

St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

Safeguarding handbook

Written by: Rev'd Lizzy Holland

Date: 30th June 2025

Adopted by PCC on:

Review date: July 2026

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Safeguarding Leaders	
At a glance	
Definitions of abuse	
Signs and symptoms	
What to do (our procedures for responding, referring, and recording)	
Pastoral care	
Confidentiality	
Gaining consent	
Sexually active children	
Record keeping	
Training	
Useful contacts	
Policy statement	

Introduction

The PCC has agreed a safeguarding policy “The Parish of St Peter’s, Woolton SAFEGUARDING POLICY, PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH”¹. This Handbook has been prepared to provide some background, further detail on how the policy is to be implemented, and where further information can be obtained. All volunteers engaged in ministry with children and/or vulnerable adults must read this handbook as well as our volunteer handbook.

Terms used throughout this handbook:

Children: Everyone under 18 years old.

Vulnerable adults: Those aged over 18 years old with care and support needs

Worker: refers to all employed staff and volunteers/trustees

Staff: employed members of St Peter’s Church

This handbook is a comprehensive document that all those working and volunteering in our church must read. For quick and easy reference there is a summary on P.4, but this should not take the place of reading the whole document. This Safeguarding handbook must be read in conjunction with our Volunteer Policy where safer recruitment and safe working practices are set out.

Safeguarding Leaders

The following roles are safeguarding leaders in the church community:

PSO²: the named person for the Diocese to liaise with concerning safeguarding

Safeguarding assistant: the person who completes necessary paperwork, DBS checks and contacts volunteers regarding their safeguarding training

Rector and Church Wardens: key leaders in safeguarding with a focus on ensuring a healthy and safe culture develops and thrives within the life of the church

Photographs and contact details of the Committee can be found on the Safeguarding Noticeboard³ at the back of church.

¹ This is a requirement from the House of Bishop’s parish safeguarding handbook P.1

² Another requirement of the above parish safeguarding handbook P.1

³ A requirement of the above is that the policy statement is displayed on this noticeboard (see P.2) as well as contact details

At a glance

This is not a substitute for this handbook or the Volunteer Policy. Please make sure you are familiar with the details of our full policy.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES

1. Remain calm and listen without asking questions or passing judgement.
2. Tell the person what you are going to do next to help them.
3. Contact a safeguarding leader in the church for advice. They will contact a member of the diocesan safeguarding team.
4. Make careful notes as soon as you can, using the Disclosure Record form (available on the website and safeguarding boards in the church buildings).
5. If you would like pastoral support contact the Rector.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT HARM

1. Share your concerns with a safeguarding leader.
2. Write your concerns down using the Disclosure Record Form.
3. Do not share concerns with anyone else.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns MUST be passed onto a safeguarding leader. They will decide what can be shared with outside agencies based on whether:

1. What you are being told puts someone else in danger
2. The adult does not have the mental capacity to consent
3. They are under 18 years of age

Never promise to keep secrets. Always consult with one of the safeguarding leads.

GOOD PRACTICE

Providing a safe environment for all:

1. Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
2. Respect personal privacy.
3. Be available, but ready to refer to a safeguarding leader.
4. Avoid questionable activity.
5. Challenge all unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
6. Follow our full safeguarding policies.

If the delay in contacting a member of the safeguarding Committee would put the person at risk please call 999

Definitions of abuse⁴

St Peter's Church recognizes that, sadly, abuse can and will occur. We also recognize that abuse comes in many forms and can be difficult to identify.

In accordance with social care guidelines, we have listed below the most likely forms of abuse. St Peter's Church fully believes that abuse is a criminal offence and should be treated as such.

Types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or universal credit.
- **Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

⁴ P.7-12 in the House of Bishop's parish safeguarding handbook

- **Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.⁵
- **Female Genital Mutilation** - (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other nontherapeutic reasons. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.
- **Spiritual Abuse** - Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.
- **Radicalization**⁶ - refers to the process by others in which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. During that process, it is possible to intervene to prevent people being drawn into terrorist-related activity. It is important to emphasize that the Prevent duty is not intended to stop adults or children debating controversial issues. More information is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>
- **Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse** - The honour code to which forced marriage and honour based abuse refers to is usually set at the discretion of male relatives and girls or women who do not abide by the ‘rules’ are then punished for bringing shame on the family. Infringements may include a woman or girl having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; homosexuality; perceived inappropriate dress or make-up and even

⁵Taken from chapter 14 of the Care Act 2014

⁶ Taken from The Prevent Duty June 2015 by the Department for Education

kissing in a public place. Crimes of honour do not always include violence, it can occur in many forms including: domestic abuse/assault, attempted/ conspiracy to commit murder, manslaughter, procuring an abortion, encouraging or assisting suicide, threats of violence, sexual or psychological abuse, forced marriage or being held against their will. **It is very important that you do not speak to any family members if you have concerns about forced marriage or honour based abuse. You should speak to a safeguarding leader immediately.**

Signs and symptoms

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.”⁷

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to or exploitation of, the individual.

