

DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

As members of the Church of England we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to protect children and young people from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and from neglect.

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Bishop's Foreword

“Jesus said: “Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18.10).

The Christian faith asserts that each person is infinitely precious to God. That includes especially children and the vulnerable. According to Jesus, children are examples of greatness: we are to try and be like them. We are to cherish and protect all children. Almighty God was born we believe as a human child, a baby, turning upside down the idea that children do not matter. The modern Western view that children matter flows from the teaching that every human life is precious at the centre of the Christian faith.

Child sexual abuse and exploitation destroys innocence and destroys whole lives for the purpose of momentary and corrupt gratification for adults. It is a heinous crime, a symptom of deep wrong in our society. It is, as we know, widespread. Similarly abuse of vulnerable adults in any way is deeply and profoundly wrong.

Our culture is coming to terms with evidence of child sexual abuse in the churches, in the BBC, in schools, in all public institutions. Within our own Diocese, the town of Rotherham is facing painful and difficult truths and finding the courage to rebuild.

As we minister as individuals and churches in this context, we need as a church to offer to the victims the tenderness and compassion and lament and tears: to weep with those who weep.

Where the Church has contributed to this abuse we need to offer repentance and penitence. This needs to be combined with utter seriousness and vigilance in addressing our own safeguarding procedures and policies.

There are many calls on a minister's time, as we all know. Operating a strong safeguarding policy can feel like routine administration. But it is routine administration which protects children and vulnerable adults from exploitation and danger which has the potential to blight lives.

I therefore hope, pray and expect that the policies in this document will have the highest priority in every parish church, that all clergy and lay ministers will take care to see that their training is updated regularly, that procedures will be followed with care and diligence and that advice will be sought in every instance which requires it.

I am grateful to Sue Booth and those who have worked with her to update our policies and I commend them to the Diocese.

+Steven Sheffield

The Diocese of Sheffield Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

This Policy and Guidelines document is the revised version of the 2008 Safeguarding Children policy. Since then there have been a number of changes in legislation concerning safeguarding children, a new set of statutory guidance (*Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2013) and a new edition of the national Church of England policy concerning safeguarding children, (*Protecting All God's Children*, edition four, 2010). This new diocesan handbook for parishes incorporates these new developments, while keeping to the existing format to try to make it easier for those in parishes who have become used to that format to access information.

It continues to provide a model parish policy and guidelines that parishes will be able to adapt to suit their own purposes. Each parish needs to consider how far the model parish policy meets its own needs, and if necessary adapt it to their own circumstances, while following the safer working practice guidelines. This is particularly relevant to the whole issue of safer recruitment. There are significant changes in the sphere of safer recruitment. These are not yet completely finalised. We recommend you continue to use the guidelines that follow as a basis for recruitment, along with a **new confidential declaration** (Appendix 3.3). When the changes are finalised, you will be sent a new section on safer recruitment. The interim national safer recruitment document is available on the Church of England website should you wish to look further at this issue. Much of what is in place in the Diocese will continue to be appropriate and essential.

We cannot emphasise strongly enough how safer recruitment can prevent inappropriate access to children.

On receipt of this new policy and guidelines we also recommend that all parishes should examine their own procedures and decide if their own systems need amending. Such amendments should be part of the continuing process of ensuring that safeguarding children is appropriate and includes new understanding and developments in the field.

For most children who participate in church activities the experience is a wholesome and enjoyable one. I know from travelling in the Diocese and talking with those who work with children and young people the huge level of commitment that exists towards their care and well-being. It is a privilege to be involved with you all.

There are however always ways in which we can make our practice better. Even if we have all appropriate procedures in place, it is those who work with children using their knowledge and skills, and their observation, who really protect children, by identifying poor practice, unsafe premises or activities, or having concerns about a child or an adult's behaviour and voicing that concern to an appropriate person.

This handbook continues to be about prevention, in the belief that sound policy and practice contribute to minimising the chances of harm occurring. Thank you all for being part of that process.

Resources within each parish vary considerably, as does the nature of contact with children and young people. All parishes will however have children on its premises at some point, even if there are no specific children's activities, and I would therefore urge all parishes to undertake a safety

audit. All parishes are likely to include survivors of abuse within their congregations, and members of the parish can be a source of assistance and understanding for those individuals. Many parishes will have those who present a risk to children within their worshipping community (whether they are aware of that or not) and should therefore plan their work with children with that possibility in mind.

My final thanks are to those who act as the safeguarding officers/ representatives who are responsible for ensuring that these things happen in parishes. They help to ensure that parish work is as safe as it can be for children and young people, fulfilling an essential and a sometimes difficult task, particularly when others in parishes cannot see the need for their work. The safety of children depends on them and their commitment to ensuring parishes do indeed have a culture of 'informed vigilance'.

Sue Booth, Bishop's Advisor for Safeguarding.

Insurance Statement

Groups and parishes will be insured through a number of different companies whose policies will be subject to various terms, conditions and exceptions. However, the majority of churches within the Diocese of Sheffield are insured with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group PLC. They have provided the following statement, incorporated in their Child Protection Booklet.

EIGP supports the House of Bishops Policy Document and its measures for the safeguarding of children. EIGP believes that preventative measures to remove the likelihood of abuse are the cornerstones for both the protection of a potential victim and an accused child carer.

Common law, and in some areas statutory legislation, require a very wide range of people to take reasonable care to prevent injury to others. Indeed, the law recognises that a higher standard of care exists in matters concerning children. The use of 'best practice' procedures in the management of child protection and care is essential, just as a similar obligation rests upon those responsible for health and safety in commerce and industry. The observance of 'reasonable care' is a standard insurance condition.

Subject to the policy terms, Public Liability (Third Party) Insurance will protect the interests of Policyholders where they are found to be legally liable for accidental death of or bodily injury to a third party. Cover is provided to Policyholders if they are held legally liable for an event caused by their negligence leading to accidental bodily injury or illness as a result of abuse. There is, however, no such cover for the actual perpetrator of abuse.

The Policy terms require that all reasonable steps be taken to prevent injury loss or damage occurring and failure to take such precautions may prejudice the insurance cover. A duty therefore exists upon Policyholders to adopt 'best practice' based upon current and ongoing guidelines.

