



Safeguarding Policy Part D: Vulnerable Adults

St Peter's, Colchester

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Commitment to safeguarding adults

St Peter's is committed to protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect and to promoting the welfare of all vulnerable adults within our church community. We recognise that we have a duty of care to all adults, however, this policy focuses its attention upon adults with care and support needs, adults at risk of abuse, and adults who have specific vulnerabilities that do not meet the statutory definitions or thresholds. We are committed to ensuring that St Peter's:

- Provides a caring environment for all.
- Provides a safe environment for vulnerable adults and actively seeks to prevent harm.
- Identifies vulnerable adults who are suffering and seeks to support them.
- Takes appropriate action to see that such vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm.

St Peter's does not engage in any ministry specifically for adults with care and support needs, however, we recognise that some of those who attend have needs that meet the statutory definitions and thresholds, and others have specific vulnerabilities, even though these do not meet the statutory thresholds. We therefore recognise that all who act on behalf of St Peter's need to know how to respond to signs and indicators and disclosures of abuse or neglect. The following guidelines are in place to support staff and volunteers in their response to adult safeguarding concerns.

Definitions

In the context of this policy, the following terms are used as defined below:

Adult with care and support needs

As defined in the Care Act (2014), an adult with care and support needs requires help or support with daily living task such as personal care (dressing, washing, toileting etc), cooking, shopping, cleaning, or managing their finances. Such adults are entitled to support. However, support is offered on a consent basis, and it is the adult's choice whether to accept such support. The criteria for this category is that the person has such a need and is not dependent upon whether that need is being met through the provision of a service.

Adult at risk of abuse/adult in need of protection

As defined in the Care Act (2014), these terms, which are used interchangeably by external services, refer to:

- An 'adult with care and support needs' (as defined above).
- Who is also at risk of abuse.
- As a result of their care and support need(s) is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect.

Since adults at risk of abuse are not able to protect themselves, the church has a legal duty to take action to protect them by making a referral to Adult Social Care or the police.

Adult with identified vulnerabilities

As used in this policy, adults with identified vulnerabilities, refers to adults who do not meet the criteria for an 'adult with care and support needs' (as defined above), but who are vulnerable in some way.

Vulnerable adult

As used in this policy, vulnerable adult is an umbrella term that incorporates all 3 categories defined above.

Vulnerable people

As used in this policy, vulnerable people, refers to children, young people and 'vulnerable adults' (as defined above).

Those acting on behalf of St Peter's

As used in this policy, this term refers to anyone who is involved serving the church in any role, whether staff or volunteers, which brings them into contact with the public in a ministry or service capacity. All staff and volunteers are appointed in accordance with our safe recruitment policy and procedures (see section F of this policy).

Understanding safeguarding adults

Adult safeguarding recognises ten categories of abuse:

1. Physical abuse
2. Domestic abuse
3. Neglect and acts of omission
4. Self-Neglect
5. Organisational Abuse
6. Sexual abuse
7. Financial abuse
8. Modern Slavery
9. Discriminatory Abuse
10. Psychological abuse

A note on so called 'Spiritual abuse'

'Spiritual abuse' is a category that is not recognised in law or statutory guidance but is recognised by the Church of England. The term is imprecisely defined and is challenged as problematic in some quarters. This policy does not specifically use the term; however, the concept is included implicitly. The unhealthy patterns of behaviour to which the term is applied are covered under our understanding of emotional/psychological abuse, breach of trust, and the misuse of power or authority.

The Church of England's description of spiritual abuse can be summarised as follows:

Spiritual abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological and emotional abuse. It is commonly described as a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. We acknowledge the need to work to create and maintain a healthy environment that reflects biblical standards and as such, promotes and nurtures spiritual growth and thriving.

The Church of England recognises that the use of the term spiritual abuse is a relatively recent development and that there has been some concern that the term could become 'weaponised' to attack particular positions, rather than to identify and address harm and abuse. The guidance states that 'Holding a particular theological position may not be in and of itself abusive. What matters is how the position is held and shared - it is important that this must be done in a way that respects and values others.'

