
A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR OUR MINISTRY AMONGST VULNERABLE ADULTS

Christ Church, Surbiton Hill

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Introduction

Following the completion of a Diocesan self- audit assessment of our safeguarding policies and practises, and subsequent discussions with the PCC, it was agreed that we should provide more assistance and guidance for those working amongst vulnerable adults within Christ Church. Steve Weston has with us already produced a good practice guide for all those working with our children and to complement this and to assist those working amongst our vulnerable members we felt it would be helpful to lay down some good practice guidelines on the following pages for those involved in those areas too.

The areas where we currently have ministries which may include vulnerable adults but are not exclusively open to them are:

- **Open Door** (a ministry to the over 55's for fellowship and teaching)
- **Hope in Depression Course** – run in conjunction with the charity Hope in Depression, who themselves have policies regarding working with vulnerable adults, and leaders have training in delivering this course from the charity itself.
- **Sunday Lunch fellowship** (not currently in operation)

We should also consider vulnerable adults who take part generally in the life of Christ Church Surbiton Hill and who may attend Sunday services, mid-week groups and other activities on offer to parishioners and members of the community. To those involved with the leading and helping within these ministries we have compiled the following guidelines which we would ask you to read and comply with.

They are guidelines to help so that in all that we do as the family of Christ Church, we may provide a safe environment in which people of whatever age may feel welcomed and secure, and that we may reflect the care of the Lord Jesus for all. Scripture reminds us of Christ's words "in as much as you did it unto the least of these my brothers, you did it unto me" - Matthew 25).

Thank you for all you do within the family of Christ Church and do not hesitate to contact us, should you have any concerns or require more help in matters relating to our safeguarding within Christ Church. Our contact details can be found at the foot of this policy.

The Parish Safeguarding Team.

Our Vision for Work amongst Vulnerable adults



Christ Church exists to glorify God by being a Jesus-loving, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled, servant-hearted family, living and telling the good news of Jesus in Surbiton and the World.

Purpose: Journeying with vulnerable adults of all ages as they discover God's love, by living and telling the Good News of Jesus.

Values: At Christ Church we believe that God loves everyone: all ages, all backgrounds, and in all situations. We will strive to ensure that all vulnerable adults find a safe place to belong and engage with God.

Structures & Roles

This hierarchy briefly describes each role within the adult ministries at Christ Church.

The Vicar is responsible for all the work in the church connected with vulnerable adults. He will meet regularly with Team Leaders to ensure the smooth running of each ministry.

Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the ministry they serve runs well and fulfils its purpose. They do this by creating rotas, organising termly Team Meetings to encourage both assistant leaders and helpers.

Assistant Leaders & Helpers are there to support the role of the Team Leader. This may involve various roles of general assistance, in caring for members and helping achieve the purpose of the ministry.

Safeguarding within Christ Church

Christ Church has adopted the Diocesan safeguarding Policy and is therefore committed to adhering to 'A Safe Church', the Diocese of Southwark Safeguarding document, which is a legal document. This section of our handbook provides some guidance on Best Practice in our work here at Christ Church. This is not a legal document and only provides guidance.

All children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture, or disability, should have the opportunity to be safe from harm. In response to this Christ Church has established a set of good behaviour guidelines, our expectations of behaviour, for those in a position of trust.

These we believe will ensure

- an important safeguarding measure
- modelling positive patterns of Christian behaviour
- protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwanted suspicion

Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is 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.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some ways and at certain times, some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. Some of the factors which increase vulnerability are:

- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- The failing faculties in old age
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Remember:

- Vulnerability is often not a permanent state
- Vulnerability is not always visible
- A person with apparently visible vulnerabilities may not perceive themselves as such
- We are all vulnerable at different stages of life
- Vulnerable people may also pose risk and cause harm

Our expectations for all those in a position of trust

- all church workers must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the Church; this includes both while on duty and when off duty;
- they must possess a personal copy of this Best Practice Guide for their work and comply with it;
- they will be seen as role models by the children or vulnerable adults with whom they are in contact at all times, including when they are off duty;
- they must not in their private life engage in activities which could bring the church or their role in it into disrepute;
- they must take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they must ensure that all communications they may have with or about children or vulnerable adults are appropriate in their tone;
- they must seek advice from the PSO or a church leader immediately if they come across a child or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed (including self-harm) or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate;
- they must not expose themselves or others to material, which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European, or international law.
- they must inform the relevant church authorities promptly should any convictions, court orders or allegations of misconduct arise.

It is contrary to the policy of the Church of England for those in a position of trust, including priests and youth workers among others, to have sexual or inappropriate personal relationships with those for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a disciplinary offence. It will be referred as appropriate to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and in some cases it may also constitute a criminal offence. Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind is likely to be dismissed and referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring.