Principles of the House of Bishops' Policy

From Protecting All God's Children 4th Edition 2010

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Principles

- We are committed to:
 - The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and all adults
 - The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
 - The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.
- We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him or her an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Responsibilities of church organisations (from Protecting All God's Children)

The Church of England is committed to encouraging partnership with all statutory and voluntary organizations, other faith groups and ecumenical partnerships wherever possible. In particular it recognizes the need to:

- Keep abreast of research and policy developments in good safeguarding practice,
- Listen to and learn from victims of abuse,
- Review and update Church policy and practice,
- Ensure that there are appropriate systems of accountability and supervision at all levels of the Church's life,
- Ensure that all licensed ministers and lay workers are carefully selected and trained, and that their training equips them for their safeguarding responsibilities in work with children,
- Provide training and support for workers who have responsibilities for children's work.

Creating 'informed vigilance'

Clear and robust procedures are essential to safeguarding. However, it is people who protect, not procedures. The aim of every parish should be to create a culture of informed vigilance by raising awareness of the issues involved in safeguarding children, addressing the needs of children in all their diversity, responding to the needs of adults and children who have been abused, and supporting and training those working with children to encourage them to work together to follow good practice, and to care appropriately for those in the church community who have abused children.

Responsibilities of the P.C.C. Each Parish should:

- Accept the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) to ensure the well-being of children and young people in the church community.
- Adopt and implement a safeguarding children policy and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishops' policy on Safeguarding Children but informed by additional diocesan procedures and recommended good practice, whilst being responsive to local parish requirements.
- Appoint at least one coordinator to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. The coordinator must ensure that any concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the diocesan safeguarding children adviser. Ideally this coordinator should be someone without other pastoral responsibility for children in the parish. The coordinator should either be a member of the P.C.C. or have the right to attend the council and should report at least annually on the implementation of the policy within the parish.
- Consider appointing a person, who may be different from the coordinator, to be a children's advocate; this should be someone whom the children know they can talk to about any problems, if they wish.

- Display in church premises where children's activities take place, the contact details of the coordinator or children's advocate, along with the Childline (0800 1111) and Family Lives (0808 800 2222) (formerly Parentline Plus) telephone numbers.
- Ensure that all those authorized to work with children and young people or in a position of authority are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice, and are trained and supported. Ensure all authorized personnel have a copy of the parish safeguarding children policy, and access to Diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored.
- Review the implementation of the safeguarding children policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually.
- If appropriate, in rural parishes or parishes held in plurality, consider joining together to implement the policy and procedures, while remembering that legal responsibility will continue to rest with the individual parishes.
- Local ecumenical projects should agree which denomination's safeguarding children policy to follow and this decision should be ratified by the bishop or other appropriate church leaders in the partnership.

Responsibilities of Parish Safeguarding Children Officers/Representatives

- To work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedures, following the guidelines and recommended good practice contained in the Diocesan policy for Safeguarding Children. This applies to all parish activities, both internal and external.
- To supervise the process of recruiting volunteers to work with children and young people in the Parish, by following the procedures in the Diocesan policy.
- Ensuring that any concerns about a child, or the behaviour of an adult, are appropriately reported when it comes to their attention.
- Ensuring that Health and Safety audits, with a particular emphasis on the safety of children, are carried out. This will usually be done in conjunction with the churchwardens.
- Helping communication on safeguarding children matters between the parish and the Diocese, in conjunction with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Adviser.
- Ensuring that training in safeguarding children for those involved in working with children and young people takes place.
- Ensuring there is a regular (at least annual) review of the parish safeguarding children policy and procedures, so that this does not become a neglected issue.

Safer Working Practice

The statutory basis for work with children is the following:

“A person who does not have parental responsibility for a particular child but who has care of the child may (subject to the provisions of this Act) do what is reasonable in all the circumstances of the case for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child’s welfare.” (Children Act 1989 Section 3 (5)).

All parishes working with children should adopt a code of safer working practice for church workers with children which covers the issues most likely to arise. This section of the Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidelines document addresses these issues. The Model Parish Policy (Appendix 2) includes the adoption of this section.

Children and young people are best protected from potential abuse when those working with them do not feel isolated, and are trained and supported. Those in the parish working with children should meet regularly, preferably with the incumbent and/or the safeguarding children representative to discuss concerns, receive support and to identify any training needs. Training is available in the Diocese and is advertised on the diocesan website. Additional parish training events can be arranged through the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. It is recommended that those with responsibility for working with children and young people should attend the training offered and that they should consider renewal of their training at five yearly intervals.

Workers with children and young people can reduce the potential for abuse, and best protect themselves, by following recommended safer working practices.

Guidelines for individual workers

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity;
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful;
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult;
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet;
- Toilet breaks should be organised for young children;
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around;
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand;
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around;
- Obtain parental consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed;
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group leader: sign and date the record;
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with your group leader and/or the safeguarding representative;

You should not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact should be initiated by the child;
- Invade a child's privacy while washing or toileting;
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games;
- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in "fun";
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one child or group;
- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature;
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or your own;
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children;
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people;
- Share sleeping accommodation with children;
- Invite a child to your home alone;
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions;
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;
- Allow strangers to give children lifts.

Additional guidance for group leaders

In addition to the above, the group leader should:

- Ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to;
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept;
- Keep the register and consent forms up to date;
- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present;
- Create space for children to talk;
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Children representative over good practice for safeguarding;
- Always inform the Safeguarding Children representative of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The representative will liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser; in the absence or unavailability of the parish representative or parish clergy the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or the Archdeacon should be contacted directly;
- Liaise with the P.C.C. when necessary.

Consent

Consent to children's activities must be obtained from a parent or carer. This should be in writing (see form at Appendix 4) and you should ensure this is renewed annually.

Personal Tasks

It may be sometimes necessary for workers to offer help of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have special needs. These tasks should only be undertaken after discussion with the parents/carers, and it is advised that parents are asked to sign a consent form for this. Workers undertaking such tasks should always inform another worker at the time they are carrying out the task. In an emergency situation, which requires such assistance, parents should always be fully informed as soon as possible as to any action taken.

