

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

As part of the Christian Church living in the spirit of the Gospel, we are committed to protect and care for everyone in the church community, and especially children, young people and adults at risk.

We are 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.

Young people/person - means any individual(s) aged 14 to 17 years old.

Vulnerable adult - Section 6 Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 defines a 'vulnerable adult' as "a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired".

The full text of the 2016 Measure is found at... <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201516/jtselect/jtecc/79.pdf>

Who this applies to

This policy applies to the PCC and all areas of its activity within the Parish of Stratford-upon-Avon which includes anyone appointed or elected by or on behalf of the PCC to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

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.

Foundations

In developing and implementing the Safeguarding Policy, the Church of England is guided by the following foundations.

1. Gospel

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

2. Human Rights and the Law

The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the

Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice.

3. Core Principles

The following core principles underpin the Church's approach to safeguarding practice:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount;¹
- Integrity, respect and listening to all;
- Transparency and openness;
- Accountability;
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners;
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the Church;
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse;
- The active management of risk;
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance;
- Regular evaluation to ensure best practice.

4. Good Safeguarding Practice

The following key features will help Church bodies promote and maintain a safer culture that protects and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.² These features are:

- A leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- A safeguarding policy available to Church Officers;
- A clear line of accountability within the Church for work on safeguarding;
- Clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- Clear roles for Church Officers;
- Practice and services informed by on-going learning, review and by the views of children, young people, families and vulnerable adults;
- Safer recruitment procedures in place;
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision;
- Safeguarding training for all Church Officers working with or in contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- Effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners;
- Publicly advertised arrangements for children, young people and vulnerable adults to be able to speak to an independent person, as required;
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures that are well publicised;
- Effective information sharing;
- Good record keeping.

¹ In the event of any perceived or potential conflict of interest the welfare of any children and young people involved will always take precedence over all adults

² These are based on *Safe from Harm*, Home Office, 1993, and the statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

It is acknowledged that the level and depth of arrangements that meet these key features will be dependent on the size and resources available to an individual church body.

5. Learning from the past

In the July Synod 2013 Archbishop Justin Welby stated:

“The reality is that there will always be people who are dangerous and are part of the life of the Church. They may be members of the congregation; we hope and pray that they will not be in positions of responsibility, but the odds are from time to time people will somehow conceal sufficiently well. And many here have been deeply affected, as well as the survivors who have so rightly brought us to this place. Many other people here have been deeply affected and badly treated. So we face a continual challenge and reality.... There has to be a complete change of culture and behaviour.

And in addition, there is a profound theological point. We are not doing all this, we are not seeking to say how devastatingly, appallingly, atrociously sorry we are for the great failures there have been, for our own sakes, for our own flourishing, for the protection of the Church. But we are doing it because we are called to live in the justice of God, and that we will each answer to Him for our failures in this area. And that accountability is one that we must take with the utmost seriousness.”

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote in their joint forward to 'Safeguarding: Follow-up to the Chichester Commissaries' Reports', June 2013:

“We cannot overestimate the importance of responding appropriately today. Sadly for many this comes far too late. History cannot be rewritten, but those who still suffer now as a result of abuse in the past deserve this at least, that we hear their voices and take action to ensure that today’s safeguarding policies and systems are as robust as they can be. This work is an essential and prior Gospel imperative, for any attempts we make to grow the Church, to seek the common good, and to reimagine the Church’s ministry.”

The statutory reports and independent reviews into abuse that have involved the Church of England and other faith organisations highlight past errors and significant lessons to be learnt to improve safeguarding.

As a Church we continue to commit to a journey of truth, healing, learning and abuse prevention.

Policy Commitments

Based on the foundations outlined above the Church of England commits to the following:

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture

All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being.

The Church will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes.

The Church will strive to support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

2. Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church

The Church will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church, in accordance with the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

It will train and equip Church Officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll-out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance, which can be found at www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding

3. Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the House of Bishops safeguarding practice guidance.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All Church Officers will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

4. Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

The Church will endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

The Church is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse.

Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Church will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support - according to the agreed need.

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order will be considered, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

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

The Church in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of an accused Church Officer including the clergy. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

The Church will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any Church Officer is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement.

Church Officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. The Church will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, parishes and congregations affected by the Church Officers in such situations.

6. Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

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.

The Church will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law.

Putting the policy into action

All parts of the Church of England must adopt or take account of this Policy Statement within their own safeguarding policy. The Policy Statement must actively underpin all safeguarding work within the Church and the drive to improve safeguarding practice.

All Church bodies should ensure that:

- All Church Officers have access to this Policy Statement;
- The Policy Statement is promoted and publicised;
- The Church's safeguarding message is communicated as reflected in the policy;
- They have a "Promoting a Safer Church" action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly.

Latest versions of the Church of England's Safeguarding documents can be found here:

www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding

Safeguarding Roles within our Parish

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC and the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within the parish.

The PCC sponsors (in its own name) activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults and as a consequence all PCC members are eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information. However, even though everyone is eligible, the Diocese of Coventry only requires that three lay PCC members are DBS checked.

Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) and the PCC are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within the parish.

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) has the 'cure of souls' within the parish. Part of this pastoral care is to ensure safeguarding is taken seriously within their church community.

He/she also plays an important role in the response to any safeguarding allegation (unless the allegation has been made against the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge). This role must be carried out under the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

The Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) requires an Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information.

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Working under the authority of the PCC, the Parish Safeguarding Officer takes the lead role for safeguarding within the parish. This includes:

- Developing local practices that comply with the Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of Coventry.
- Reporting all safeguarding situations to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- In addition to the above, immediately notifying the statutory authorities if an adult or child:
 - Is at imminent risk of harm; or,
 - Discloses any abuse which is a criminal offence.
- Processing DBS checks for volunteers and staff (or delegating it a Safeguarding Evidence Checker).
- Ensuring that volunteers and staff receive appropriate diocesan safeguarding training.
- Producing an annual Safeguarding Report and presenting it to the PCC.
- Acting as a bridge between the church and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for matters relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk and children in the parish.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is a local contact; they are not expected to be a safeguarding expert or to deliver training. They would never be expected to conduct investigations.

An Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information is required for a Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are the senior lay representatives within the parish. They carry the responsibility for the oversight of the parish in the absence of the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge) and must therefore be fully aware of safeguarding procedures.

The PCC sponsors (in its own name) activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Churchwardens require an Enhanced DBS Check without barred list information.

PCC Lead on Safeguarding

The PCC must appoint a lay member to take the lead on discussing any safeguarding matters at PCC meetings. This person must not be related to the Incumbent (or Priest-in-Charge).

Children's Advocate

If a PCC sponsors (in its own name) any activities for children, the PCC must appoint a Children's Advocate to whom children can talk about any problems if they wish.

This role will often be carried out by the Parish Safeguarding Officer. If not, the Children's Advocate requires an Enhanced DBS Check with barred list information.

Safeguarding Evidence Checker

DBS checks within the Diocese of Coventry are carried out via an online system provided by Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (APCS). Within a parish, the system can only be accessed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer or by other authorised people.

Additional authorised people are called Safeguarding Evidence Checkers. Their role is to assist the Parish Safeguarding Officer with the processing of DBS checks for volunteers and staff.

The Associate Vicar and Parish Operations Manager are currently authorised Safeguarding Evidence Checkers.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The PCC has identified activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. The requirement of the PCC is that the leaders of all identified groups (and new groups before they commence work) together with any identified individuals in specific roles will be required to complete an enhanced DBS clearance before they commence work in any capacity in their roles or with these groups, regardless of the length of time that the individual or individuals have been a part of our congregations. Each group leader will also be expected to liaise closely with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure that a current and accurate list of leaders and volunteers is maintained and that all DBS and training requirements are kept up to date.

Training and Professional Development

All those recorded as being leaders of sections that run activities for Vulnerable Adults and/or Young people and Children will be required to complete training as set out by the Diocese of Coventry and arranged by the Diocese and/or PCC from time to time.

Failure to complete required training or the annual updates will lead to the cancellation of any agreement from the PCC for the individual to act with the group in any capacity whatsoever.

Recognising abuse that is reportable

What is abuse?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 identifies four categories of child abuse, which are assumed to be forms of significant harm.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse – is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