Possible Indicators of Abuse

St Peter’s Church fully recognises that possible indicators and examples of behaviour are not exhaustive and that individuals may be subject to a number of abuse types at any time. We also fully understand that evidence of any one indicator should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring, but will always, in keeping with the Care Act of 2014, and the Working Together to Safeguard Children Act (2018) and the Children’s Act (1989), where the welfare of the child is paramount. make further assessments and alert the appropriate authorities.

An individual may:

- Have no explanation for injuries or a consistent account of what happened.
- Have injuries inconsistent with their lifestyle.
- Show evidence of bruising, cuts, welts, burns or other marks on the body.
- May show loss of hair in clumps.
- Have frequent injuries or unexplained falls.
- Have subdued or changed behaviour, perhaps in the presence of a particular person.
- Show signs of malnutrition.
- Fail to seek medical attention.
- Show low self-esteem.
- Self-blame for any abuse.
- Be subjected to verbal abuse or humiliation in front of others.
- Fear/resent outside intervention.
- Become isolated, suddenly or over a period of time.
- Have limited access to money.
- Show unusual difficulty in sitting or walking.
- Show signs of self-harming.

⁷ Department of Health’s No secrets March 2000

- Have poor concentration.
- Show withdrawal from society and events.
- Show reluctance to be alone with a particular person.
- Suffer insomnia.
- Show sudden aggressive behaviour.
- Have sudden weight loss or gain.
- Show signs of distress, ie. tearfulness or anger.
- Have an unexplained lack of money or personal possessions.
- Show unexplained withdrawal from personal accounts.
- Have friends or family with unexplained interest in their finances or personal possessions.
- Have recent changes to deeds or title to property.
- Be in rent arrears or have eviction notices.
- May have a lack of personal documents or I.D.
- May continually wear the same clothes.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Show fear of police or other public bodies.
- Show poor standards of care and personal hygiene.
- May live in an unhygienic environment.
- Show pressure sores or ulcers.
- May not take prescribed medication.
- Have reluctant contact with medical professionals.

All observations, however trivial they may seem at the time, should be passed onto a safeguarding leader and will be recorded in writing on a Disclosure Recording Form and kept by them in an appropriate secure place.

Sexually active children⁸

In determining whether the sexual activity of children is a safeguarding matter, it is essential to look at the nature of the relationship between those involved. Power imbalances are very important and can occur through differences in size, age and development and where gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge are used to exert such power. (Of these, age may be a key factor e.g. a 15 year old girl with a 25 year old man). There may also be an imbalance of power if the young person's sexual partner occupies a position of trust e.g. teacher, youth worker, carer etc. (In these circumstances, seek advice from the Safeguarding Committee who will contact Social Services).

To determine if the relationship presents a risk to the young person, the following factors, which are not exhaustive, may need to be considered:

- The age of the young person - sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator of risks to the welfare of the young person (boy or girl) and, possibly, others;
- Whether the young person is competent to understand and consent to the sexual activity in which he or she is involved;
- The nature of the relationship between those involved, particularly if there are age or power imbalances;
- Whether overt aggression, coercion or bribery was involved including misuse of substances/alcohol as an inhibitor;
- Whether the young person's own behaviour, for example, through misuse of substances, including alcohol, places them in a position where they are unable to make an informed choice about the activity;
- Any attempts to secure secrecy by the sexual partner beyond what would be considered usual in a teenage relationship;
- Whether there have been concerns about the sexual partner, including their relationships with other young people;
- Whether the young person denies, minimises or accepts concerns;
- Whether methods used to secure compliance and/or secrecy by the sexual partner are

⁸ Taken from protecting sexually active children section of the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership. For more information see https://liverpoolscp.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sex_active.html?zoom_highlight=sexually+active+children

consistent with behaviours considered to be 'grooming'

- Whether sex has been used to gain favours e.g. exchanging sex for cigarettes, clothes, alcohol, drugs, mobile phones, etc.
- Whether the young person has unreasonable amounts of money or other valuables that cannot be accounted for.