Staffing Ratios

There should be a minimum of two adults for each group. Where it is possible, and particularly if the group are away from the church or other premises, it is recommended to have three adults. Those under the age of 18 should not be counted in the requirement to fulfil staffing ratios. With groups of mixed gender there should be both male and female workers where possible, and it is recommended that wherever possible one of the leaders should be female.

The staffing ratios below are minimum requirements, and in many circumstances more adults will be needed.

Age Group	Staff	Children
0-2 years	1 for every	3
2-3 years	1 for every	4
3-5 years	1 for every	8
5-8 years	1 for every	8
Over 8 years	1 for the first 8 children and then 1 for each additional 12.	

However, on no account should an adult be by themselves. Staffing ratios with all age groups should always take account of the need and nature of the group.

The following factors should always be considered in deciding how many adults are needed:

- Age and age range of the group
- Special Needs, e.g. health, disability, behavioural problems
- Provision for accompanying a child home or to hospital
- Layout of the building being used and proximity of adults to each other
- Activities requiring workers with specific skills or qualifications
- Activities requiring closer supervision
- Activities taking place outside the building

The Diocesan Children's and Youth Work Adviser may also be contacted for further information.

Uniformed organisations have their own staffing ratios and guidelines which must be observed.

Adults asked to help by using particular skills may be treated as a visitor for the specific occasion, but should always be supervised by an appointed worker. If they are to become a regular helper for the group they must go through the usual recruitment process. Similarly any adult who assists one or two occasions must be responsible to an appointed worker. Thereafter they should become part of the team and appointed through the normal recruitment process.

Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for those with disabilities. Discuss with the parent how best to meet the child's special needs and do not see this as the responsibility of the parent to fulfil. Consider recruiting another adult, if necessary, to assist that child. Continue to have discussions with the parent as the child's needs change.

Physical contact

Within the world of working with children there is a concern about touch. While it is necessary to keep children safe, this need not involve keeping the child at arm's length. Such an approach can be neglectful of children's needs and demoralising to workers. However, children need to be protected from inappropriate touching.

Suggested guidelines for physical contact:

- All volunteers must work with, or within sight of, another adult.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to challenge constructively a colleague if necessary. This issue should form a part of any review of children's activity.
- Concerns about possible abuse should always be reported in accordance with the Allegations Policy.

Restraint

In very extreme circumstances it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others. It may also be necessary to summon the help of police if the situation gets really out of hand. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded with the details of any witnesses noted. The information should be given to the Parish Safeguarding Children Representative. Further consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should take place if the behaviour continues.

Inappropriate Behaviour By Children Towards Adults

Children or young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult. They may have a 'crush', or may act inappropriately because of previous experiences. The behaviour may be a 'cry for help'.

If an adult feels uncomfortable about a child or young person's behaviour he or she must:

- Make it clear to the child or young person, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate.
- Tell another adult: a clergy colleague, the parish priest or parish Safeguarding Children Representative. Agree what measures should be taken to prevent a recurrence.
- Record the incident in case accusations are made in the future. Sign and date the record and ensure it is placed with other confidential records.

Unaccompanied Children

Sometimes children may attend worship or children's groups apparently without the knowledge of their parents. No hard and fast guidelines can be given, as each situation is different, but the following advice may assist:

- Establish whether the child attends with their parents' knowledge, or at least without their parents' objections.
- Establish their full name, address and contact details. Include them on the register. Provide information about the group for the child to take home.
- Seek to obtain parental consent to the child's involvement, preferably by direct contact with the parent rather than by using the child as an intermediary.
- Bear in mind the child may have some personal or family difficulty which they may not wish to disclose, which may require sensitive handling.
- Do not include the child on trips away from the usual place of meeting without explicit written parental consent.
- If the child stops attending after having attended frequently, it may be appropriate to undertake some level of outreach, but this should be done very carefully and only after discussion with group leaders and the clergy.

Safe Environment

Display both the Childline telephone number (0800 1111) in a prominent place where children and young people can see it and the Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) number for parents (0808 800 2222).

Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, First Aid kit and a Health and Safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:

Venue:

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Electric sockets should be covered.
- Toilets and handbasins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities should be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate obtained.
- Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary. It is recommended that at least one worker has a mobile phone with them.
- Adults should be aware of fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly.

- Unaccompanied children and young people should be discouraged from walking to and from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. The First Aid kit should be stored in a waterproof container and clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals (consider three monthly).
- All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and the parish should facilitate access to First Aid training. A list of First Aiders in the parish should be compiled and displayed. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book.

Use Of Transport

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity.
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own the child must sit in the back of the car.
- All those who drive children on church-organised activities must ensure that they have adequate insurance before offering to transport anyone. This would normally be comprehensive insurance, and insurance for business use in the case of paid workers. Their insurance certificate and driving licence should be checked by the person responsible for the group.
- All those who drive children on a church-organised basis should be over 25 and have held a full driving licence for two years. Drivers must be fit to drive i.e. not over-tired, not under the influence of alcohol, not taking illegal substances and not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.
- All cars that carry children should be roadworthy and children should wear suitable seat belts or age-appropriate seats. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the passenger number.
- Any driver who has an “unspent” conviction for any serious road traffic offence, such as drink driving, dangerous driving or racing on a public highway should not transport children for the church. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the group leader and the safeguarding children representative so a decision can be made about their suitability for transporting children.
- Drivers who are not children’s workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process, including a DBS check.

Use of a minibus or coach

Many groups rely on the use of a mini-bus for transporting children and young people. The guidelines below should be used in addition to the above guidance for transport.

- Drivers of a mini-bus must ensure that they are licensed to do so. The European Directive requires most drivers to take a test before they can drive a mini-bus with more than eight passengers, other than one used purely for social or voluntary purposes.
- Adequate insurance cover must be arranged for the driver, passengers and the vehicle.
- You must be satisfied that the vehicle documentation is up to date and the vehicle is safe to drive. The mini-bus must have forward facing seats and three point diagonal seat belts throughout.

