

St Helen's Parish Policy for Safeguarding Adults

**Policy on the Safeguarding of Adults in the Church:
in the Parish of St Helen's, Ashby de la Zouch**

This statement was adopted by St Helen's Parish Church
at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on 17th January 2017

This policy will be reviewed each year to monitor the progress which has been achieved.

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. The parish commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable and to treating them with dignity and respect.
3. 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 such abuse that we discover or suspect.
4. As members of this parish we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
5. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
6. We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
7. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
8. The parish is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
9. The parish adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese.
10. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Elizabeth Smith, Safeguarding Officer, to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies.

Incumbent

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

Date

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Vulnerability:

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is "invulnerable"; some people may consider themselves to be strong but, when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognise and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity. Vulnerability is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labelled as "vulnerable" in the same way as a child is regarded as such. Childhood is absolute: someone who is not yet eighteen years of age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with vulnerability. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity; brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma;
- 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 of old age.

Implementing the Policy for Safeguarding Adults:

Everyone, as a citizen, has a responsibility for the safety, well-being and protection of others. Everyone within the church community also has a responsibility to ensure that there is a welcome for all people, including those seen as vulnerable. A policy about the safeguarding of vulnerable people should be the concern of the whole congregation and therefore should be presented to the Parochial Church Council for adoption and be reaffirmed at least annually. This is an opportunity for church members to remember their commitment to one another.

Everyone should be alert to situations where those who might be vulnerable are exposed to unacceptable risks. Those who work with vulnerable people often find themselves in challenging situations and need the support, prayers and encouragement of everyone in the congregation. Sometimes workers may be confronted with difficult behaviour on the part of those with whom they are working; sometimes workers may have to face difficult decisions about incidents that may need to be reported to the statutory authorities. The congregation and church workers need to be clear about the procedures which should be followed when there are concerns about people being harmed or abused.

Those who work most closely with vulnerable people in lunch clubs, day centres, Bible study groups or as pastoral visitors, etc., are in a unique position to get to know them. As a result workers might learn about things that give cause for concern or they may see others, sometimes including fellow workers or church members, behaving in ways that may be described as abusive or potentially harmful. When visiting a care home, for example, a

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visitor may observe another resident showing signs of abuse. Workers should follow the guidelines for good practice listed below:

- Helping in such a way as to maximize a person's independence. People with additional needs can and do lead active and fulfilled lives but some may need support and resources to do so.
- Always respecting the person and all their abilities.
- Recognising the choices people make even if they may appear risky.
- Giving people the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in the circumstances.
- Including everyone in decisions affecting their life
- Creating an environment within the Church that can include everyone.

Workers and volunteers should know what to do if they learn of any incidents where vulnerable people are being mistreated or abused. (see appendices 1 and 2 for procedures on reporting incidents)

Not all concerns about the welfare or safety of a vulnerable person need the public authorities to be involved; sometimes it may be that the concern focuses on behaviour and attitudes that are not immediately harmful and then the matter should be dealt with through discussion or training. The choices of the adult concerned should if at all possible be accepted. The response to any concerns should always be proportionate and appropriate to the issue.

The Church should make every effort to provide a safe place for those who may be vulnerable. Where special activities or groups for vulnerable people are organised, care should be taken to ensure that those who work in these activities are carefully appointed, supported and supervised. Recruitment to other positions of trust should be carried out sensitively but thoroughly to try to prevent inappropriate appointments being made.

The Parochial Church Council together with the incumbent carries a duty of care for the safety of those who attend or use the church. The PCC should, with the help of the diocese, ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the need to safeguard vulnerable people and that it is being implemented and has appropriate resources. The PCC needs to find ways to communicate the policy to the whole congregation. Clergy in particular need to be aware of the pastoral needs of vulnerable people, their carers and those that work with them.

It is recommended that a named individual be appointed by the PCC to act as the key person to speak on behalf of vulnerable people both within the congregation and to outside bodies. Ideally the appointed person should have some experience in this field. They should be recruited using the Safer Recruitment Policy. Such a person may be the most appropriate person to receive information about concerns and will need to listen carefully, possibly discussing the matter with the adult concerned and making a decision about whether these concerns should be passed to an outside statutory body such as the police or the local authority Adult Services. The lead person should always liaise with and seek advice from the designated person in the diocese. If there is clear evidence

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that the vulnerable person has suffered abuse, then this should be reported as soon as possible to local authority Adult Services as the lead agency. All Adult Services Departments (or similar) have policies about the safeguarding of vulnerable peoples and will work in multi-agency collaboration with the health service and police.

Some parishes may find it difficult to appoint someone to undertake this responsibility. It may be more appropriate for this to be considered as an appointment within each deanery. However it must be remembered that each PCC is legally responsible for the activities in its own parish.

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Appendix 1

Safeguarding – who to contact

If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child or vulnerable adult, you should report the matter immediately to either of the following:

The Police 999

Social Services:

Leicester City (incl. out of hours) - 0116 454 1004

Leicestershire Children's Service - (incl. out of hours) - 0116 305 0005

Leicestershire Adult Services - 0116 305 0004

Rutland Children's Services (daytime) – 01572 722 577 ext 8407

Rutland Adult Services (daytime) – 01572 722 577

Rutland Children's Services (out of hours) – 0116 305 0005

Rutland Adult Services (out of hours) – 0116 255 1606

If you have concerns but the child or vulnerable adult is not in immediate danger, you should talk to your priest or Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible. They will then contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. If neither the priest nor coordinator is available you should contact the adviser yourself:

Rachael Spiers, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 0116 261 5341,
rachael.spiers@leccofe.org

Other Contacts:

- Tim Stratford, Archdeacon of Leicester – 0116 261 5319, tim.stratford@leccofe.org

- David Newman, Archdeacon of Loughborough – 0116 261 5321,
david.newman@leccofe.org

- Andy Brockbank, Assistant Diocesan Secretary – 0116 261 5312,
andrew.brockbank@leccofe.org