this context
- Christian experience

The interview must be led by a member of staff. If he/she has any doubts about the suitability of the person they should ask further, more searching questions. They should also seek the advice of others on the staff team and the churchwardens and/or safeguarding officers

DBS check

Before a person is appointed, they will also be required to complete an application for DBS disclosure. This includes a declaration of their offending history. The DBS will issue two copies of the disclosure: one to the applicant and one to the Counter-signatory. The Counter-signatory will advise the Rector, in writing, whether or not they are free to continue with the appointment. The applicant needs to show the clear certificate to the person responsible for their recruitment. Applicants are expected to sign up to the DBS updates service.

References

Two external references are required for any applicant and must be taken up.

Confidentiality

The paperwork associated with any appointment will be kept in accordance with the church's information storage policy. This means it is strictly confidential to the Rector, the staff member responsible for the volunteer (if it is a voluntary role), the Rector's PA/Operations Manager and the parish safeguarding officers. The information is stored on Share Point.

A register must be kept of all volunteers.
All records must be kept indefinitely.

Appeals Procedure

Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeals process is available through the Diocesan Advisor.

Appendix B: Guidelines for working with vulnerable adults

This policy lays down the general principles that we, as a church, seek to apply. However, there are some groups for which more specific guidance is required. These include any activities for pupils in years 12 & 13 (this age-range falls just outside the Child Protection legislation), CAMEO (a group for some of our older members), the pastoral team (who work with or visit vulnerable people in their own homes), football in the park (where adults and children mix) and Saturday Kitchen for the homeless and those living on the street. Saturday Kitchen has its own separate policy, also approved by the PCC.

1. When working with older young people, the guidelines in our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, should be applied, taking particular note of Appendix B in that document.

Visits and Transport

2. When representing the Church by visiting young people, vulnerable people of any age or people known to be potentially violent:
 - Two people should visit if possible.
 - If only one person can go, that person should ideally be of the same gender as the person visited and the visit should be known about by a third party who should be informed when the visit is completed. (It would be best practice for the third party to be the person in the church to whom the visitor is responsible). It is accepted that for visits which have to be arranged quickly or where specific people are required (eg bereavement or funeral arrangement visits by clergy) same gender visits are not always possible.
 - It is always good practice in any event, and particularly if difficulties are anticipated, for a third party to be informed about the visit. Visitor(s) should carry a mobile phone which is on at all times. If visitors are concerned beforehand, an arrangement should be made for their contact to phone them at a pre-set time to check that everything is OK.
 - The visitor(s) should make sure that they have a clear exit from the meeting place.
3. If abuse is suspected in a care home, all the evidence should be written down and the advice of the Parish Safeguarding Officers should be sought.
4. If, while an individual is providing transport to someone, an incident occurs which might be construed as improper or harmful to any party, the incident should be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officers as soon as possible.
5. Where frail or unsteady people are being brought to or from church by anyone who has been formally asked to do so by the Church:
 - A wheelchair should be used from the car to a seat in the church and back again to ensure the safety of both parties.

- Any injury should be reported as soon as possible to the Church Office and recorded in the accident book.
 - If a person falls, they should **not** be picked up (in case of further injury) but made comfortable and an ambulance called. If they insist on getting up, they should be encouraged not to do so for their own safety and the safety of others. Assistance may be given by a medical professional who is a member of the church.
6. No-one, whether independently or asked by any other church member, should transport in an ordinary car anyone who cannot support themselves independently when standing. The person should be able to transfer from a wheelchair to a car seat without being lifted.

Pressure which might be viewed as Spiritual Abuse

7. Spiritual abuse may be defined as “using scripture or faith to coerce or control people”. All those speaking at our services, including preachers, leaders, the music group, the drama group and anyone giving notices or displaying notices on the board or on “the screen” should be careful not to put *undue* pressure on their hearers. This is particularly relevant to discussions of giving (whether of time or money or other things).

Visitors requesting aid

8. Casual callers and the homeless should always be seen by a member of staff or a churchwarden. All members of the congregation should be made aware of the separate policy, guidelines and notes issued by our church.