It is considered good practice to follow the Fraser Guidelines⁹ when discussing personal or sexual matters with a young person under 16. These hold that sexual health services can be offered without parental consent providing that:

- The young person understands the advice that is being given;
- The young person cannot be persuaded to inform or seek support from their parents and will not allow you to inform the parents that contraception/protection, for example, condom advice, is being given;
- The young person is likely to begin or continue to have sex without the provision of contraception or protection by a barrier method such as a condom;
- It is in the young person's best interests to receive contraceptive/safe sex advice and treatment without parental consent and the young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless he or she receives contraceptive advice or treatment.

⁹ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines>

Working with Sexually Active Children

The child's welfare is paramount. Any departure from protocol needs to be agreed with the Safeguarding Committee and reasons for doing so must be recorded. Wherever possible the child should be encouraged to discuss the issues with a parent or person in position of trust.

Under 13 years old?

No

Yes

Age 13-16 years

Ages 16-17 years

An offence has been committed under Sexual Offences Act 2003. Penetrative sex with anyone under 13 years old is classed as rape.

Assessment of risks to include:

- Fraser competence
- Home circumstances
- Relationships? Any power imbalances
- Substance misuse as a disinhibitor
- Aggression
- Coercion
- Grooming
- Whether sexual partner is known to the Police

- Is this a vulnerable child & concerns about exploitation?
- Is sexual partner a person in position of trust or a family member?

Refer to Children's Social Services as a child in risk of significant harm

Yes. Refer to Police & Children's Social Services

No. Continue to provide services, advice & support

No concerns. Continue to provide advice & support. Document reasons for not referring & re-assess as needed

Yes concerns. Refer to Children's Social Services and to Police

What to do¹⁰

Concern/allegation

You suspect or witness abuse, or someone discloses information about a safeguarding concern or allegation.

If you are unable to contact a member of the Safeguarding Committee and to delay waiting on a response from the Committee will put the person you are concerned about in grave danger you are to make the referral yourself.

Emergency - immediate

If a child or adult is in immediate danger or requires medical attention, call the police on 999 OR social services.

Social Services for children Tel: 0151 233 3700

Social Services for adults Tel: 0151 233 3800

Non-emergency - within 24 hours

Contact a member of the Church Safeguarding Committee and make a written record using the Recording Disclosure Form.

They will contact Social Services for advice and possible referral.

Record and report all information to a member of the Church Safeguarding Committee.

A member of the Safeguarding Committee will inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser within 24hrs. They will also keep the Archdeacon informed as well.

RECORD ALL ACTION

Consider the support needs of all those affected by allegations of abuse at all points in the above stages. Remember the safety and welfare of any child or adult takes precedence over all other concerns.

¹⁰ Taken from P.18-19 of the HoB Parish safeguarding handbook.

Abuse is disclosed¹¹:

It can take a great deal of courage for a child or adult to talk to someone about their abuse, whether it is something from their past or currently happening. They may be having to betray a person who is not only close to them but also loved by them and they are risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what they say.

Some helpful responses:

- *Remain calm, approachable and receptive.*
- *Listen carefully, without interrupting.*
- *Make it clear that you are taking them seriously.*
- *Acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell you.*
- *Reassure them that they should not feel guilty and that you're sorry that this has happened to them.*
- *Let them know that you are going to do everything you can to help them and what may happen as a result.*

Responses to avoid:

- *Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.*
- *Do not probe for more information than is offered.*
- *Do not speculate or make assumptions.*
- *Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.*
- *Do not make any promises that you cannot keep, remember the confidentiality statement.*
- *Do not agree to keep the information a secret.*

Abuse is suspected:

Many adults may have periods where they have additional care and support needs. These could be short term (bereavement or unemployment/redundancy, or health concerns) or longer term (mental health needs/learning difficulties or a physical or learning disability). As you get to know the adults or children you are working with you may well suspect that they are suffering abuse; they could display signs as described in this handbook or you witness something occurring. If so, you should contact a safeguarding leader for advice.

The safeguarding leader will report this disclosure to the diocesan safeguarding team and follow their advice and instruction. The primary responsibility for managing any investigation process rests with managers of either the diocesan safeguarding team or Children or Adult social services

¹¹ Based on the guidance on P.23-24 of the HoB parish safeguarding policy

Committees. Where a crime may have been committed, the police will investigate. St Peter's Church has a duty to act on any concern of abuse to ensure that the situation is assessed and investigated. The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of the person concerned.