Spiritual abuse, by some of the definitions offered, shares some of the hallmarks of bullying and harassment, including intimidation, manipulation and inducing fear. It often uses the 'victim's' belief system to coerce, manipulate, control; and abuse them, using religious position, membership of the religious community, power or influence within the community, scripture, biblical discourse or spiritual threats to abuse. Spiritual abuse can coexist with other forms of abuse; sometimes being used to hide, legitimise or justify that abuse, but it can also exist in isolation.

Responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse

Safeguarding concerns about adults are handled in the same way as concerns about children or young people and in accordance with the principles outlined in part A of this policy.

- Anyone who has a concern about the safety or wellbeing of an adult should raise that concern with their Ministry Area Lead (MAL)/Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), who will advise and support.
- The MAL will record the details of the concern, and any initial actions taken, and will consult with the PSO who will advise what action needs to be taken.
- If required, the PSO will consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA).
- The PSO will lead on any safeguarding concerns that meet statutory thresholds or that involve liaison with external agencies.
- The MAL will lead on any concerns that do not meet safeguarding thresholds, but which involve practical or pastoral needs, supported by the PSO as required.
- The DSA will be updated as required and will provide advice and support when needed.

Supporting vulnerable adults in making their own decisions about support

This guidance has been adapted from the Church of England Safeguarding e-manual [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse | The Church of England](#).

When assessing and managing safeguarding concerns, the PSO will need to establish whether the adult meets the criteria for an 'adult at risk of abuse'/'adult in need of protection' and whether they have mental capacity. The answers to these questions will determine whether consent is needed to share information. Even if the church has a duty to report, and consent is not required, the views and

wishes of the individual must be considered. The majority of safeguarding concerns raised at St Peter's do not meet this threshold, meaning that consent must be obtained if information is to be shared with external agencies.

When seeking to address support needs (as opposed to having the duty to protect), it is important that vulnerable adult's consent to the provision of support and to the sharing of their personal information or details of their needs. The section below, adapted from the Mental Capacity Act 2005: Code of Practice, explains how people can be assisted to make their own decisions about the support in this Guidance.

Providing relevant information

Does the vulnerable adult have all the information they need to make the decision? For instance, have you given them information about who will provide the services, when and how? If they have a choice, have they been given information on all the alternatives?

Communicating in an appropriate way

Is the information about the support explained in a straightforward way, without using jargon? Could information about the support be explained or presented in a way that is easier for the survivor or victim to understand (for example, by using "everyday" language or visual aids)?

Could anyone else help support the person or help with communication? For example, a family member, support worker, interpreter, speech and language therapist or advocate. The victim or survivor would need to agree to the involvement of a third person in this way.

Making the person feel at ease

Are there particular times of day when the survivor or victim's understanding is better? This applies where people may be taking medication that affects their lucidity. Are there particular locations where the survivor or victim feels more at ease? Some places associated with the church, or the abuse, may trigger re-traumatisation and therefore affect their ability to decide whether to accept support. Could the decision be put off in order to see whether the survivor or victim can make the decision at a later time when circumstances are right for them?

'Deliverance ministry'

Where applicable, St Peter's will ensure that those with concerns that they or others require 'deliverance ministry' receive adequate pastoral support. Any meeting with such individuals will be held with at least two appropriately recruited individuals (in line with safer recruitment practices outlined in this policy) and any meetings and/or actions taken will be clearly communicated to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Guidance for visiting adults at risk of abuse or those who lack mental capacity

St Peter's seeks to care well for all who attend the church and as such, expects the highest standards of Christian conduct and integrity from anyone involved in ministry to vulnerable adults, including making

home visits. Most adults, including vulnerable adults, have mental capacity and can protect themselves. Such adults have the right to make decisions for themselves.

Occasionally, situations may arise where home visits to adults at risk of abuse and/or who lack mental capacity form a part of our care for that person. Although these people may be well known to us, unexpected circumstances can be encountered during home visits, which may place either the person being visited, or the visitor facing increased risk.

While it may be tempting to some to avoid such situations, this group of people are perhaps those most in need of such visits and our fear of the potential challenges posed by the situation do not negate either our biblical responsibility to care for such people, or their need for such care.

It is important to recognise that each situation is different and must be assessed and responded to in a manner that is specifically planned to meet that person's needs. (This falls under the principle referred to in safeguarding as the personalisation of safeguarding, which responds to the specific needs and wishes of the individual concerned.)