- The leader should have a list of the names and addresses of those you are transporting both on their person and a copy left behind with another responsible person. These details should include the parental consent forms.
- The mini-bus needs to be appropriate for its user group e.g. with wheelchair adaptation if necessary. Any luggage should be secured and that driving times should be reasonable. Ensure there is a qualified co-driver if the journey is more than six hours in total. You should be accompanied by another adult in any event.
- The vehicle should be covered by breakdown cover and access to a mobile phone is essential.
- Workers and helpers should sit among the group and not all together. If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.

Outdoor Adventure Activity

If you are providing any outdoor adventure activities as part of a group activity, you should check that the centre or hostel being used has adequate insurance, qualified instructors and is currently licensed by the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority. This can be checked by visiting their website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>

Overnight stays

- A consent form must be completed. For overnight stays, special activities or hazardous activities it is essential that parents or carers complete the consent form and the details of the activity must be specified. No child should be allowed to participate in such activities if a consent form has not been completed and returned to the group leader.
- Parents must be given full details of the event, including:
 - Aims and objectives of the activity,
 - date and duration,
 - details of the venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision,
 - travel arrangements,
 - name of group leaders and contact numbers,
 - information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements.
- A full risk assessment must be completed and should be given to parents and carers.
- Ensure your group has adequate and appropriate insurance cover.
- Always have separate sleeping arrangements for leaders and young people.

Safeguarding Guidelines for home-based youth groups

Underlying Principles and values

The following are reproduced from the Church of England 'Equipping': training for youth work. They apply equally to work within a home-based or cell group structure.

When working with young people there are ethical principles and values which underpin the work. The following are based on those found in 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work' (N.Y.A. 2000) and 'Youth Work Values' (DES 2003). They reflect not only the Christian roots of youth work, but also the respect which Christians should have for others.

Ethical Principles

All those engaged as workers with young people, on behalf of the Church of England, should have a commitment to:

- Treat young people with respect, valuing each individual and avoiding negative discrimination;
- Recognise and respect individual young people's spirituality and faith development;
- Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or others are seriously threatened;
- Promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people, while permitting them to learn through undertaking challenging educational activities;
- Contribute to the promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally, towards encouraging respect for equality and diversity and challenging discrimination.

Good working practice

It is important that all home-based groups operating within the auspices of the Diocese of Sheffield are attached to, or have a supporting parent body, with a recognised governing structure and able to supervise the group leaders/convenors. It is recognised that the youth cell movement is a vibrant and growing area of the Church, and is one of the key fresh expressions of Church. It is important that this area of work is helped to flourish, and that initiatives such as these are also well-supported and able to protect those involved in these groups. Given that the members are both children in the eyes of the law, but approaching young adulthood with the increasing independence of this stage of development, a balance has to be maintained between protection and encouraging that development.

However, there are good safeguarding principles that have to be maintained, and the paramountcy principle, the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount, has to be upheld.

These Guidelines have been compiled in an attempt to assist those in this area of work to maintain the balance.

1. Home-based youth groups should have a clearly stated parent body, for example, a school or a parish, and the group should use that body's Safeguarding (child protection) policy.
2. Recruitment for group leadership should be done carefully, with particular attention given to a role description and person specification. Home-based youth groups should have an adult leader who is the responsible person for the keeping of records and ensuring that safeguarding guidelines are adhered to.

The issue of staffing ratios is probably the most contentious issue area in safeguarding young people in home-based youth groups. All current safeguarding advice says that two adults, properly recruited and checked, should be present for each group.

3. When the group is in planning the issue of insurance cover should be checked with the parent body's provider and additional cover provided if necessary.

4. Registers, contact details and parental consent for attendance and group activities should be kept as with any area of children's work.

5. The person responsible for safeguarding in the parent body, whether incumbent, churchwarden, safeguarding children representative/officer, or teacher responsible for safeguarding, should be informed about the group and be able to include it in their usual monitoring, including the report to the P.C.C. or Governing Body.

6. The provision of host premises is an area for careful consideration. Home-based youth groups on school or church premises are responsible to those bodies, and those bodies have a duty of care to the group. Cell groups also meet in host family homes. Where this is approved by the school/P.C.C./other governing body, written consent from the hosts should be obtained. Adults acting as hosts should be expected to complete the same recruitment process as any other group leader. In these circumstances, the parent host could act as the second adult for staffing ratio purposes, provided that an "open door" policy is adopted. The parent hosts should be given a copy of the relevant Safeguarding (child protection) Policy and expected to adhere to it. At least one parent host should remain on the premises during a meeting and if unable to do so must inform the adult leader so that a second authorised adult can be present.

7. Home-based youth groups are likely to organize activities outside the host premises. These may well be similar activities to those taking place in the members' other social networks, but it should be made clear to parents/carers of the nature, time and cost of the activity, including transport arrangements and with a contact telephone number for emergencies. Where group activities are outside the normal social activities, such as street cleanups, direct action etc. a risk assessment should be carried out by the adult leader/convenor of the activity and that risk assessment, along with the consent form, should be given to parents.

8. Careful attention should be given to the issue of transport provision, and particularly that of newly qualified drivers. It would be sensible to have a discussion with parents of group members on the issue of giving lifts, and for everyone to be clear about the risks, both in terms of accidents and of the potential grooming of group members. Where group members are under 16 the guidelines for transport in the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy should apply.

9. Supervision of group leaders is essential and should be offered regularly: this should involve, on at least an annual basis, a discussion with the safeguarding representative of the parent body.

Making and publishing images of children

The making and publishing of images of children is something which is enjoyed by children, parents and carers and those involved in children's work, and can bring positive publicity to church activities. However there are issues to be borne in mind when such activity is planned. The issues are the same, whether the images are still photographs, digital images or films, and regardless of the particular technologies involved.

Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998 and therefore the principles of that Act apply. For parish purposes, it is important that the consent of children and their parents/carers is obtained for the making and use of images of children.

Those taking photographs need to bear in mind that there may be good reason for withholding consent, such as:

- some children may have been involved in legal disputes, local authority proceedings or adoption and their whereabouts should not be too widely known
- if individual children are identified by name it would be possible for potential abusers to use them to target potential victims
- images made using digital cameras can be manipulated to produce indecent or abusive images.