Concerns about a colleague¹²:

Unless it is a safeguarding leader whom you suspect, all such concerns should be shared with them. In the case of suspecting a safeguarding leader you should speak directly to the Rector. If you have concerns about the Rector you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. In all cases it is important that you write down your concerns and why you have them, making sure to include any dates and times of specific incidents.

If there is evidence that an employee or volunteer is behaving inappropriately, that person will be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation. Any investigations will be handled by the police.

Outside agencies who need to be informed with regards to the above: The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted within 24 hours when an allegation is made. This will be done by a member of the Safeguarding Committee. The DSA will also be informed. As a registered charity the Charity Commission also needs to be contacted¹³, although this is likely to happen later in the process. If a person has a Criminal Records Disclosure Certificate, the DBS will need to be notified at the point at which any allegation is confirmed.

Historic abuse:

Non-recent allegations of abuse must be treated as seriously as recent allegations. Please inform the Safeguarding Committee as set out on P.13 and they will contact Social Services.¹⁴

Responding well to those who may cause a risk¹⁵:

The House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy, 2017 states, "the Church, based on the message of the Gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the Church community who may present a known risk."

¹² P.20 of the HoB parish safeguarding handbook.

¹³ Further help on this: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/safeguarding_sir_guidance_dbes_final_nov_2021.pdf#:~:text=A%20Serious%20Incident%20Report%20will,enough%20to%20be%20reported%20by

¹⁴ P.24 of the HoB parish safeguarding handbook says the DSA will make this referral. **The PCC advise it's a member of the Safeguarding committee and the DSA is kept informed.**

¹⁵ P.34-38 HoB parish safeguarding handbook

This means that there are likely to be those with criminal convictions for sexual offences and other forms of abuse attending church.

The Safeguarding Committee will contact the DSA if they learn that any of the following people worship in our church:

- 1.Anyone placed on the sex offenders register, with a violent offence or conviction and/or who is barred from working with children or adults by the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 2.Anyone who admits to being an abuser including non-recent abuse.
- 3.Anyone who is subject to an investigation for suspected abuse, including possession of indecent images of children, and/or is suspended from their usual role.
- 4.Anyone who may pose a risk to other church members due to their behaviour, irrespective of their criminal status.

The DSA will undertake a risk assessment and the formation of a risk management plan known as a Safeguarding Agreement.

Pastoral Care

The existence of abuse is both distressing and disturbing. As a caring adult, it is natural for you to feel shocked and angry. It is important, however, for you to manage your own feelings so that you can react appropriately. Awareness of abuse can sometimes remind adults of painful situations in their own past. If this applies to you, you may find it helpful to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Committee. It can also be emotionally draining to accompany a person through an investigation, and it is important for you to be able to off-load your feelings. The safeguarding leaders are available for this and in particular the pastoral lead, the Rector.

Caring pastorally for victims and survivors¹⁶

This will be offered through the pastoral lead on the Safeguarding Committee, the Rector. We journey alongside those who have been abused; for some, forgiveness may be part of that journey, while for others, it may not be so. In any event, there should not be any pressure or expectation on the victim/survivor to forgive.¹⁷

If an allegation of abuse by a church member is made¹⁸, the DSA will arrange for a Support Person, outside of the parish, to be offered to the alleged adult victim¹⁹.

Caring pastorally for alleged perpetrators²⁰

All church officers who are the subject of a concern will be offered a Link Person through the DSA. This too will be someone outside of the parish. Their role will be to keep the person up to date with the progress of their case and help them to access advice and support.²¹

St Peter's Church will, in the event of abuse being disproven, do all it can to help and assist the individual.

¹⁶ P.29 HoB parish safeguarding handbook

¹⁷ Please see https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/forgivenessandreconciliation_0.pdf for more help in this area.

¹⁸ P.30 HoB parish safeguarding handbook

¹⁹ Further information can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/practice-guidance-responding-to-assessing-and-managing-safeguarding-concerns-or-allegations-against-church-officers.pdf>

²⁰ P.31-33 HoB parish safeguarding handbook

²¹ Further information can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/practice-guidance-responding-to-assessing-and-managing-safeguarding-concerns-or-allegations-against-church-officers.pdf>

Confidentiality

The common-law duty of confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their concerns and to ask for help. However, **the right to confidentiality is not absolute**. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice.