Hiring the Church Premises

9. When the church premises are hired to an outside agency, this agency must either provide a copy of its safeguarding policy or agree to adopt that of St Matthew’s and The Minster.

Appendix C: Suspected abuse - action to be taken

Please see the fact sheet from the Diocese of Gloucester entitled, "A fact sheet dealing with some of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and what to do if you are concerned". <https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Signs-and-symptoms-of-abuse.pdf>. If you have concerns of any kind speak to one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

The "Quick Guide" in section 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook gives a flow chart of actions to be taken to respond promptly to every safeguarding allegation. Copies of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook are available in the church office and in the reception desk in the entrance.

Abuse is varied and can take many forms including, physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual abuse or neglect. In addition, there are other risks, particularly for children and young people but also for adults, such as sexting, on-line abuse and cyber bullying. More details of these forms of abuse can be found in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

The person who first suspects, or is told of alleged abuse or a need to safeguard is responsible for ensuring that the vulnerable person is heard. If the person making the disclosure of abuse would like the support of an independent advocate an appropriate referral will be made. The Rector, Pastoral Minister or Parish Safeguarding Officers will be able to make such a referral.

If a member of staff, lay or ordained, is accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour the Parish Safeguarding Officers must inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately. Any member of the Church with such information may go directly to the Diocesan Team, but must also inform the Parish Safeguarding Officers of their actions.

There follow three different sections about what to do in different scenarios:

- A. what to do if an adult wants to talk to you about abuse,
- B. what to do if you suspect abuse, and
- C. what to do if there is clear evidence of abuse.

In all these situations, a decision has to be made about what the Church needs to do. This decision will be taken by the Parish Safeguarding Officer in discussion with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and the Rector. If a matter is referred to the Statutory Authorities - the police or Social Care, then further decision-making will be made by the authority concerned.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer should not delay any action. If you are unsure what action to take contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers for advice (01452 835516 or for out of hours concerns, 07944 680320.)

Where the allegations or suspicions are about treatment of a 16-17 year old, who would legally be covered by the policy for Vulnerable Adults, our preference is to follow the

procedure for children and young people and involve the Parish Safeguarding Officers responsible for children and young people.

A. What to do if an adult wants to talk about abuse

Be aware that people often have difficulty talking about abuse, whether they are the victim or they are talking about other people.

- Let them know that you are willing to listen to anything they have to say.
- **Do not** promise them confidentiality. Explain that some things are so serious that you are required to report them to the Parish Safeguarding Officers, who may need to discuss the information with agencies such as NHS services or adult social care.
- Listen carefully to what they wish to share and do not interrupt them, especially if they are revealing details about difficult events.
- Accept what they have to say, keep calm, and give them your full attention. Remember that you don't have to come up with answers. They have chosen to tell you because they trust you. It is important just to be yourself.
- Do not push for information from them or ask leading questions. Try to enable them to say all they want to.
- Be sensitive to the possibility that they may have been, or feel threatened.
- Reassure the person of your support.
- Inform the person of the steps you are going to take with them or on their behalf and that you will let them know the outcome. As far as possible, encourage the abused person to seek help, possibly from the Parish Safeguarding Officers and assure them of your support in the process. If that person refuses any help, advice should be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Recording the facts

- As soon as possible record the interview. Write an account of what you have heard or been told for future reference and keep it safe. This shouldn't be a long and detailed narrative, but the key points, and what you remember someone saying or doing. It can be helpful to include direct quotes from the interview.
- Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record even if it is subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period.
- You should tell the Parish Safeguarding Officer about the conversation and give them a copy of your record of the meeting. You should not talk to anyone else, and particularly not the alleged abuser, about what the person has said.
- Do not try to investigate an allegation or make a judgement about it.

B. What to do if you suspect abuse

The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his or her concern is taken seriously by informing the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Never investigate an allegation or make a judgement about it. Just remember what you have seen or heard, write it down and talk to the Parish Safeguarding Officer straight away.

Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse, with many intermediate levels.

Information may reach you from a variety of different sources:

- an adult saying that he or she has been abused
- another concerned person
- a family member
- a fellow worker of the alleged abuser
- someone who believes that he or she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- your own concerns.

