

Safeguarding Policy

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Vulnerable Adults

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SECTION A

Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Abuse

SNCA is committed to preventing abuse and neglect taking place, and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable adults within our community. We are committed to ensuring that SNCA:

1. provides a safe environment for vulnerable adults and actively seeks to prevent harm
2. identifies vulnerable adults who are suffering
3. takes appropriate action to see that such vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm

All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Who is a vulnerable adult?

The term 'vulnerable adult' refers to 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.

When an adult makes a disclosure of abuse or if you encounter an adult at risk of harm, or suffering from harm, please discuss with the Minister in Charge ("**MiC**") or Church Safeguarding Officer ("**CSO**").

Consideration will then be given as to how to respond and whether that person is a vulnerable adult. This is done in liaison with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor ("**DSA**"). If the adult concerned does not meet the definition of a vulnerable adult, it is still important to consider how to respond well and the principles that follow would still be relevant including keeping records and seeking appropriate advice.

2. What is abuse?

The Church of England Safeguarding e-manual provides the following examples of types of abuse. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

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. Extremism and radicalisation
10. Discrimination and bullying
 - a. Discriminatory abuse
 - b. Bullying, cyber bullying and online abuse
11. Psychological abuse
12. Spiritual abuse

Guidelines for when a vulnerable adult tells us they have been abused

We seek to create and maintain a safe environment for all. This includes being open and responding appropriately to concerns and allegations raised by vulnerable adults. Caregivers should avoid intentionally instigating a meeting with a vulnerable adult to receive a disclosure or take a statement from them – that is the role of local authorities' social care services or the police. However, if a vulnerable adult directly discloses about abuse happening to them, the following general guidelines should be followed:

3. Respond

- Remain calm.
- Listen to the person carefully and in a manner that conveys they are being heard and taken seriously. Give the person the opportunity to tell their story in their own time.
- Ask questions only for clarification.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by disclosing and that the church will work with statutory services to safeguard them.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept – for example, that the disclosure will be kept secret.
- Explain to the person what will happen next – i.e. that you will inform the MiC / CSO who will progress the disclosure.

4. Record

- Make an accurate record of the disclosure (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours)
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Record what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation).
- Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept in a secure place.

5. Report

- **Emergency:** If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the police. Ring 999.
- **Non-emergency:** Contact the MiC. If the allegation is against the MiC, contact the CSO. If neither are available, [contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor \(“DSA”\)](#) directly. Contact details are also at the end of this document. The MiC / CSO will then seek advice from the DSA within 24 hours. They will act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given. They will also consider whether any additional action is required.
- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so you must also contact either the MiC or CSO.
- If you are not sure whether this is a concern that needs reporting or not, it is always best still to check with the MiC or CSO. You don't need to mention names initially unless advised to do so.
- Apart from telling the MiC / CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with other church members.
- Do not investigate the concerns of abuse yourself. Do not contact anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
- Consider your own feelings and ask the MiC for pastoral support if needed.

Please note that disclosures may be from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

How to support vulnerable adults in their decision making about support

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

It is important that victims and survivors need to consent to the provision of support or before their personal information or details of their needs are shared with third-party providers of support. 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 victim or survivor have all the relevant 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?

SECTION B

Guidelines for visiting vulnerable adults

It may often arise that we need to arrange home visits for some vulnerable adults in our church family. Although these people will be well known to us, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place the person visiting at risk.

To assure the person being visited of their safety, and for the visitor's own safety:

1. Where possible, a risk assessment should be undertaken before an initial visit, especially if the person being visited is not well known or if there are known risks. Consider whether the visit is necessary or whether the visitor should be accompanied by another person.
2. Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
3. Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
4. Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
5. Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
6. 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 SNCA, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Church office.
7. Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the Ministry Leader and report any safeguarding concerns to the CSO and/or Ministry Leader.

Guidance on communicating electronically with vulnerable adults

Do:

1. Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
2. 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.
3. Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the MiC / CSO.
4. 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.
5. 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 and profiles separate from your personal social media accounts.
6. Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
7. Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the CSO/ Ministry Leader.
8. Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

1. Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
2. 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.
3. Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.

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

1. libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements;
2. breaches of copyright and data protection;
3. material of an illegal nature;
4. offensive sexual or abusive references;
5. inappropriate language; or
6. anything which may be harmful to a vulnerable adult or which may bring SNCA and the gospel into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no communication with a vulnerable adult should occur between 10pm and 7am.

'Deliverance ministry'

This guidance has been taken from the Church of England Safeguarding e-manual [Deliverance Ministry | The Church of England](#)

Where applicable, SNCA will ensure that those with concerns that they or others require 'deliverance ministry' would receive adequate pastoral support. Any meeting with such individuals will be held with at least two appropriately recruited members of staff (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.

Contact Names and Details

Safeguarding Committee

Frank Owusu-Sekyere (Chair)
Church Safeguarding Officer
safeguarding@snca.co.uk

Tom Wright
Assistant Minister
Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion
tom.wright@snca.co.uk

Tricia Owusu-Sekyere
Trustee

Susannah Williams
Operations Manager and Lead Safeguarding Recruiter
susannah@snca.co.uk

SNCA Staff

Chris Fishlock
Minister in Charge
chris@snca.co.uk

Tom Wright
Assistant Minister
Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion
tom.wright@snca.co.uk

Matt Bridges
Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for Victoria Talks)
matt@snca.co.uk

Tom Barnardo
Minister (Ministry Leader for London Bridge Talks & Fleet Street Talks)
tom.barnardo@snca.co.uk

Sarah Quinlan
Women's Minister
sarah@snca.co.uk

Lizzie Price
Women's Minister for London Bridge Talks
lizzie@snca.co.uk

Susannah Williams
Operations Manager and Lead Safeguarding Recruiter
susannah@snca.co.uk

Carrie Fishlock
Finance Manager
carrie@snca.co.uk

Suzie Burden
Projects Manager
suzie@snca.co.uk

Phyllida Stuart
Children's Work Administrator and Safeguarding Recruiter
phyllida@snca.co.uk

National Contacts

Diocese of London

Helpline: 02079321224

safeguarding@london.anglican.org

Thirtyone:Eight

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

City of London Corporation Children and Families Team

020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

City of London Social Care Services

020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

Child Line NSPCC

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR Child Protection Helpline,

Tel. 0800 1111 0808 800 5000

(full number is just these 8 digits)

Family Lives (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222

Domestic Violence Helpline (for females) 0808 2000 247

Mankind (for males) 01823 334244

Police non-emergency phone line 101

Further resources

'Protecting all God's children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England', 2010

'Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London', 2015

'The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook' – promoting a safer church, October 2018

'The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016' (Chapter 14)

London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding

APPENDIX

Definitions Of Abuse

Taken from Church of England Safeguarding e-manual [Definitions of Abuse | The Church of England](#)

● **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

At time of writing, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has been passed, but much is not yet in force. The Act can be found at Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk). This will create 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.

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 amount 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:

- Very 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:

- 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
- Uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour
- 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 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.

● 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 on the basis of 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.

● Discrimination and bullying

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

Bullying, cyberbullying 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 school, at home, online, at work or in church. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a person 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 person
- Encouraging people to self-harm
- Revenge porn

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.

● **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

● **Spiritual abuse**

What it is:

Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

Signs you may see:

- The misuse of the authority of leadership
- Penitential discipline
- Oppressive teaching
- Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in physical, emotional, or sexual harm.

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. Asylum-seeking children who are unaccompanied are in a highly vulnerable situation.

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.