CHILDREN:

If a child wishes to disclose anything you inform the child of our confidentiality duties. An example of how to do this is:

“Before we go any further, I need to inform you of my position as a Volunteer etc. Whilst our discussions are confidential there may come a time where I feel that you are at risk, in danger, or in breach of the law. If this time comes I may not be able to keep this information to myself, I may have to tell someone else whether you want me to or not. However, you have my word that if that time comes I will inform you of this.”

It will become obvious during a conversation with a child, if they are trying to disclose anything, which needs to be passed on. At an appropriate point in the conversation reassure the child that they are right to tell you, but you may need to tell someone else. A child may choose to stop talking at this point. If this is the case, do not press for any information. Instead re-emphasise they did the right thing coming to you and that when they are ready to talk again they can, because you want to help them. If you feel the child is at risk at this point, follow the guidelines on P.10. If the child continues to disclose you will need to pass this information on to the Safeguarding Committee.

DISCLOSURES WHICH NEED TO BE PASSED ON:

Abuse that is happening to them or another person (see P.5-7 for definitions of abuse)

Allegations about a volunteer/employee

Self-harm and attempts at suicide

Possession, usage or intent to sell drugs

Domestic violence

Secrets and surprises²²: children can be taught to differentiate between surprises and unsafe secrets. Surprises on birthdays, for example, which everyone eventually finds out about, are fun. But secrets that involve someone being hurt or being told to keep silent about something they are

²² Taken from CCPAS factsheet *Help I want to teach my child personal safety*

frightened of or don't understand is never OK. As a volunteer working with children it is important you use the language of surprises and secrets in the correct way.

Involving and informing parents:

In line with the guidelines in the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership²³, the Safeguarding leaders will involve and inform parents in the following way:

1. Where practicable, concerns should be discussed with the family and agreement sought before making a referral.
2. If consent is given then the referral can go ahead. This must be recorded.
3. If you believe to obtain consent would put the child at risk then you must go directly to Social Services without notifying the parents. If this is the case you must talk to a member of the Safeguarding Committee and obtain their permission to move ahead in this way. This must be recorded and the reasons why.
4. Where the parent/s refuses to give permission for the referral, you must seek advice from Social Services and the outcome fully recorded.
5. If having taken full account of the parent's wishes, it is still considered that there is need for a referral:
 - a. The reason for proceeding without parental consent must be recorded.
 - b. Social Services should be told that the parent has withheld their permission.
 - c. The parent/s should be contacted to inform them that after considering their wishes a referral has been made.

ADULTS²⁴:

Adults have a right to self-determination and to be consulted before any action is taken concerning them or on their behalf. Only in very specific circumstances, for example where an individual's mental capacity is impaired, OR their actions put someone else's life in danger, should decisions be made on their behalf. We need to remember that adults are free to put themselves in positions which others might judge to be inappropriate or dangerous – extreme sporting activities are a good example.

Some basic principles²⁵:

- Don't give assurances about absolute confidentiality.

²³

https://liverpoolscp.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/early_help_assess_consent.pdf?zoom_highlight=parental+consent#search=%22parental%20consent%22

²⁴ P.28 HoB parish safeguarding handbook state that where possible this should be done with their written consent.

²⁵ Social Care Institute for Excellence webpage on the Care Act 2014 – what does the law say about sharing information?

- Try to gain consent to share information as necessary. Full details of the consent should be recorded, i.e. date consent is given, what information can be shared and with whom.
- Consider the person's mental capacity to consent to information being shared and seek assistance if you are uncertain from a member of the Safeguarding Committee.
- Make sure that others are not put at risk by information being kept confidential.
- Does the public interest served by disclosure of personal information outweigh the public interest served by protecting confidentiality?
- Could your action prevent a serious crime?
- Don't put management or organisational interests before safety.
- Share information on a 'need-to-know' basis and do not share more information than necessary.
- Do not discuss any allegation of abuse, substantiated or not, with anyone other than the Safeguarding Leaders.
- Record decisions and reasoning about information that is shared.
- Carefully consider the risks of sharing information in relation to domestic violence or hate crime.

IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSURE AS TO WHETHER YOU CAN PASS ON A DISCLOSURE CONTACT THE SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE FOR ADVICE.