Good Practice is therefore:

- Obtain consent from parents and children before making images. Consent need not be in writing if it is not proposed to publish the pictures in any way, but if they are to be displayed, used in publicity via newspapers including the Diocesan newsletter, or put on a web-site, then specific written consent should be obtained. A consent form with conditions is available at Appendix 5.
- If the event is a church event that is to be filmed, then an oral notice can be given out at the beginning of the service/activity asking any parent who does not agree to images being made of their child to remove them from the view of the camera, and to ask the group leader afterwards to ensure that any image inadvertently taken is not used.
- Where possible, each child should be part of a group
- If the image is to be published, avoid naming the child. If a name has to be used, use only first names.
- If a child is named in full, avoid using their image.
- Avoid images of scantily clad children, such as at swimming parties.
- Be clear if the image is to be retained for further use.
- Store the image securely, and destroy it if there is no further use for it.

Guidelines for the use of the Internet and other e-technologies

These Guidelines are designed to address the potential safeguarding issues resulting from the use of the Internet and other technologies in connection with church activities. There are potential risks if

- Your computer can be accessed by children
- You run your own web-site
- You use e-mail, chat rooms, social networking or text messaging to communicate with children

If the parish computer is accessible to children:

- Fit a locking device or use passwords to prevent unauthorised access to the internet.
- Use filtering software to govern which sites can be accessed.
- Encourage potential users and their parents to sign an agreement as to appropriate use.
- Ensure potential users complete an Internet consent form, including parental permission.
- Young people must be supervised when using the internet.
- Keep a log of use by children and young people.

If you run your own web-site:

- Follow the above guidance on images of children.
Ensure that the site is frequently and regularly monitored for content and inappropriate use.

If you use social media, e-mail, chat rooms or text messaging to contact children:

- e- mail: Ensure any communication is public, not private. Ensure that church leaders and parents know that you are communicating in this way and that the parents are happy with this. Send group e-mails rather than individual ones if possible. Save the e-mails you send and receive.
- Text-messaging: take great care when using this medium. Ensure you save text messages as text files, if possible, so that a record exists.
- Social networking sites and chat rooms: Keep everything public and accessible to all users. Check that the chat room is moderated and that there is appropriate access and password verification. If using social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) ensure that the page you are using is one used for professional, work purposes and not your personal page. Remind yourself of appropriate boundaries before you send your message. Ask yourself, how could this message be interpreted by the recipients and any onlookers? Be wary of slippage between how you would use this facility with friends and how you use it professionally. It is the responsibility of the adult worker to monitor themselves and other users in terms of appropriateness of language, content and style.

See also Diocesan Social Media Guidelines (Appendix 8)

Further information is available from Youth Org UK: <http://www.Youth.org.uk>, CEOP and the Internet Watch Foundation (see resources page).

Mixed- Age Activities

Care should be taken to ensure that children in mixed-age activities such as choirs, bell ringing and serving are appropriately supervised. It is no longer possible to request DBS checks for all adults in those groups unless they have specific responsibilities for children: as with other activities with children if an adult is undertaking regulated activity with children (see recruitment section) then a DBS check must be obtained through the Diocesan system.

In mixed-age groups, at least one person in addition to the person leading the activity must be recruited using the safer recruitment process, and be designated to supervise the welfare of the children involved. It is likely to be more convenient to have a team of such people taking responsibility to allow for holidays, illness etc.

Hire of premises

Many churches have buildings which they let to community groups and others. Some of these groups may undertake work with children. The observance of 'reasonable care' is a standard insurance condition. Those hiring out church premises are required to ensure that all children and adults who may be vulnerable are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring, and should ensure they carry full liability insurance for this. The owner of the building (normally the P.C.C.) has a duty to adopt best practice based upon current and developing guidance.

For both one-off and regular lettings a written agreement should be used. There is a model form at Appendix 7, which can be adapted to fit parish circumstances.

The hiring body should abide by their own safeguarding policy if they have one, otherwise by that of the church with whom they have the agreement. This should be made available to the hiring body. It is recommended that the policy be displayed in all church premises.

If the hiring body is required to register with OFSTED then the Safeguarding Children representative should ask to see the registration certificate and record that it has been seen.

Working With Those Who May Pose a Risk to Children

Research indicates that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally. It is probable that many congregations will have among their number people who have abused children, only some of whom will be known. This is a powerful reason for implementing safer working practices which apply to everyone.

Not all of those presenting a risk will have been sexual abusers: some will have committed physical or emotional abuse, or neglect. The church is a unique institution in that it has a duty to administer to all: this poses a particular responsibility with regard to offenders and ex-offenders. However, this duty must not compromise the safety of children: the protection of children is the paramount duty.

In addition to those with convictions for offences against children, there are other groups of people who may also pose a risk. These may for example, be those with convictions for violence or sexual offences against adults, adults who perpetrate domestic violence, those involved in drug or alcohol addiction, or those whose behaviour in a professional setting has caused them to be placed on the list barring them from working with children.

The following advice is designed to protect both the adult involved, and children in the parish. Evidence shows that when an offender is known, befriended and supported by a group of volunteers to lead a fulfilled life without children, the risk of reoffending is reduced (though never eradicated). The church has an important role to play in helping the individual in these circumstances.

- When it is known that a member of the congregation has sexually abused a child or young person the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser **must** be consulted, so that a safe course of action can be agreed in conjunction with any relevant statutory authorities. There are protocols in place with the statutory authorities to enable risk to be assessed and the parish advised as to how to manage the risk appropriately. Informing the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be done at the earliest indication of such a situation, including at the arrest of an individual: i.e. before conviction. It is expected that an agreement will be entered into with the offender. Parishes must not attempt to manage this process without appropriate professional advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- If the offender's victim is a member of the same congregation the offender should be introduced to another congregation. Consideration must also be given to those who have been abused in the past.
- The person should not be given any role or office in the church which gives them status or authority as a child or young person may deem that person to be trustworthy. This is also an underlying principle for any work that is done with the individual, and any assistance given. Nothing should be done or offered that would make another person be more likely to trust that individual. Hospitality should be offered carefully and with thought to the impression given to other people. Clergy in particular should be careful of the perception any assistance they offer so that the individual is not accorded trust. In particular no accommodation in clergy premises, whether owned by the diocese or parish, should be offered by clergy before seeking advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the relevant Archdeacon.
- A frank discussion will be held with the offender, explaining that a small group of the congregation will need to know the facts in order to create a safe environment for him or her. If possible the membership of the group should be agreed. Those needing to know are likely to

include the clergy, church wardens, safeguarding children representative/ children's work leader, and any befriending volunteers.

