

Diocese of Worcester
Parish of St Martin with St Peter, Worcester

PARISH PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

The procedures outlined in this document complement the policy agreed by the Parochial Church Council (P.C.C.) and outline the ways in which its principles will be enacted within this parish. The term 'vulnerable adult' is used in accordance with the statutory definition outlined in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

1. We will implement the House of Bishop's Policy Promoting a Safer Church (2006) and the diocesan procedures.

The House of Bishops' policy document can be obtained and consulted online by all members of the P.C.C. and congregation (<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/37405/promotingasafechurch.pdf>). A copy will also be kept in the Parish Office for consultation. The Diocese of Worcester's child protection policy and relevant documents are also available online <http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/GH/20>).

2. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and everyone may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in their lives.

The theological rationale for our duty of care to vulnerable adults is outlined in Section 1 of *Promoting a Safer Church*. The statutory definition of a vulnerable adult contained within that document has been replaced by the definition in the Protections of Freedoms Act 2012, in which an adult is not considered vulnerable *per se* but when undertaking activities which as a result of their particular circumstances cause them to be vulnerable at a particular time (see Appendix 3). However, we recognise that people who are not vulnerable within the legal definition of the term may still be vulnerable and require appropriate care.

3. We commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister. We will offer informed pastoral support to any vulnerable adult who has suffered abuse and provide them with details of local and national support agencies.

All people, both within and outside the church community, have a right to receive respectful pastoral care, and we will endeavour to provide this insofar as we are able to do so, and to provide the contact details of local and national support groups and relevant professionals where this may be more appropriate. We will display relevant numbers on the church notice board, along with a copy of the Parish Policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

4. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, and to those defined as vulnerable by statute, ensuring their well-being in the life of the church.

Appendix 1 (Rights of Vulnerable Adults) of this document outlines the basic rights of those who may be considered vulnerable, and we commit to respect these rights and ensure that all people may play as full a role as possible in the life and activities of the church community.

5. We commit to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.

We will endeavour to follow the guidelines and recommendations in *Promoting a Safer Church*. We particularly take note of the need to make the premises accessible and to provide worship material in various formats, including large print editions when necessary.

6. We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable, using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking system where legal and appropriate.

Ordained clergy and lay readers are trained and vetted through the diocesan system. This parish does not currently employ anyone in a paid capacity to work with vulnerable adults. All volunteers who work with vulnerable adults will be recruited in accordance with Appendix 2 (Safe Recruitment of People Working with Vulnerable Adults) of this document.

7. We will respond without delay to every complaint made that an adult for whom we are responsible may have been harmed or is in significant danger.

The procedures to be followed if abuse is suspected or alleged are contained in *Promoting a Safer Church*. The first contact should usually be the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent, who can seek the assistance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, although in urgent cases the police or relevant statutory body should be informed immediately.

8. We will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning a member of the church community. We will inform the statutory agency or agencies of any suspected criminal offences or concerns of which we are made aware in respect of our contact with vulnerable adults. We recognise that it is the responsibility of the entire church community to prevent the physical, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

All members of the church community, not only children's workers, officeholders or P.C.C. members, are required to cooperate with statutory authorities during an investigation into allegations of abuse. Vetting procedures are not infallible, and everyone therefore has a duty to be reasonably vigilant and raise any concerns with an appropriate figure (usually the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent).

9. We commit ourselves to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.

Insofar as is reasonably possible, we will endeavour to ensure that no act of worship or church activity knowingly excludes any person in any way. Appropriate consideration should be given to the possibility of unintentional exclusion in the planning of all worship and events.

10. We will supervise and support any member of our church community known to have offended against a vulnerable adult.

Any person who has been known to offend against children or vulnerable adults, or for whom a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check reveals such convictions, or who is on the DBS Barred List, will not be allowed to work with vulnerable adults, nor will they be permitted to hold any official role or office in the church which gives any status or authority. Diocesan procedures are in place to ensure that the situation is risk assessed and managed on a multi-agency basis.