Staff or volunteers who are likely to be providing such care may need to be DBS checked. They also need to be aware of basic safety strategies and principles; particularly if visiting alone. To assure the person being visited of their safety, and for the visitor's own safety, the following principles should inform and shape the way such ministry is conducted:

- Where practical, before an initial visit (particularly if the person being visited is not well known to us) risks should be considered using a generic risk assessment, which should be updated as required over time if visiting is ongoing.
- If there are known risks, consideration must be given to how these will be managed.
- It is preferable to call by appointment rather than to arrive unannounced.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care and/or support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission and encourage them to set up the contact themselves, unless there are safeguarding concerns that need to be reported.
- Never offer 'over the counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the ministry at St Peter's, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the church office.
- Keep appropriate records of such visits, including details of any concerns that are identified or disclosed, or any incidents that occur during the visit. As a minimum, this should include the date, time, and location and purpose of the meeting. If the visitor is concerned about any aspect of the visit, they should speak with their MAL, who will consult with the PSO as required.

Guidance on communicating electronically with those who may lack mental capacity

Do:

- Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
- Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key.
- Treat online communication with vulnerable adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- Keep backup copies of electronic communications.
- These should be made available to the church leadership or the PSO if required.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media, or via any other electronic means, to the PSO via your MAL, or directly if necessary.
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
- Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church accounts & profiles separate from your personal social media accounts e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, and a separate Facebook profile for private life
- Where possible, use an approved ministry account or a St Peter's email address to communicate with vulnerable adults. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence if required.
- Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

- Do not use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with vulnerable adults.
- Do not stalk them (ie. dig through people's social media to find out about them).
- Do not say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper, or on headed notepaper.
- Do not destroy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means. Notify the named persons immediately.
- Do not comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your role.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.
- Breaches of copyright and data protection.

- Material of an illegal nature.
- Offensive sexual or abusive references.
- Inappropriate language.
- Anything which may be harmful to a vulnerable adult, or which may bring the ministry at St Peter's into disrepute or compromises its reputation.

External organisations

St Peter's has connections with various external organisations that work with vulnerable groups. Such activities operate separately to St Peter's and have their own safeguarding policies. St Peter's members who volunteer with them are subject to the safeguarding policies and procedures of those external organisations.

APPENDIX: Definitions Of Abuse

Taken from [Church of England Safeguarding e-manual](#).

Physical abuse

What it is

Physical abuse is the act of physical ill treatment. It may include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate physical sanctions.

Bumps and bruises don't always mean someone is being physically abused. Although there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for, it's important to be aware of the signs.

If someone regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Signs you may see

- bruises
- flinching away from others
- wearing clothes that cover up, even in warm weather
- burns or scalds
- broken or fractured bones
- bite marks

Domestic abuse

What it is

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It's important to remember domestic abuse:

- Can happen inside and outside the home.
- Can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites.

- Can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended.
- Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021), along with the related [statutory guidance](#) provides a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. See Section 3 for more information.

Signs you may see

- Productivity signs.
- Change in the person's working patterns: for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early.
- Reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards.
- Change in the use of the phone/email: for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails.
- Spending an increased number of hours at work for no reason.

Changes in behaviour or demeanour

- Conduct out of character with previous employment history or social engagement
- Changes in behaviour: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed
- Isolating themselves from colleagues or friends
- Obsession with timekeeping
- Secretive regarding home life
- Worried about leaving children at home.

Physical signs

- Visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations.
- Change in the pattern or amount of make-up used.
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries.
- Substance use/misuse.
- Fatigue/sleep disorders.

Other signs

- Partner or ex-partner following employee in or around the workplace or Church setting or repeatedly turning up at the workplace or Church setting
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule or social activities.
- Flowers/gifts sent to employee for no apparent reason.
- Isolation from family/friends.

Stalking and cyber-stalking are also forms of control and abuse. Church workers should remain alert to the use of words, physical or sexual practices to demean and control a vulnerable adult.

Neglect and acts of omission

What it is

- Carers ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs of the vulnerable adult.
- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services.
- The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Signs you may see

- An out of character failure to engage in social interaction and activities.
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with support, such as medical and social care organisations.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing.
- Poor state of home environment.
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss.
- Untreated injuries and medical problems.
- Accumulation of untaken medication.

