

Working with Adults who may be at Risk



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Section 1 – Trinity Cheltenham Introduction to the Policy

The vision of Trinity church is to make committed followers of Jesus who change communities and nations for Him and we believe that this must first begin in Cheltenham.

As part of our call to fulfil this vision God has given us, we believe that with the help and love of God that we will endeavour to alleviate some of the social needs in our community that particularly affect vulnerable adults.

To this end, this policy document has been drawn up to ensure that good practice is maintained across all the ministries of Trinity church that work alongside vulnerable adults in our community. While this policy gives clear guidelines and operating procedures that will protect and safeguard those serving and those being served, we believe that it is the practical demonstrations of love in the community that will cause people to ask questions and point them to the Lord who loves us unconditionally and who gave up His life for us all. It is this same love of Christ that works in us and through us that is to be the driving force, which underpins all our work with the people we encounter both in and outside the church.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

2 Corinthians 5:14

Section 2 – Diocese of Gloucester Introduction to the Policy

1. Our Christian Belief

This policy expresses our Christian belief that:

1. Each person is made in the image of God and is deserving of the best possible quality of relationships and care. Being in a state of vulnerability should not obscure the truth that God's spirit is reflected in each person.
2. Christ himself entered into a state of vulnerability on the cross, was subjected to mistreatment and abuse and so is identified with those who are in a state of vulnerability.
3. Christ's redeeming work and presence includes many gifts, especially gifts of healing, reconciliation, wholeness, empowerment and responsibility. This ministry is a witness and an inspiration to the Church. The Church is to share in the outworking of the ministry of the risen Christ so that God's purposes and Kingdom can become fulfilled in creation.
4. The best quality of care and relationships, offered through the Church, is part of God's Kingdom. It expresses God's call for justice and Christ's presence with those who are vulnerable.

On this Christian basis, the Bishop's Council accepts the commitment to create and maintain an organisational culture that is respectful, non-abusive and which takes allegations of abuse seriously.

2. Definitions of Vulnerability

Vulnerability in adults takes many forms. The Bishop's Council accepts the working definition for use with those who may be vulnerable set out in the report "Promoting a Safe Church".

"Any adult aged 18 or over whom, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

The phrase "other situation" includes in the case of the Diocese of Gloucester those who are vulnerable for medical and social reasons and also those who are vulnerable by virtue of their economic position or their status under immigration laws (for example those who are asylum seekers or refugees). Taking into account the breadth of the definition, it is probably the case that in a good proportion of congregations in the diocese there are many people who can be considered vulnerable.

"The Bishop's Council will promote good practice that takes account of the broad understanding of vulnerability, whilst also accepting that Criminal Records Bureau disclosures only apply to a specified range of vulnerability (see below)."

3. Enabling responsibility

The Bishop's Council supports **the overall approach** outlined in "Promoting a Safe Church". This is based on enabling adults to be as responsible for themselves as is practicable.

"The Bishop's Council will promote good practice that respects the rights of individuals to enjoy privacy, dignity, independence and choice and which actively promotes the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable people. This includes the right to live a life free from abuse and neglect."

Unfortunately, those who are most vulnerable are those least able to report any abuse.

The Bishop's Council believes that it is a Christian duty to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

- 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.
- failing faculties in old age.
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, including bereavement, previous abuse or trauma, or instability in economic or legal circumstances.

The Bishop's Council will promote programmes and staff activities which ensure that people:

- are treated with respect and dignity.
- have their privacy respected.
- are able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- have the protection of the law.
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion, or cultural background.
- are able to engage in effective communication.
- are heard.

This will support parishes to ensure that everyone is able to worship and follow Christian discipleship with encouragement and in safety.

Section 3 – Trinity Cheltenham Policy on the Safeguarding of Adults

1. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
2. As members of this Church we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
3. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
4. We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
5. Trinity commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
6. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any suspected or confirmed abuse to the safeguarding officer or one of the senior pastors.
7. We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
8. We are committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work among people who may be vulnerable.
9. This policy will be reviewed once a year.
10. Trinity Cheltenham adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese.
11. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

The above policy was adopted by Trinity Cheltenham PCC on (date)

Appendix A – What is the basis of this policy in Christian belief?

Jesus Christ, the Carer of Vulnerable People

At its heart, this policy is based upon the Christian understanding of Jesus Christ, the One sent by the Father, the One who demonstrated care and compassion for the vulnerable people He encountered. He deliberately seeks out those on the margins of society, offering them the love, salvation and inclusion that He came to bring and calling for justice in all relationships.