- It must be made clear that no one else will be informed without the offender's knowledge. The highest levels of confidentiality should be maintained.
- The group should offer pastoral care, support and friendship as well as supervision. They should endeavour to keep channels of communication open.
- Alongside the setting up of the small support group, if appropriate, consideration should be given as to whether the congregation should be told. This should be with the offender's agreement, and should only be undertaken after careful consideration of all the advantages and disadvantages of this course of action. Advice from the offender's supervising Probation or Police officer, if applicable, will be sought before any such disclosure takes place.
- It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries, both for the protection of children and young people and to reduce the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. An Agreement will be prepared with the offender which will include the following elements:
 - attend designated services only
 - sit apart from children
 - stay away from areas of the church where children meet
 - attend a house group where there are no children
 - decline hospitality where there are children
 - never be alone with children
 - never work, or be part of a mixed age group, with children

Further clauses will be added to reflect individual circumstances.

- The offender will be asked to sign the agreement.
- The agreement should be enforced, and no manipulation allowed.
- The agreement should be reviewed regularly and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser consulted, particularly if there is a need for a variation of the agreement.
- An agreement must remain in place for as long as the person is a member of the congregation, whether or not their name appears on the Sex Offenders Register.
- If the Agreement is broken, as a final resort the offender will be asked not to attend the church, and other statutory agencies involved will be informed. If the person cannot be prevented from attending the church because it is their parish church, the Diocesan Registrar will be consulted. A high level of supervision should be maintained.

In some cases offenders only reveal their offending history after many years. In such situations great sensitivity will be required. It must, however, be remembered that there may still be a substantial risk to children. The offender will be expected to comply with an appropriate agreement, as above.

Anyone who seeks a position in the church whose DBS check discloses that they are barred from working with children **must not** be allowed to undertake such work. In addition, this application will be reported to the police by the DSA (or other appropriate person) as it is an offence for this person to seek such work, or for an employer to knowingly offer the work. This applies to both voluntary and paid positions.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse has many forms. There are four categories of abuse defined in “Working Together to Safeguard Children”, from which the following definitions are taken. These definitions are not mutually exclusive. Following these statutory definitions, I have listed other types of abuse and harm which may occur in specific situations. Again, these are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those who know them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by another adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example in domestic abuse situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual

abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers), ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Other Types of Harm

Internet-related abuse

Please see separate section in Safer Working Practices.

Bullying

Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

It can take many forms: the main types are physical (hitting, kicking, theft from the victim), verbal (racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (isolating an individual from activities and/or social acceptance of their peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development, or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). Bullying can be committed by both children and adults.

All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

Domestic Violence

Domestic abuse, or violence, is the abuse of adults within a household. It need not involve physical assault to count as violence, and the adults concerned need not be married or of opposite sexes. If there are children in the household they are witnesses to the abuse and are considered to be emotionally abused at least, whether or not they are in the same room. They may also be directly affected by the abuse.

Racism/ Racial Abuse

Some communities in British society suffer systematic disadvantage in many areas of their lives. Racism can be defined in various ways: for the purposes of these procedures it can be defined in general terms as consisting of, "conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as

in its overt forms” (Macpherson Report 1999). The effects of racism differ for different communities and individuals and should not be assumed to be uniform.

Racial Harassment

This can be defined as a continual and ongoing series of incidents of varying degrees of severity ranging from insults, through assault to grievous injury, possibly fatal, which are perceived to be racially motivated by the victim and/or any other person. This may mean, for example, that an isolated parent cannot go out, or that a child cannot play in his/her garden. Racial harassment could therefore have an impact on a child’s emotional and social development. The stress it causes can become a contributory factor towards physical or mental ill-health of children or parents.

Parents who are Themselves Vulnerable Adults

It is not uncommon for the parents of children who are abused or neglected to be themselves vulnerable adults. Particularly common are problems of mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance abuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol), often in combination. Where someone with such a difficulty is known to be a parent with a child living with them, a referral to the local authority children’s social care may be required.

Complex or Organised Abuse

This is abuse which involves one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children and/or young people. The abusers may be acting in networks to abuse children or in isolation. They may use an institutional framework or position of trust or authority to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children and the Internet may be used as a recruitment tool.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside faith communities including the Church of England.

Within church communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries. Any of these could result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation with the appropriate statutory agencies. Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way.

Allegations of Possession by Evil Spirits

It is sometimes suggested that a child is possessed by evil spirits and that this may account for behavioural issues in the child or be considered to justify harsh treatment by the parents or carers. Parents may seek the assistance of clergy or other church members. Parish priests and others should consult the bishop and should note that most parish insurance policies do not cover deliverance ministry. This is an area of ministry where particular caution needs to be exercised and the House of

Bishops' guidelines on both healing and deliverance ministry should be followed. Cases should be referred to the Diocesan Adviser(s) when necessary in order to use their expertise to help as effectively as possible those who think they need this ministry. There is also statutory guidance on Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (May 2007 DCSF).

Female Genital Mutilation

This is a criminal offence and any suggestion that it is being sought or has been carried out should be referred to the local authority children's social care service or the police.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is the bringing of children into the country, sometimes without proper immigration arrangements, for a variety of illegal purposes which can include domestic service, illegal adoption, organ harvesting, benefit claims or prostitution. Such children may speak very little English. The police or local authority children's care services should be contacted immediately if a church member comes across such a child.

Sexual Exploitation and Involvement in Prostitution

Children can be exploited by being given rewards in return for sexual activities. The Internet and other media technology may be used in the abuse. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Regardless of the challenging behaviours they may display, exploited children should be viewed as victims of child sexual abuse, not as criminals.

Children and Young People who Sexually Harm Others

Children and young people who sexually harm others should be held responsible for their abusive behaviour, while being identified and responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others. Such children are likely to have considerable needs. Evidence suggests that they may have suffered considerable disruption in their own lives, been exposed to violence within the family, may have witnessed or been subject to physical or sexual abuse, have problems in their educational development, and may have committed other offences.