An agreement will be signed with any known offender who wishes to be part of the church community under the supervision of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. As part of this agreement, support will be offered from a named person or persons and boundaries set in place for worship services, hospitality, etc. Only those few individuals with a need and a right to know details of the offences may be informed (typically, this would be the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, the Incumbent, and where relevant the Curate or other clergy). The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained.

11. We commit to support the training and regular review of those who work with people who may be vulnerable.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will have details of relevant training and ensure that all people appointed to work with vulnerable adults have access to this training and any further support they may require.

These procedures were discussed and agreed at the P.C.C. meeting held on Tuesday, 16 July, 2013.

The Revd Phil Bradford (P.C.C. Chair)

The Revd Canon Ken Boyce (Incumbent)

Bill Simpson (Churchwarden)

Elizabeth Yarker (Churchwarden)

Appendix 1

Rights of Vulnerable Adults

Any person who may 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 life;
- 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 able to use their chosen language or method of communication;
- be heard.

Appendix 2

Safe Recruitment of People Working with Vulnerable Adults

All people appointed to work with vulnerable adults will:

1. Have an interview with the Incumbent.
2. Complete a Confidential Declaration.
3. Have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, if applicable (see below).
4. Have their appointment confirmed in writing following confirmation by the P.C.C.
5. Be provided with appropriate training and support.

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, all those who engage in activity defined as regulated activity should undergo an enhanced DBS check with Barred List check. In this parish, the following are considered to be engaged in regulated activity within the terms of the Act and should only be appointed after these checks have been undertaken:

- Home Communion Assistants (including Nursing Home Communion Assistants)
- Drivers for Church activities acting in an official capacity (including bringing people from Nursing Homes or New College, and drivers for Community Care events)
- Members of the Community Care Group who shop on behalf of vulnerable adults

If a DBS check reveals that a person has convictions which may make them unsuitable for the role in question, a risk assessment process will be undertaken with the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. Confidentiality and data protection must be respected at all times.

Until such time as the government introduces a framework for the portability and online checking of DBS certificates, this parish will conduct a fresh DBS check on an individual every five years. Criminal records certificates prior to 1 December 2012 were issued by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB); the CRB certificates of those recruited prior to that date have the same status as a DBS certificate and shall be renewed under the DBS framework after five years have elapsed since the date of the check.

Appendix 3

Defining a Vulnerable Adult

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 does not define a vulnerable adult. Instead, it identifies activities which, if any adult requires them, lead to that adult being considered vulnerable at that particular time. In relation to adults, regulated activity comprises:

- (i) Providing health care.
- (ii) Providing personal care (physical assistance with eating or drinking, going to the toilet, washing or bathing, dressing, oral care or care of the skin, hair or nails; anyone who prompts an adult in such matters who, because of age, illness or disability, cannot make their own decisions about such matters without prompting or supervision; anyone who trains, instructs or offers guidance on such matters).
- (iii) Providing social work.
- (iv) Assistance with cash, bills and/or shopping.
- (v) Assistance in the conduct of a person's own affairs.
- (vi) Conveying (providing transport, but does not apply to taxi drivers or family and friends).

In the context of St Martin's, these apply in the following ways.

- (i) No one provides health care on behalf of St Martin's.
- (ii) No one provides personal care on behalf of St Martin's.
- (iii) No one provides social work on behalf of St Martin's. However, home communion assistants do visit adults who could be considered vulnerable in their homes.
- (iv) Members of the Community Care Group do sometimes assist people in this way. If necessary, a rota is sometimes devised to help people with shopping.
- (v) No one provides this service on behalf of St Martin's.
- (vi) Drivers are arranged for the Community Care Lunch and Community Care outings, as well as for those attending services from Abbeyfields and New College.

Those engaging in regulated activity in categories (iii), (iv) and (vi) will need to have the appropriate DBS checks (see Appendix 2). However, these regulations specifically exclude private arrangements between friends. Unless a person is vulnerable and the church specifically undertakes to arrange to transport them to a regular service, a person bringing a friend or neighbour to church would not be engaging in regulated activity. Also, when Community Care outings occur, only the transportation of vulnerable adults would require a DSB-checked driver; the regulations would not apply to those simply sharing lifts or giving lifts to a person without a car, if those people would not be considered vulnerable.