1. Luke 4:16-21

When He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was His custom. He stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. Then He began to say to them: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

2. Jesus Christ, the vulnerable one

He was vulnerable Himself, most notably on the cross, encountering rejection and subjected to mistreatment and abuse. He shared in the pain, poverty, suffering and death of human existence and thus Christ is identified with those who are found in a state of vulnerability.

3. Hebrews 2: 17-18

Therefore He had to become like His brothers and sisters in every respect, so that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because He himself was tested by what He suffered, He is able to help those who are being tested.

Jesus Christ, the one who calls us to work with him

Those who follow the risen Jesus Christ are called to share in His work, reaching out through the Holy Spirit in compassion to those who are vulnerable, to welcome those who find themselves 'on the edge' in all kinds of ways and to offer the best quality of care and relationships.

1. Matthew 25:37-40

Then the righteous will answer Him: "Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? And when was it that we saw You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and gave You clothing? And when was it that we saw You sick or in prison and visited You?" And the King will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me."

2. In conclusion:

'The heart of Christian pastoral care is this: love for God and love for our neighbour, the social expression of which is justice in all human affairs.'

(Promoting a Safe Church)

Appendix B – Important Definitions

1. What is understood by the term 'vulnerable adult'?

The following is the definition of a vulnerable adult as set out in the House of Bishops' Report:

Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Promoting a Safe Church)

The phrase 'other situation' includes in the case of the Diocese of Gloucester those who are vulnerable for medical and social reasons and also those who are vulnerable by virtue of their economic position or their status under 'immigration' laws (for example, those who are asylum seekers or refugees). Taking into account the breadth of the definition, it is probably the case that in a good proportion of congregations in the diocese there are many people who can be considered vulnerable in some respects.

2. What is abuse?

'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.' (Human Rights Act)

Abuse can take many different forms:

- **Physical abuse:** Being hit or restrained or misuse of medication.
- **Sexual abuse:** Being harassed, teased or touched in a way that the person does not like or being forced to have sex.
- **Neglect:** Not getting the food, care or clothing needed.
- **Psychological abuse:** Being bullied, threatened or verbally abused.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** Being ridiculed or threatened because of race, gender, disability or age.
- **Financial abuse:** Money or possession being stolen or used in a way that the person does not like .
- **Institutional abuse:** Being mistreated by an organisation or person that is providing care.

Spiritual abuse: See the Diocesan Policy – also cross reference to Prayer Ministry section on Child Protection Policy (See God’s Children: Our Diocese).

1. Where can abuse happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere, for example:

- In the home.
- While with family and friends.
- While receiving treatment.
- In a day centre.
- In a care home, residential home, nursing home.
- In hospital.
- In church.

2. Who could be abusing people who live in your parish?

- A partner (husband or wife).
- A friend or relative.
- Someone employed to help look after a vulnerable person.
- Someone living in the same care home, hostel or housing scheme.
- Someone attending the same day activities or day centre.
- A stranger.

People of all ages can be vulnerable. The following statistics are an example to illustrate vulnerability with regard to older people:

Facts about abuse, from 'The UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People (2007)'.
40% of people aged 66 and over living in private households (including sheltered housing) reported that they had experienced mistreatment during the past year.

51% of mistreatment in the past year involved a spouse/ partner; 49% another family member; 13% a care worker; 5% a close friend (respondents could mention more than one person)

Women were more likely to say that they had experienced mistreatment than men, but men also experience mistreatment.

The results of the survey indicated that abuse of older people increased with age, depression, loneliness, and declining health status. A much greater percentage of those living alone reported instances of mistreatment, compared with those who had social contact.

The most common form of mistreatment reported was neglect, followed by financial abuse, physical and psychological abuse and sexual abuse.

You may like to relate these statistics to your own church and neighbourhood Think of the proportion of people in your parish who are living alone or are over 65. (The National Statistics website can be useful here, providing up to date information on a ward by ward basis <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination>)"

3. For CRB purposes, what is the definition of a vulnerable adult?

For the purposes of the CRB check, the definition of a vulnerable adult is narrower than the definition of a vulnerable adult as set out in the House of Bishops' Report.

4. For CRB purposes, a vulnerable adult is:

A person aged eighteen or over who receives services of a type listed in the first paragraph below and in consequence of a condition of a type listed in the second paragraph below; or has a disability of a type listed in the third paragraph below:

5. The services are:

- Accommodation and nursing or personal care in a care home.
- Personal care or support to live independently in his or her own home.
- Any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency or National Health Service body.
- Social care services.
- Any services provided in an establishment catering for a person with learning disabilities.

