

AVON VALLEY CHURCHES SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS STATEMENT AND POLICY

Dated: October 2022 (version 4)

Review Date: by October 2024

Name: The Parish of Fordingbridge and Hyde and Breamore and Hale with Woodgreen (known locally as Avon Valley Churches) (hereafter, 'The Parish')

The Avon Valley Churches have one Parochial Church Council overseeing the four Local Church Areas of Breamore, Fordingbridge, Hale & Woodgreen and Hyde, each of which has a Local Church Council (LCC).

Church Office Address: Church Office, Rainbow Centre, 39 Salisbury Street, Fordingbridge SP6 1AB

Church STATEMENT

The Parish has an active adult population. The Parochial Church Council (the PCC) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all adults, especially those deemed potentially vulnerable, entrusted to The Parish's care or who use its services or participate in any of its groups. This policy outlines the procedures and standards expected by The Parish.

Church MISSION

As part of the Parish's mission the PCC is committed to:

- Providing respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
- Safeguarding people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
- Promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
- Supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.

Church POLICY

The PCC recognizes the need to provide a safe and caring environment for vulnerable adults, allowing that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives. The PCC has therefore adopted, and will regularly review, the procedures set out in this document.

To ensure the above are achieved, the PCC will appoint a Parish's Safeguarding Officer, supported at each church by an Assistant Safeguarding Officer.

Current ROLE HOLDERS: **Safeguarding Officer** – tba

Assistant Safeguarding Officers – Michelle Gosling (Fordingbridge), Jane Greenall (Hale & Woodgreen), Andy Finch (Breamore), Martin Ings(Hyde)

Correspondence address and contact details:

Safeguarding Officer, c/o Church Office, Rainbow Centre, 39 Salisbury Street, Fordingbridge SP6 1AB

Phone: 01425 653163

Email: safeguarding@avonvalleychurches.org.uk

Diocesan Contacts:

The Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator, Mrs Sonia Jeffery, may be contacted for advice on

Phone: 01962 737347

Email: siona.jeffery@winchester.anglican.org

Concerns may be registered 24 hours a day:

Phone: 01962 737317

Email: safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org

Procedures:

The Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the Incumbent/Rector and the PCC to ensure that the list of people requiring Enhanced Clearance from the Disclosure & Barring Service is kept up to date. Records will consist of Contacts, Certificate and Disclosure Codes and relevant Dates. This record will be kept securely on the AVC Office computer and that of the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officers will attend Diocesan Training courses as required to keep knowledge of procedures and issues up to date with current legislation and practices. All volunteers carrying out any Regulated Activity will also be required to complete relevant training as provided by the Diocese, as will any support volunteers.

Signed:

Signed:

**Incumbent/Rector
(on behalf of the PCC)**

Safeguarding Officer

Date:

Date:

AVON VALLEY CHURCHES SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS STATEMENT AND POLICY

AMPLIFICATION:

Principles Underlying the Policy

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse voice in our society. The Church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers.

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;
- should be appropriately supported so that they are 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.

The Church of England is committed to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

Everyone, whether they see themselves as vulnerable or not, will receive respectful pastoral ministry recognising any power imbalance within such a relationship.

All church workers involved in any pastoral ministry will be recruited with care including the use of the Disclosure & Barring Service when legal or appropriate. Workers will receive training and continuing support.

Any allegations of mistreatment, abuse, harassment or bullying will be responded to without delay. Whether or not the matter involves the church there will be cooperation with the police and local authority in any investigation.

Sensitive and informed pastoral care will be offered to anyone who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired: help to find appropriate specialist care either from the church or secular agencies will be offered.

What does the term Vulnerable Adult mean?

The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult', referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper who decides? issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"

In other words, the people who are most likely to be the subject of mistreatment, are those people who:

- Are very frail

- Are older people
- Have a mental illness including dementia
- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have a serious physical illness

What we mean by 'Abuse' (Abuse can take various forms)

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately, or unknowingly, causes him or her harm, endangers their life, or violates their rights.

Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological, and financial or may arise through neglect.

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

Abuse concerns the misuse of power; control and/or authority and can manifest itself as:

- Domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Racially or religiously motivated assaults
- Discrimination and oppression
- Institutional abuse

Abuse can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, place of employment, community setting and in public places (including churches and ancillary buildings).

Any act of abuse, whether a single act or repeated, is a violation of the individual human and their civil rights.

Issues of spiritual abuse within faith communities:

Harm may be caused to vulnerable adults by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include:

- The misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline
- Oppressive teaching
- Obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries
- The denial of the rights to faith and religious practice

Any concerns in relation to these matters should be dealt with via the procedures and guidelines included in this Policy.

Spiritual growth and wellbeing among vulnerable adults can be enhanced by:

- Making reasonable arrangements for them to attend acts of worship
- Providing for dietary, dress and other requirements of faith
- Enabling adequate and reasonable access to them by representatives of their faith community
- Accepting the integrity of the person's religious belief and spirituality.

Physical Abuse

This is the ill treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury. It

includes:

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Forcing
- Withholding or misuse of medication
- Squeezing
- Drowning
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Restraining
- Biting
- Suffocation
- Killing

Emotional Abuse

This is the use of threats or fear to negate the vulnerable person's independent wishes, it includes:

- Lack of privacy/choice
- Deprivation of social contact/deliberate isolation
- Lack of love or affection
- Humiliation
- Controlling
- Coercion
- Ignoring the person
- Denial of dignity
- Made to feel worthless
- Threats
- Blaming
- Pressuring
- Fear
- Verbal attitude

Financial Abuse / Legal Abuse

This is the willful extortion or manipulation of vulnerable adults' legal or civil rights including misappropriation of monies or goods, it may include:

- Misuse of finances/lack of money/Exploitation

Neglect

This is any pattern or behaviour by another person, which seriously impairs the individual, this can include:

- Failure to intervene in situations where there is danger to the vulnerable person or to others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk
- Not giving personal care
- Deliberate withholding of aids such as hearing
- Withholding food, drink, light and clothing
- Restricting access to medical services
- Limiting choice
- Denial of social, religious, cultural contacts,
- Denial of contact with family
- Left alone unsupervised
- Misuse of Medication
- Withholding medication
- Deliberate poisoning
- Inappropriate use of medication

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual act carried out without the informed consent of a vulnerable adult is abuse.

It includes contact and non-contact abuse.

Non-contact abuse may include:

- Sexual remarks and suggestions
- Introduction to indecent material
- Indecent exposure
- Teasing

Contact Abuse may include:

- Indecent assault
- Touch
- Sexual intercourse
- Being forced to touch another person

Perpetrators of abuse may be:

- Neighbours and Visitors
- Carers – informal/formal
- Professional staff
- Volunteers or Other service users
- Care practitioners or Strangers
- Clergy or Professional church workers
- Church members
- Member of a community group such as a place of worship or social club
- People who deliberately exploit vulnerable people
- Members of church visiting teams
- Relatives and other family members

From time to time organisations can and do abuse and cause harm by the way they conduct their day to day practice: churches and Christian groups need to be aware and sensitive to this.

Factors which may lead to abuse

Abuse can occur in any setting no matter where a person lives or where they are being cared for. Abuse can occur in residential or day care settings, in hospitals, in other people's homes churches and other places previously assumed safe, and in public places.

Abuse is more likely to occur if the vulnerable adult:

- Rejects help
- Has a communication difficulty
- Has challenging behaviour
- Behaves in an unusual way
- Is not helpful or co-operative
- Is behaviourally disturbed or there are major changes in personality behaviour.

Research has shown that mistreatment is more likely to occur if carers:

- Feel lonely or isolated and have no one to talk to
- Are under stress due to poor income or housing conditions

- Have other responsibilities i.e. work, family
- Are showing signs of physical or mental illness
- Are becoming dependent on alcohol or drugs
- Family relationships over the years have been poor or family violence is the norm

Other factors to look for include:

- Carer has their own problems
- Carer perceives the dependent adult as being deliberately awkward
- Vulnerable adult has few/no social contacts
- Vulnerable person cannot converse normally

Indicators of abuse

The lists below are purely indicators. The presence of one or more does not necessarily confirm abuse.