Specialist professional services are usually involved in working with such children and their advice, and that of the diocesan adviser, should be sought if a child who has offended in this way is involved in a church group.

Abuse Within a Church Context

Physical abuse may involve punishment, over-emphasis on physical activities that are beyond the scope of the child, failure to recognize special needs, failure to deal with bullying from whatever source.

Emotional abuse may involve being rude or ignoring a child, failing to recognise special needs, failing to recognize that a child is in need, the creation of situations where children can only fail, the instilling of guilt in a young child, name-calling, teasing, failing to deal with bullying, the deliberate abuse of a situation of power and control, etc.

Sexual abuse may involve unwanted and inappropriate touching, making suggestions and comments, inviting children to share sexual feelings/experiences, involving them in looking at pornography or accessing the internet inappropriately.

Neglect in a church context may be a failure to respond to a child in need, a failure to listen to a child or to take them seriously, a failure to provide a safe environment and age-appropriate and safe (as possible) activities for children.

Who Abuses Children?

Child abuse is not new: it has however been increasingly recognized, named and condemned during the course of the twentieth and into this century. Its manifestations vary in time and place, and currently we are witnessing a new manifestation in the use of the new electronically based technologies to abuse children. Child abuse occurs in all cultures, religions and classes. It affects girls and boys, babies and young people of all ages up to the age of eighteen, children with learning difficulties, with physical disabilities and children from any kind of family background.

Most child abuse is committed by those closest to the child: parents, brothers or sisters, step parent or other carer, members of the extended family, babysitter or family friend, or other trusted adult such as a neighbour. It is known to be perpetrated by children against other children: child perpetrators will have greater power than their victims, perhaps due to age, gender, physique or ability. Both men and women can abuse children.

Within a church setting, a worker may encounter child abuse or harm when a child discloses, fully or partially, or when the worker picks up clues that things are not right at home. Children may be suffering from neglect or physical abuse and the symptoms may be spotted by church workers.

There is, however, a category of offenders, the majority of whom are male, who will use access to children within the church setting to gain the confidence of children and ‘groom’ children for sexual abuse. It is very difficult even for professionals to be able to detect such individuals. The existence of rigorous safeguarding procedures offers some protection to children, because the deterrent factor is significant and if the procedures are followed there will be no opportunity to abuse. The procedures and safer working practice, if followed, also provide some protection for workers against any false allegations of abuse.

Sexual abuse of children does not simply just happen. It is a process that is planned, manipulated and repetitive. You cannot tell by looking at someone that they are an abuser and abusers come from all classes and groups within society. People in positions of trust and authority can be involved in abusing children: they may be youth workers, teachers, social workers, or church workers or leaders.

Vigilance is a key weapon in the battle against child abuse. Sadly, this means being vigilant within our own groups and activities. Workers with children need to be aware that some adults are unable to provide consistent care, that some may manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit children physically, emotionally, or sexually. The reasons why people sexually abuse children are usually very different from the reasons why children are neglected or physically abused but all potential situations where children can come to harm must be monitored.

Sexual abusers may involve or “groom” children by befriending them, by spending time with them and paying them a lot of attention, by giving them money or gifts. The children are usually told to

keep the gifts a secret and thus begins a process of encouraging secrecy. Such offenders often target vulnerable children and their families, who may be isolated or who have been victims of emotional deprivation, neglect or earlier abuse.

The abuser then grooms the child to accept increasing levels of physical contact, from apparently accidental touching to cuddles and kisses that a parent may feel is quite innocent. Physical contact becomes more sexual and the child is warned to keep the contact secret, either for reward or by the threat of something bad happening to them or their family. The process of ensuring secrecy through fear or encouraging the child to believe no-one will believe them, or through making them believe that they are responsible for the abuse, often results in the child not being able to disclose, or to disclose only partially and then to retract the disclosure. Most children do not disclose their abuse: it is likely that most never disclose, even when they are adult.

Such offenders may also groom the families of the children, and the members of any organisation which they are using to gain access to children. This is a difficult process to detect and often only recognised in hindsight.

Sexual abuse may also occur in ways that do not involve physical contact: such as taking photographs or videos, or by being shown illicit and pornographic material on the internet, or by deceiving children into relationships by pretending to be of a similar age and persuading them to behave sexually on camera.

Common signs and symptoms of child abuse

This summary gives a brief outline of some of the signs and symptoms which can be causes of concern. They should **NOT** be regarded as definitive and require professional investigation before any attribution of child abuse as the cause.

Physical Abuse

Bruises

In or around the mouth

Fingertip bruising on arms, chest or face indicating tight gripping or shaking

Bruises of different colours indicating injuries of different ages

Two simultaneous black eyes without bruising to the forehead

Bruising showing the marks of a belt or implement or a hand print

Bruising or tears around the earlobes

Bruising to the head or soft tissue areas of the body

Bites

Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped and can leave a clear impression of teeth

Burns and scalds

Burns with a clear outline are suspicious

Circular burns from cigarettes

Linear burns from hot metal rods or electric elements

Burns of a uniform depth over a large area

Friction burns from being pulled across a floor

Scalds producing a water line from immersion or pouring of hot liquid

Splash marks around the main burn area are caused by liquid being thrown

Old scars indicating previous burns

Fractures

Any fracture in a child under one year is suspicious

Any skull fracture in the first three years is suspicious

Female genital mutilation (circumcision)

This is illegal except for very rare health reasons

Neglect

Often difficult to identify, neglect leads to the physical and emotional harm of a child. The signs and symptoms include:

Failure of a parent to provide adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, medical care or supervision.

Failure of a child to grow within the normally expected pattern; they may show pallor, weight loss and signs of poor nutrition.

Failure of a parent to provide adequate love and affection in a stimulating environment, a child may look listless, apathetic or unresponsive with no apparent medical cause.

A child may be observed thriving when away from the home environment.