6. The conditions are:

- A learning or physical disability.
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise including an addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity.

7. The disabilities are:

- A dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of basic physical functions,
- Severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others, or
- Impairment in a person's ability to protect him/ herself from assault, abuse or neglect.

8. Who should apply for a CRB check in respect of their ministry with

vulnerable people?

The PCC together with the incumbent should ensure that CRB checks are obtained for people who fall into the following categories:

- Lay people commissioned by the Bishop for pastoral and community work.
- All those who become parish lead people under the policy.
- All lay people authorised in a formal way by the parish for pastoral and community work.
- All those commissioned by the Bishop to distribute Holy Communion to people in their own homes.
- According to the House of Bishops' policy: "Those who regularly care for, train, supervise or are in sole charge of vulnerable people" (as described by the narrower definition) should obtain a CRB check.

The implications of this are that many of those who work with adults in our churches do not come into the above categories, and so will not be checked. In these cases, references should be taken with care (Promoting a Safe Church).

Appendix C – What are some of the relevant issues?

1. There are similarities between this issue and child protection, but there are also key differences:

- The big difference is that this policy is focusing on **adults** – who have a different position in law from children. This policy is not advocating that adults should be treated like children. Anyone under the age of 18 is a child under law and child protection legislation protects all children.
- For adults, however, vulnerability is not an absolute. Some adults may experience greater or lesser degrees of vulnerability at different times in their lives.
- Different factors, such as illness, disability, addiction, mental health impairment, diminishment of faculties through ageing etc., can lead to an increase in vulnerability.
- **Adults may choose not to report instances of abuse towards themselves** and in certain circumstances they will have the right to refuse to allow others to do so.
- Another key difference relates to **CRB checks**. CRB checks will not be necessary or possible for everyone who works with vulnerable adults.

Appendix D – Guidelines for those in positions of trust or exercising pastoral ministry with vulnerable people

Many dioceses have produced helpful guidance on the professional conduct of clergy and lay people. The Convocations of York and Canterbury have also produced Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.

All those involved in pastoral ministry, whether paid or unpaid, clergy or lay, should be working within this or a similar set of guidelines. Following such guidelines should not only protect vulnerable people but also ensure that workers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

1. Pastoral relationships

Exercising any kind of ministry involves workers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the well-being of others and how they ensure their own well-being and safety. People in positions of trust inevitably have power, although this may not be apparent to them. Therefore, respecting professional boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts making this guidance even more necessary.

- Church workers should exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.
- Church workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.
- Church workers who exercise a healing ministry should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.
- Church workers should recognise their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (eg therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators or giving legal advice). In these cases, the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.

2. Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters. Church workers should be aware of their language and behaviour, for example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the worker should be discerning about the motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist.

The church worker should consider in advance:

- The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, the worker's dress.
- The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby).
- The physical distance between people. The appropriate distance should be determined by a balance of hospitality and respect and an awareness that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past.
- Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction.
- The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone, especially in the evening.
- The personal safety and comfort of all participants.
- Establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration.
- The appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

3. Record keeping and privacy

Church workers should consider keeping a daily record of pastoral encounters including the date, time, place, subject and actions to be taken. The content of any encounter should only be recorded with the person's consent unless it is a matter of child protection or might record a suspicion of abuse or mistreatment:

- Any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- Records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years).
- The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation.

4. Working with colleagues

The standards maintained within a pastoral relationship are equally relevant in relationships with colleagues. Harassment or bullying should never be condoned. All workers need to be aware of the possibility of stress within the work place. The needs of family should be acknowledged and all who work together should acknowledge the boundaries between work and home, allowing sufficient time for relaxation and holidays. Everyone who works with vulnerable people should know to whom they are accountable and have a designated person with whom to discuss their work.

- Church workers should be aware of the responsibilities, function and style of other church workers and should encourage cooperation and consultation between workers in their tasks.
- Colleagues should not be discriminated against, harassed, bullied or abused for any reason.
- Colleagues should not be penalised for following this guidance or for taking action regarding others and this guidance.
- When leaving office or relinquishing any task, church workers should relinquish any pastoral relationship except with the agreement of any successor.
- Church workers should know to whom they are accountable and be regularly mentored by them or another person who can assist. Such mentoring is especially necessary for those undertaking a continuing individual pastoral ministry of counselling, or when their ministry takes them outside normal church work.
- Church workers should ensure that their tasks can be carried out by another if they are ill or otherwise unable to fulfil their responsibilities.