Our Expectations within all our activities with Vulnerable Adults

These recommendations apply to all church activities with adults who may be vulnerable – for instance, during worship on Sunday mornings, on outings, in groups and when visiting at home. They are designed to protect the adults who may be vulnerable in your care, as well as your leaders. They apply as much to church 'in house' activities for regular attendees as to activities which you run in and for the local community. Activities set up specifically for adults known to be vulnerable will need planning and preparation of a kind not needed for activities open to all. Please ensure there are supervision arrangements and a reporting line back to the PCC.

a) Encourage active membership and inclusion

- Create an environment where all people, including those who are vulnerable, are encouraged to participate in and contribute to all aspects of church life.
- Risk assess continuing and new activities including worship exploring what inclusion, choice and independence mean for communities and individuals.
- Set up policies and procedures for complaints and allegations.
- Share information appropriately.

b) Show respect to all

- Always respect the vulnerable adult and all his or her abilities.
- Ask about personal preferences, forms of address, how much help might be needed.
- Ensure his or her individuality - e.g., always use their name.
- Give the same respect as to others.
- Respect differences – e.g., in appearance, ideas, personalities, ability.
- Don't assume or withhold physical contact – ask first.
- Have a proper conversation using appropriate language – e.g., ask about interests.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to set boundaries for some to ensure the safety of others.
- Obtain specialist advice when necessary, e.g., on harassment, disability, mental illness, domestic abuse.

c) Provide the individual's right to choose

- Respect the choices vulnerable adults make, even if they may appear risky.
- Consider whether the vulnerable adult has the capacity to make choices and whether safety might require intervention.
- Give vulnerable adults the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances.
- Consult with the vulnerable adult about who he or she wishes to be included in affecting his or her life – in a way that does not further highlight to others their vulnerabilities.
- Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise a person's independence.
- Give vulnerable adults a choice about where they sit, and what activities they participate in, recognizing that some people find making choices stressful.
- Ensure that there is clear access to all areas which are available to members of the congregation, e.g., where coffee is served, the bookstall, where meetings are held.
- Do not assume that someone's level of comprehension matches their verbal communication.

Allegations and Complaints

In the event of a concern about a vulnerable person, complaint or allegation against a Church Officer or member of paid staff a PSO should be contacted directly within 24 hours of the complaint and a Disclosure of Concern form should be completed – see link below. Team leaders or clergy then can be contacted by the PSO as appropriate to discuss next steps as required and appropriate and should do this in a timely way.

Where necessary the PSO can access advice from the diocese or report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer if a paid worker is involved in the allegation and it is appropriate/ necessary.

For more detailed steps around managing allegations and concerns please see Section 6 of the 'A Safe Church' -Diocese of Southwark document -[ASC_Section_6_Allegations_and_concerns.pdf \(anglican.org\)](#)

Some Other Considerations

a) Premises

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place.

b) Worship

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, by:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Using a variety of liturgy and resources to cater for different levels of understanding
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear
- Considering holding a service which specifically caters for certain groups of adults at risk, such as those with learning disabilities, the deaf or the visually impaired.

c) Transport

- Lifts arranged by adults among themselves are a private matter and not the concern of the church unless there appears to be abuse or exploitation.
- Lifts arranged by the church, whether using existing pastoral care workers or a special team of drivers, are a church Lifts responsibility. Drivers will be acting as Church Officers and therefore need to be safely recruited. Carers should be consulted as appropriate.
- All those who drive vulnerable adults on church-organised activities should normally be over 25 and should have held a full driving licence for over two years.

- All cars that carry vulnerable adults must be comprehensively insured. The insured person must make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during church activities. They must inform their insurance company that lifts may be given. There are separate requirements governing minibuses.
- All cars that carry vulnerable adults should be clean and in a roadworthy condition.
- All passengers as well as the driver must wear seat belts. If there are no seat belts vulnerable adults should not be carried.
- Take care in assisting vulnerable adults to board or leave vehicles, taking account of the guidance on touch.
- At no time should the number of passengers in a car exceed the usual passenger number. There must be a seat belt for every passenger.
- Recognize that people are vulnerable when receiving a lift as they cannot leave a moving car or effectively resist inappropriate approaches.
- If lifts are also provided to GP or hospital appointments or adult social care facilities this is regulated activity and attracts a DBS check with barring information.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Any driver who has an “unspent” conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport vulnerable adults.
- Please see the record keeping note below regarding documents that must be provided when transporting a vulnerable adult as a Church Officer.

d) Visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (including residential and nursing homes)