You should talk immediately to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (and to no-one else). The Parish Safeguarding Officer will consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (01452 835516). They will clarify the next steps.

If the suspicions concern the Rector or other member of staff, then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers immediately.

C. What to do if there is clear evidence of abuse

While no one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made, it is important to avoid delay in order to prevent further abuse. If the Parish Safeguarding Officers are not available, and there is concern for the immediate safety of an individual, you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and the Rector. If none of these are available, you should contact the police or Social Care.

Clear evidence of abuse is:

- where an individual is making a clear allegation of abuse
- where physical injuries to an individual are raising strong suspicions

As in the two previous scenarios, write down everything you can remember as accurately as possible and speak to the Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately. Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.

If the Parish Safeguarding Officer judges the case to be urgent, they will:

- Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice and the next steps to be taken.

- If agreed, they will contact the Statutory Authorities, particularly if there is a threat of injury. Under no circumstance will the Parish Safeguarding Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of abuse. The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the relevant authorities.

Gloucestershire Children’s Social Care 01452 426565 (office hours 0900 to 1700)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours) 01452 261112 or if no reply 01242 521321

- In the extreme situation where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- If the Parish Safeguarding Officer judges it to be appropriate, the individual will be encouraged to seek help from the appropriate Public Services. If the individual is reluctant to do so, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will offer to go with them. If the individual fails to act, the Parish Safeguarding Officer should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for further advice.
- While no one should act without due consideration, if the evidence is clear, it is important to act without delay to avoid further abuse or harm. In cases where a criminal act is suspected and/or the person is thought to be in danger of imminent harm, the person with these concerns should contact the Police (phone 111). Following contact being made with the Police the Parish Safeguarding Officers will be informed immediately of this action. In all other cases the Parish Safeguarding Officers will contact Social Services (phone 01452 426868) or the Police non-emergency (phone 0845 090 1234). Any person with concerns about potential abuse may contact Social Services or the Police direct, but must then inform the Parish Safeguarding Officers of their actions.

If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations the Parish Safeguarding Officer should also inform the Rector. If the suspicions concern the Rector or member of the staff team, then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should not speak to the Rector but consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, (01452 835516, or out of hours 07944-680320), immediately.

Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person originally in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Parish Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to the relevant authorities, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters and should therefore take the action outlined above.

The PCC will support the Parish Safeguarding Officer in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

Caring for someone after disclosure

We will always make sure that the individual who has made the disclosure has a safe environment with trusted friends around. The Church's Pastoral Care team may be used as back-up in these circumstances. If further advice is needed, particularly because the individual's situation is not safe, we will immediately consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.

Caring for the person who heard the allegations

We acknowledge that hearing of others' situations where abuse has potentially occurred can be very painful and traumatic. We will always look after the person who has spoken to the person disclosing information by offering a supportive debrief and as far as possible, keeping them informed of all the actions resulting in the disclosure of abuse or concern. If it is helpful, we will consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers for any further support or counselling which might be needed.

Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

When anyone is suspected to be a risk to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, the church has a responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others. Alongside this, when responding to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, the church will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of the accused adult. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during any inquiry processes. As the process progresses additional support services may be offered. Any adult who is the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. We will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and congregations affected in such situations.

Appendix D: Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The reason for a Parish Safeguarding Officer in each parish is to ensure that others share with the Rector the responsibility for the protection of vulnerable adults.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer has three main responsibilities, - advocacy, reporting concerns and policy. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should;

- be known to the congregation and the clergy and be able to respond if there are any safeguarding issues;
- be familiar with the work of the church, with the groups which vulnerable adults attend and know the leaders;
- be involved in the recruitment of volunteers and employees and ensure that the names of volunteers are recorded;
- be responsible for maintaining the list on behalf of the PCC of those who work with vulnerable adults in conjunction with the evidence checker;
- be a part of the annual APCM review of the PCC policy and to maintain the dashboard, to which the Diocese has routine access;
- be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship with a vulnerable adult;
- give advice and support to those leading activities;
- ensure that any record-keeping is accurate and in line with the Church's data protection policy;
- be involved in drawing up Safeguarding Agreements as required;
- in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and when it is necessary to inform statutory authorities immediately;
- ensure that Activity Leaders know who to talk to if the Parish Safeguarding Officer is not available;
- help, support, develop and implement PCC policies and practices and to be familiar with the activities undertaken by the church and those groups using the church premises;
- attend all appropriate training on working with vulnerable adults, seek advice and keep up to date on best practice. Pass this on to Staff and Activity Leaders as appropriate;
- review with the PCC that appropriate insurance cover is in place;
- ensure that Diocesan safeguarding policies are followed.