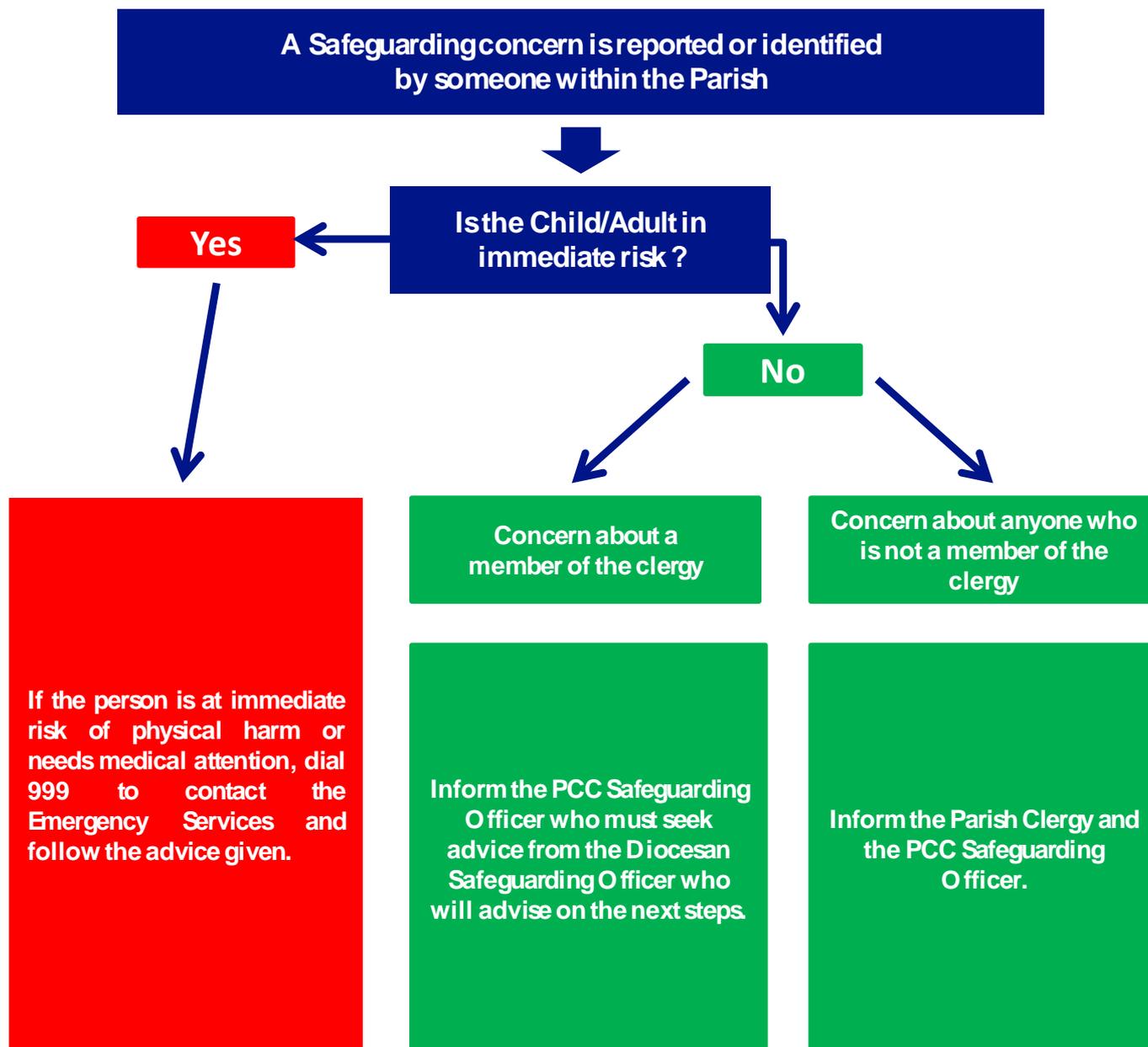
Since publication of the report there is a growing understanding and many examples of organised abuse taking place across the country.

Organised abuse Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Indicators include:

- Series of complaints from different parents about the same staff/situations/issues
- Records regularly being mislaid/poor record keeping
- Controlling relationships
- Children/activities being visited regularly by "associates" of staff

What to do if a disclosure is made to you or there are concerns about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult

The flow chart below will help you determine what actions to follow. There are some guidance notes and a list of essential contacts after the flowchart to support what you do.



Record the concern (who, what, when where, why, how?) within 24hrs of an issue having been raised and file it securely in the parish office. Send a copy to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Further guidance notes :

The following guidance is intended for anyone receiving information from a child, young person or vulnerable adult and for designated officers who may need to make a referral about specific allegations or expressions of concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be at risk of serious harm or exploitation.

Respond to the individual by:

- Remaining calm and not showing shock or disbelief
- Listening carefully to what is being said
- Not asking detailed or probing questions
- Demonstrating a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that what has been reported has happened
- Confirming that the information will be treated seriously
- Giving information about the steps that will be taken
- Advising who you will be reporting to and that information will only be shared with others on a need to know basis
- Informing them that they will receive feedback as to the result of the concerns they have raised and from whom
- Giving the person contact details so that they can report any further issues or ask any questions that may arise

Do Not:

- Remain in any situation that is unsafe
- Question the person further, investigate or probe
- Stop anyone who is telling you freely about significant events
- Be judgmental (i.e. "why did you not run away")
- Promise not to tell anyone else about the problem
- Clean up, touch the victim or any object (where applicable)
- Interfere with anything that could be evidence
- Ignore the issue
- Make contact with the abuser
- Pass on information or discuss with anyone except those who need to know
- Make any promise you cannot keep

Take Action:

- Write down what is said. You need to do that as soon as possible on the same day
- Report the incident as soon as possible to the designated officer. If you are the designated officer and a referral is required do this as soon as possible and certainly no more than 24 hours later
- Ask the individuals consent to inform the Police or to seek medical attention if needed
- In an emergency call the police if a crime is suspected (regardless of whether consent is given) or an ambulance if medical attention is urgently required

Contact Details

Vicar	Revd Patrick Taylor	01789 508155
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Jane Armitage	01789 297652
Children's Advocate	Family and Children's Minister – Phil Harper	07791 005696
DBS Administrator	Parish Operations Manager – Lola Spetsioti	01789 266316
Safeguarding Evidence Checker	Associate Vicar – Revd Steve Jarvis	01789 290128
Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	Sarah Price	024 7652 1345

Monitoring this policy

The churchwarden responsible for Safeguarding will be expected to produce for the PCC :

- an annual report concerning the effectiveness of this policy
- a quarterly report detailing the status of all DBS clearances
- a report as needed concerning the occurrence of any reports made to the Diocese concerning the protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults

Approved by	Parochial Church Council
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Date of 1 st review	March 2021
Date of next review	January 2023