- Always do an assessment of risk to both the vulnerable adult and other interested parties, including yourself, before visiting someone in their own home.
- If there are concerns or risks known before the visit is undertaken, give careful consideration to whether the visit is absolutely necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another adult. Don't take unnecessary risks.
- Always carry a mobile phone on a home visit and ensure that someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return.
- Don't call unannounced: call by arrangement if appropriate telephoning the person just before you go.
- Always carry identification with you or a note of introduction from your church.
- Always knock on the door before entering a room or home; respect the person's home and possessions.
- It is not advised to take or offer sweets, drink or other food items to people you are visiting, although having a cup of tea together would be fine if the person you are visiting would value that.
- Never offer 'over the counter' medicines to the people you visit or administer prescribed medicines even if asked to do so.
- As a general principle, do not give those you visit your home phone number or address. Instead, where possible leave information about a central contact point.
- If you don't know the answer to a question or feel out of your depth, seek advice and if appropriate refer the person to another agency. Know where you can access information about other relevant services.
- When referring someone on to another person or agency, talk this through with the vulnerable adult. Ask his or her permission before passing on personal information. Make the link with the new person or by yourself: if it is more appropriate for the vulnerable adult to do so themselves make sure they have all the information they need and that their contact will be expected.

- Be clear about your boundaries: keep to agreed limits on how much time you will spend with someone and how often you come. Don't take on extra responsibilities on a bit-by-bit basis. Be realistic about the amount of time you have; don't say yes to every request for help.
- Set a pattern and expectations about communications between visits. Beware of over-frequent texting or emailing and exchanges late at night.
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable – and what is not – from the vulnerable adult.
- A record of pastoral visits and home communions must be kept by the church.

e) Vulnerable Person's Finances

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions and gifts, as outlined below:

- Avoid handling money for vulnerable adults; if it is unavoidable provide receipts and discuss with group leader or PCC treasurer
- Workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the church trustees, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the trustees. Workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

f) Insurance

We will take reasonable steps to safeguard adults at risk and will follow any specific safeguarding requirements as laid out by our insurance company.

Keep in Mind

In addition to these guidelines, we would draw your attention to the following:

1 Recruiting staff and volunteers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of all.

Safe recruitment of workers (including paid staff, ministers and voluntary workers) will include an Enhanced DBS check. It may also include taking references, completing an application form and interviewing the person. It should not be assumed that these steps are not necessary simply because the person is known to the church or is applying for a voluntary position.

2 Record keeping

Unlike our work amongst the young we will not require the completion of a registration form and consent forms but we would encourage in a friendly way obtaining basic details from any attendees, name contact number, who to contact in case of emergency etc..

We will keep a record of all volunteers - leaders and helpers who take part in volunteering at activities where vulnerable adults are involved and appropriate safeguarding checks and references will be obtained for these volunteers. These details will be held on Church Suite for the purposes of maintaining these records.

Volunteers (Church Officers) who take part in activities where they are supporting vulnerable adults will complete Church of England Foundations Safeguarding training at appropriate intervals and provide PSO's with a Certificate of Training for file.

Volunteers (Church Officers) who are involved in transporting Vulnerable Adults as part of a church activity will provide a copy of their driving licence, MOT certificate and latest insurance to be held securely on file.

3 Health and Safety

- all activities are to be assessed in conjunction with the church's health and safety policy
- the team leader is responsible for ensuring that the room is safe for the activity each week
- In addition, for one off activities, i.e. those different from the week by week session a separate risk assessment form must be completed, signed, dated and given to the Church Office

4 First Aid

During all activities there is a named first aider available to deal with any injuries. This person should have a relevant and up to date qualification and be familiar with the location of the first aid box provided (one just inside the church on the window ledge to the right, one in the church office). When you become aware of an injury:

- stay calm! Assess the situation
- call another leader and named first aider
- wait for the appointed first aider to assist with the injury
- notify the Team Leader, or someone from the paid ministry team.
- never move someone who appears to be badly injured unless absolutely essential for safety reasons
- for any injuries seek assistance to stop friends, etc. crowding round

The Team Leader should be alerted to all injuries however minor. Where necessary, call, or arrange for the ambulance to be called. Offer to contact a relative or friend. Be ready to arrange transport home if necessary.

5 Incident Record

All incidents/ concerns relating to Vulnerable Adults must be recorded on an Incident Report form within 24 hours of the concern being raised and should be forwarded to the PSO's for action.

- date, time and name
- a brief description of the incident and the action taken
- the leaders involved
- signature of Team Leader where appropriate

Contacts

Feel free to contact the following people should you have any questions or queries.

Christ Church Office	(for general enquiries)	020 8390 7215
Rev. John Shepherd	Vicar	john.shepherd@ccsurbiton.org
Keith Mason	Parish Safeguarding Officer	safeguarding@ccsurbiton.org
Pamela Chisholm	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor	020 7939 9423 (office hours) 07982 279713 (out of hours)
Childline	For information, advice and support	0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
Achieving for Children	Kingston Council	020 8547 5008 (office hours) 020 8770 5000 (out of hours)

For further information and a full list of policy and procedures relating to safeguarding, please see: [Diocesan policies and procedures - The Diocese of Southwark \(anglican.org\)](#)