Physical Abuse:

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising or burns of unusual location or type
- Finger marks
- Being excessively withdrawn and or compliant
- Appearing frightened of / avoiding physical contact

Emotional Abuse:

- Person in state of neglect
- Difficulty in making choices because they have never been allowed to make them for themselves
- Low self esteem
- Making derogatory statements about a person's ability when they are present

Individual features:

- Very eager to please and appear subservient
- Change in appetite
- Unusual weight gain / loss
- Tearfulness
- Inappropriately dressed
- Unkempt and unwashed

Financial Abuse:

- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets
- Inability to budget and pay bills that is out of character with previous behaviour
- When a trustee who has the 'Power of attorney' is not making appropriate arrangements for the use of that money or property. Refer them to the good practice guidance we have written.

Neglect:

- Excessively and inappropriately craving attention
- Marked change in relationship between vulnerable adult and others
- Poor physical state of person and / or their home

Sexual Abuse:

- A change in the person's usual behaviour

- Withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone
- Overt sexual behaviour / language by the vulnerable person
- Self-inflicted injury
- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothes

Abuse can be intentional or unintentional, passive (e.g.) neglect, or active (e.g.) hitting.

It may be part of a significant pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident. It can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, community settings - anywhere.

A single act of abuse or repeated acts of abuse is a violation of the individual's human and civil rights.

The adult protection procedure identifies three distinct roles in the protection of vulnerable people. This comes from the Government's paper on Vulnerable Adults Safe from Harm:

- Alerters
- Investigators
- Managers

Lay people and Clergy act as Alerters. Their duty is:

- To report suspected acts of abuse
- To be alert to what abuse means and take seriously what they are told
- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice
- To work strictly in accordance with anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist and anti-disability practices
- To ensure the safety of the person you suspect is being mistreated as well as your own safety
- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation.
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully rather than question directly
- Be sympathetic
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed

Tell the person that:

- They did right to tell you
- You are treating this information seriously
- It was not their fault

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events as they may not tell you again
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential, i.e. information will only be passed to those people who have "a need to know"
- Make promises that you cannot keep (such as "This will not happen to you again")
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental (e.g. "Why didn't you run away?")
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn't have a "need to know" i.e. do not gossip.

Keep a Record

At the first opportunity make a note of the disclosure and date and time and sign your record.

You should aim to:

- Note what the people actually said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Separate out factual information from your own opinions.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink, so that the report can be photocopied.
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

Lay people should then inform the parish priest. The Parish Priest will inform the Protection-for-All Adviser who will inform the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon will alert the Bishop of the inquiry.

The Role of the Diocesan Protection-for-All Adviser in the implementation of the policy:

- To create relationships with Vulnerable Adult Units, in each area; Police, Social Services etc.
- To provide advice to the Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Registrar, of future volunteer/employment possibilities of anyone who is convicted of an offence against a vulnerable person.
- To provide advice to the Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Registrar about the necessity of keeping records and any disciplinary or other procedure invoked.
- To advise the Bishop about contact from any person making the allegation (whether this is the victim of the alleged abuse, their family, or a third party)
- Advising the Bishop about practical arrangements, which may be required for any person accused of abuse and the family.
- To advise the Bishop about arrangements to support congregations.
- To work alongside the Diocesan Registrar on employment, disciplinary matters and keeping of records and to advise the Bishop on these matters.
- Providing advice and professional support to clergy, paid staff and volunteers who may have concerns about pastoral situations in which they find themselves.
- To be aware of the links with vulnerable adult teams in Social Services in the local authorities within the diocese and report to them any cases of suspected abuse.
- To help with the implementation of training on this policy in the Diocese
- To set up a small team of experts to advise the Bishop and co-ordinate responses when cases arise.

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