5. Sexual conduct

The sexual conduct of church workers may have an impact on their ministry within the Church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Workers should be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

- Church workers must not sexually abuse an adult or a child.
- Church workers must take responsibility for their words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (eg a hug may be misunderstood) or wishing to talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication and refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.
- Church workers should follow the Church's discipline on sexual matters.
- Church workers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and should refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.

- Church workers should avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted.

6. Financial integrity

Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

- Church workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.
- Church workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Church workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.
- Money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated lay people.
- Any gifts received should be disclosed to a supervisor or colleague who should decide whether the gift should be accepted.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable eg the recently bereaved.

7. Behaviour outside work and Christian ministry

In church ministry behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. Church workers are expected to uphold Christian values throughout their lives.

Appendix E – What to do if a vulnerable adult is being abused

1. Things to remember if you suspect or are told that a vulnerable adult is being abused:

- Under no circumstances should you do anything that might be construed as an investigation of the allegation. This may contaminate evidence if a formal investigation were to be made.
- You must never assume that somebody else will recognise and report what you have seen or heard.
- It can be difficult if the allegation is about a colleague or friend or it is difficult to believe what you have heard, but you should never dismiss a report of abuse.

2. If someone says they have been abused:

- Listen very carefully and give them your full attention.
- If the person is in immediate danger, call the police or ambulance.
- Do not agree to keep it a secret, you cannot do this. Explain to them you have to pass it on.
- Reassure them you will deal with the allegation discreetly and will take it seriously.
- Avoid asking questions about the alleged abuse.
- Don't make judgements
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- Report the allegation to the safeguarding officer or one of the senior pastors.
- Write down what you have been told for future reference
- Keep evidence, do not clear it away.
- Remember that many vulnerable people rely on their carers for support and shelter, so the reporting of mistreatment needs to be undertaken with sensitivity.

3. Report the incident:

- Talk to one of the senior pastors of clergy or the person responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Refer the incident to the Bishop's Adviser for Adult Safeguarding and Child Protection for information and advice

4. Useful contact numbers:

- Neville Page-Jones, Trinity Cheltenham Safeguarding Officer: 01242 808792 or 07711 504931
- The Adult Helpdesk at Gloucestershire County Council: 01452 426868
- Rape Crisis: 01452 526770
- Samaritans: 01242 515777
- GUIDE (health, social care and disability information): 01452 331131
- Safeguarding Children Services: 01452 583636

Appendix F – Discussion: Examples of good and bad practice in all our work

Most people will have no difficulty in accepting the core values of independence, choice, inclusivity, privacy and respect necessary for good practice. This is about creating an ethos of good practice for our work with all adults, to ensure it is based in a culture of respect. Working through these examples helps to bring us to a good understanding of the issues which are outlined in the draft parish policy.

Good practice Do...	Bad practice Do not...
Use considerate language, for example, use politically correct terms if you need to describe a person's physical, mental or learning disability.	Maintain a 'them' and 'us' divide in our attitudes, speech and actions. Treat vulnerable people differently to other adults. Avoid using the names of vulnerable adults. Use words that some people might find offensive like 'handicapped' or 'retarded'.
Treat vulnerable adults with the same respect as you would others. Refer to vulnerable people by name, eg "We must save a seat for Bill."	Speak to or about vulnerable adults in a different way to normal. Group people together as vulnerable as this may damage their individuality.
Use proper sign language for the deaf and for those with learning difficulties.	Use action songs as a substitute for signing. The 'actions' are not necessarily intelligible to deaf people or those with learning difficulties. Actions are fun and can be used for children or as an aid to worship – they are not sign language.
Make sure everyone can access facilities and refreshments and receive the necessary books or papers on arrival at church. Clearing access to enable independence is always the preferred option, but remember to be available to offer help should it be needed.	Assume that the person with a disability has no need of books, etc. Assume that all disabled people have to be served and cannot express a preference.
Give the same respect to vulnerable adults as to others. Always knock on the door before entering a room or home. Ask permission to join the person and respect their home and possessions.	Touch or move personal possessions without permission or tidy up without permission. Many people use the locations of items to help navigate around their home.
Respect differences in appearance, ability and ideas etc.	Attempt to change someone's appearance. Impose 'ministry' on vulnerable adults without their informed permission. Assume that everyone shares your Christian values.