What to do if an adult DOES NOT consent to their disclosure being shared:

Embedded in the very beginning of the Mental Capacity Act are its statutory principles which underpin the law's requirements. St Peter's Church endorses these legal principles of:

- A person is **assumed to have capacity** unless it is established that they lack capacity
- A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all **practicable steps** to help them do so have been taken without success
- A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an **unwise decision**
- An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in their **best interests**
- Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is **less restrictive** of the persons rights and freedom of action

If an adult has the capacity to consent but withholds their consent to the sharing of information

regarding safeguarding concerns, wherever possible their views and wishes should be respected. They should be given information about where to get help if they change their mind, or, if the abuse or neglect continues, and they subsequently want support to promote their safety. The referrer must assure themselves that the decision to withhold consent is not made under undue influence, coercion or intimidation. A safeguarding record must be made of the concern, the adult's decision and of the decision not to refer, with reasons. A record should also be made of what information they were given.

If there is an overriding public interest or vital interest or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, the duty of care overrides the individual's refusal and a referral for support should be made. The need to protect the individual or the wider public outweighs their rights to confidentiality. This would include situations where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime
- where there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent

In all incidents where you as the referrer and the Safeguarding Leader think that an adult does not have the capacity to make a decision as to whether a referral can be made, the diocesan safeguarding team will be contacted for advice.

Record keeping²⁶

This section is for the Safeguarding Leaders ONLY to act upon, all other volunteers and employees are asked to read it for reference alone.

Incidents of abuse may only come to light after a long period of time, in some cases many years, and so the retention of documents should be on an indefinite basis. Keep a copy for yourself and give the original a Safeguarding Leader who will hold them in a secure place.

All DBS checks and references will also be held in a secure place for an indefinite period.

Documentation

The Safeguarding Committee will keep in a locked cupboard in one of the church buildings all relevant case files, recruitment paperwork and referral forms. Where this paperwork is stored electronically this will be password protected and kept secure.

All records relating to volunteer appointments and staff appointments, including a note of when a DBS check was obtained will be kept in a secure place. Records of child and adult protection matters will be kept, together with a note of the outcome, in a secure place. These will be retained even if the information received was judged to be malicious, unsubstantiated or unfounded.

Data protection²⁷

The GDPR 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018 contain the principles governing use of personal data. Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as what is called 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken. Please see our GDPR policy. The Data Protection Act 2018 allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent.²⁸

²⁶ This is a requirement of the House of Bishops parish safeguarding handbook P.2

²⁷ P.27 of the HoB parish safeguarding handbook

²⁸ P.28 The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe, and this can equally be said to apply to vulnerable adults.

Training

St Peter's Church requires all volunteers and employees to undertake safeguarding training relevant to their position²⁹. Please see the volunteer handbook for details.

Useful contacts

Listed below are some telephone numbers that may be of use to any individual concerned about the welfare of another, about abuse in general, to respond to anything raised in this policy or for further information. As ever, in any emergency event where life may be at imminent risk, please phone 999 and ask for the police.

Rector: Lizzy Holland, 07377449873, revlizzyholland@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Chris Ford,

Church Wardens: Alistair Fletcher, Mike Welsby

Marie Stopes International (Abortion Help): 0845 300 80 90

Action Fraud: 0300 123 20 40

Age UK: 0800 678 1602

Alcoholics Anonymous: 0800 917 7650

Beaumont Society (trans-gender issues): 01582 412 220

Brook Advisory (sexual health): 0800 018 50 23

Cruse Day by Day (bereavement help): 0808 808 1677

Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

FRANK (drugs help): 0300 123 6600

MenCap: 0808 808 1111

Mind (information line): 0300 123 3393

Shelter: 0300 330 1234

The Samaritans: 11 61 123

²⁹ A requirement of the House of Bishop's parish safeguarding handbook P.1

Liverpool City Council

Adult - 0151 233 3800. Out of hours emergency- 0151 233 3800

Web Site: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/adult-social-care/keeping-adults-safe/adults-at-risk/>

Children – 0151 233 3700. Out of hours emergency – 0151 233 3700

Web Site: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/children-and-families/childrens-social-care/keeping-children-safe/children-at-risk/>

Domestic Abuse Support: 07802 722703

Web Site: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/communities-and-safety/crime-and-safety/domestic-abuse/>

Merseyside Police – in an emergency 999, Non-emergency - 101

Andy Holmes, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA)

07940 378139 andy.holmes@liverpool.anglican.org

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

St Peter's Church PCC has adopted and is committed to following the Church of England's Safeguarding Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church'. This was adopted on

The following policy was agreed by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) on

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church 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 that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC 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.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are 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 notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, 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.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works and/or volunteers within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints as the Parish Safeguarding Officer Chris Ford.

Incumbent: Rev Lizzy Holland

Churchwardens: Mike Welsby and Alistair Fletcher

Date: 30th June 2025