Self-Neglect

What it is

Self-neglect covers a range of behaviour related to neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Signs you may see

- Poor personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes every day
- Unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter/heating
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services, accumulation of untaken medication
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury

Organisational Abuse

What it is

Poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home, for example. This may range from one off incidents to on-

going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

Signs you may see

- An unsafe, unhygienic or overcrowded environment
- A strict or inflexible routine
- Lack of privacy, dignity, and respect for people as individuals
- Withdrawing people from community or family contacts
- No choice offered with food, drink, dress or activities
- No respect or provisions for religion, belief, or cultural backgrounds
- Treating adults like children, including arbitrary decision-making.

Sexual abuse

What it is

- rape
- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo
- sexual photography or filming, "revenge porn"
- subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts
- sexual assault
- sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Signs you may see

- rape
- excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- fear of receiving help with personal care
- reluctance to be alone with a particular person
- self-harming
- poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- the uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- pregnancy in someone who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse

Financial or material abuse

What it is

- theft
- fraud
- internet scamming
- coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Signs you may see

- Missing personal possessions.
- An unexplained lack of money.
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity, or being obtained by someone you would not expect.
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Appearance of previously uninvolved relatives or 'close friends'.
- Failing to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of someone else.

Modern Slavery

What it is

- slavery
- human trafficking
- forced labour and domestic servitude
- traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Signs you may see

- Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse and untreated injuries.
- Looks malnourished or unkempt or appears withdrawn and neglected.
- Seems under the control or influence of others.
- Wears the same clothes every day.
- Wears no safety equipment even if their work requires it.
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Living and working at the same address.
- Appears unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.
- Rarely allowed to travel on their own.
- Collected and dropped off on a regular basis early in the morning or late at night.

- In a crowded minibus with other workers.
- Has no control of their identification documents such as their passport.
- Reluctant to seek help and avoids eye contact.
- Appears frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers.
- Fear of police don't know who to trust or where to get help.
- Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

Psychological abuse

What it is

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation
- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Signs you may see

- an air of silence when a particular person is present
- withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person.
- insomnia.
- low self-esteem
- uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- a change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment

Discriminatory Abuse

What it is

- harassment

- slurs or similar treatment because of:
- race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- gender and gender identity, including gender reassignment
- age
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage and civil partnership

Signs you may see

- Overhearing harassment or abuse
- A person appearing to be excluded from activities or groups for discriminatory reasons.
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety.

Other types of abuse

In addition to the categories of abuse listed above, there are a range of identified risks, which for the sake of this policy will be referred to as types of abuse. These all fit within one or more of the categories of abuse. These are sometimes referred to as 'current themes' or 'hot topics' and include, but are not limited to:

Extremism and radicalisation

What it is

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities based on race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. This can include harmful minority religions ('cults').

Signs you may see

- isolating themselves from family and friends
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use

Bullying, cyber bullying and online abuse

What it is

- Bullying can include many different forms of abuse, including physical and emotional abuse, and typically (but not exclusively) takes place between peers.
- Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.
- It can happen anywhere – at home, online, at work or in church. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a vulnerable adult both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying can include:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- shaming someone online
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- revenge porn
- trolling

Signs you may see

- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn.
- Problems with eating or sleeping.
- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.
- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- Seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- Be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone.
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises.
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them).
- Bullying others.

Relevance to other countries

Please note that whilst there might be different perceptions of what constitutes abuse in different countries, abuse cannot be understood as a relative concept only applicable in certain contexts. Abuse is abuse. Domestic abuse and the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, for example, are still forms of abuse whichever country they take place in and must be responded to.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers have the same fundamental rights to safety and protection as any other person and the fact that their citizenship status may not have been resolved does not alter this. From a safeguarding point of view refugees and asylum seekers are not necessarily vulnerable and their autonomy should be respected. They are, after all they have gone through, survivors and shouldn't be treated as victims. However, refugees and asylum seekers may face certain risks associated with their particular circumstances and experiences.

Who abuses adults

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer.
- Neighbours.
- Paid carers and carers within institutions.
- Workers in places of worship.
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service.
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.