Appendix E: St Matthew's and the Minster's Statement on Domestic Abuse

Recognising Domestic Abuse

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is usually construed as physical violence from one party against another. However, it can also include the following, as single items or in combination:

- Coercive control and “gaslighting”, a form of psychological abuse where a person or group makes someone question their sanity, perception of reality, or memories;
- Economic abuse;
- Online abuse;
- Threats and intimidation;
- Emotional abuse;
- Sexual abuse.

What are the signs of Domestic Abuse?

If you believe that you or someone else could be the victim of domestic abuse, some of the indicators are as follows:

- Being withdrawn or isolated from family and friends;
- Bruises, burns or bite marks;
- Having finances controlled or not being given enough to buy food or pay bills;
- Not being allowed to leave the house or stopped from going to work;
- Having internet or social media use monitored or someone else reading texts, emails or letters without permission;
- Being repeatedly belittled;
- Being pressurised into sex;
- Being told that any abuse is the fault of the victim or that the victim is overreacting.

We recognise that:

- All forms of domestic abuse express an imbalance of power in the relationship and that all parties involved are damaged as a result;
- Everyone has a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities
- Although domestic abuse may be a single incident, it is usually evidenced as a systematic and repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- If witnessed or overheard by a child, the perpetrator is simultaneously creating an abusive situation for that child;
- We will need to work in partnership with other agencies to help any member of our community suffering domestic abuse.

We, at St Matthew's and the Minster believe that all forms of domestic abuse are wrong. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which ensure that all

people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. We recognise equality amongst people within their relationships. We desire to protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm by enabling and encouraging their concerns to be raised in a safe and loving context, so that we might give appropriate help in their circumstances.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse in the following ways:

In all our activities, we will listen to and offer help to anyone who is suffering from the damage caused by domestic abuse. We will work with other agencies to offer that help.

In our publicity, we will raise awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise through providing information that can be seen in public.

When concerns are raised, we will ensure that those who have experienced domestic abuse can find safety and informed help. We will work with the appropriate statutory bodies during any investigation into domestic abuse, including cases where allegations are made against a member of the church community.

When those who have suffered domestic abuse are known to us, we will ensure that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered. We (Rector, Pastoral Minister, Safeguarding Officers) will define the parameters of that pastoral care for the person taking responsibility for that care.

Appendix F: Types of Abuse

The Church of England has published a fact sheet on types of abuse, which can be found at the following link:

[Fact Sheet](#)

The headings list is copied below, so that the categories included in that paper may be seen. Please refer to the Fact Sheet if you require details about the individual categories.

Contents

2. Children

- 2.1. Physical Abuse
- 2.2. Sexual Abuse
 - 2.2.1. Grooming
 - 2.2.2. Child Sexual Exploitation
- 2.3. Neglect
- 2.4. Emotional Abuse
- 2.5. Domestic abuse
- 2.6. Bullying and Cyberbullying

3. Adults

- 3.1. Physical abuse
- 3.2. Sexual abuse
- 3.3. Psychological abuse
- 3.4. Financial/material abuse
- 3.5. Modern slavery
 - 3.5.1. Possible indicators of modern slavery
- 3.6. Discriminatory abuse
- 3.7. Domestic abuse
- 3.8. Organisational or Institutional Abuse
- 3.9. Neglect and acts of omission
- 3.10. Self-neglect
- 4. Additional Vulnerabilities
 - 4.1. Additional Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
- 5. Additional Specialist Guidance
 - 5.1. Complex abuse
 - 5.2. Honour based violence or abuse
 - 5.3. Forced marriage
 - 5.4. Female genital mutilation
 - 5.5. Spiritual abuse