Children who are not allowed to participate in social activities and who are isolated.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can also be difficult to identify. It is the result of ill treatment in the form of coldness, hostility and rejection; constant denigration or seriously distorted emotional demands; extreme inconsistency of parenting. Some of the signs and symptoms are:

Low self-esteem

Apathy

Being fearful and withdrawn or displaying “frozen watchfulness”

Unduly aggressive behaviour

Excessive clinging or attention seeking behaviour

Constantly seeking to please

Over-readiness to relate to anyone, even strangers

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can be suspected based on physical signs, the child’s behaviour or following a direct statement by the child. It is often investigated because of a combination of these signs.

Physical signs:

Recurrent abdominal pain

Unexplained pregnancy

Difficulty walking and sitting

Faecal soiling or retention

Recurrent urinary tract infection

Behavioural signs:

Knowledge unusual for the age of the child

Sexually provocative relationships with adults

Sexualised play with other children

Hints of sexual activity through play, drawing or conversation
Requests for contraceptive advice
Lack of trust or marked fear of familiar adults
Sudden onset of soiling or wetting
Severe sleep disturbance
Change of eating habits
Social isolation and withdrawal
Role reversal in the home e.g. a daughter taking over the mothering role
Inappropriate displays of physical contact between adult and child
Learning difficulties, poor concentration
Inability to make friends
Using school as a haven, arriving early and reluctant to leave
Reluctance to take part in physical activity
Truancy, running away from home
Self harm, mutilation or suicide attempts
Dependence on drugs or alcohol
Anti-social behaviour including promiscuity and prostitution

What to do if you suspect abuse

If you are concerned that a child or young person has been abused or is at risk of being abused, then you must report it. Above all, what you must NOT do is NOTHING.

A worker may become concerned about abuse for a number of reasons:

- A child may tell you something which indicates they are being abused
- Someone else involved with the child may tell you that they are concerned, or that the child has told them something
- A child's behaviour may make you concerned that he/she is being abused
- You may feel uncomfortable about the way a worker is behaving with a child, or with a child's reaction to a worker
- A child may have an injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation.

NB. Distress in a child may be caused by many factors, one of which may be child abuse. It is therefore important to refer on so that the situation can be investigated by professionals.

If you have any cause for concern, you must refer this to your line manager / parish safeguarding representative / clergy. Use a **cause for concern form** (Appendix 6.1) to report your concerns.

If a child discloses to you:

- Listen, and keep on listening.
- Don't ask leading questions or press for information.
- Accept what you hear without passing judgement.
- Do not promise to keep secrets, and do tell the child what you are going to do.
- Write down what has been said as soon as possible and keep a copy. This may be needed in any subsequent investigation, and the original should be given to the investigator. See Appendix 6.2 for a model disclosure form.
- Refer to the incumbent and/or the parish Safeguarding Children Representative, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. In an urgent situation, refer immediately to the local authority Children's Social Care Services or the police.
- Do not contact the person against whom the allegation is made but wait for advice.
- Do not talk to others (except the above) about the allegation.

No individual person should attempt to deal with the problem alone. In the first instance the incumbent, or in the case of the incumbent's involvement the churchwarden, should be contacted. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should also be contacted. In their absence the Archdeacon responsible for Safeguarding can be contacted. Anyone has the right to contact Children's Social Care or the Police and if they feel such action is immediately necessary then they should do so, and inform the incumbent and the Safeguarding Adviser that they have done so.

Significant Harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of children. The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Sometimes a single event may constitute significant harm, but more often it is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. In every case it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and weaknesses.

Children in Need: Common Assessment Framework

All local authorities have a duty to consider the needs of those children who are referred to it by means of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Some children, for instance, by reason of a level of disability, will automatically be considered to be children in need. Others will be assessed using the CAF. To be assessed as a child in need does not imply there are issues of abuse: this is

often a useful assessment for the child because it can trigger the provision of additional help or services to the family.

Survivors of abuse

The church will be involved with survivors of abuse in many ways:

- Abused children may come to the church for help.
- Adult abuse survivors may turn to the church for help.
- Some clergy were sexually abused as children, and may need the support of colleagues and congregations.
- Children may be abused by Christian family members.
- Children may be abused by clergy or church workers.

Each parish should consider the fact that they almost certainly have survivors within their community and should think about ways of responding in a sympathetic and practical way. This means creating a loving environment within which healing can happen, and may require providing access to factual information and sources of professional help. For further information please see the section on survivors in the sister policy: Safe Church.

Disclosures of historical (past) abuse

In the course of their work, many ministers and those offering pastoral support in the Church, will find themselves hearing disclosures from adults concerning abuse that happened to them when they were children.

There is no single, correct procedure for dealing with a disclosure of historical abuse by an adult. The wishes of the person disclosing abuse will be very important. For some adults, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be a powerful healing event. The pastoral care of the person who has been abused should be a priority. A referral to the police will not always be necessary unless the individual wishes to report the offence; however, they should be encouraged and supported to do so. Adults do need to be made aware, however, that if the alleged abuser is still working with or caring for children a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be made by the person hearing the complaint or with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, who must in any case be informed. People who have committed sexual abuse against someone years ago could well be abusing children today.

Safer recruitment in work with children and young people

Interim Guidance

It is important that anyone who works for the church or church-based organisations, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, should be chosen with care. While there are no procedures which can give an absolute safeguard against appointing people who present a risk to children, the consistent application of procedures designed to vet for offenders against children has a significant deterrent effect. This is not sufficient of itself: continued monitoring and a culture of supervision and review are also important in ensuring our children are protected from harm.

There is a new national interim policy relating to Safer Recruitment which currently has an interim status because of the current review on Vetting and Barring, DBS Disclosures and planned changes to the system.

However, the procedures which follow are not interim: they are essential if we are to be confident that our recruitment of children and young peoples' workers, of all those who carry out "regulated activity" and of those who occupy positions of trust is as safe as possible.

Parish Process of Recruitment

Step one

Provide a job description and application form (see. Appendix 3 for forms relating to recruitment) for staff and volunteers wishing to work with children. The confidential declaration **must** be used. This step may be combined with Step three. The confidential declaration is important for two reasons: it affords the potential worker an opportunity to make a self-declaration of any matter which may appear on the DBS Disclosure, in accordance with good employment practice and the guidance from DBS, and it asks about other situations where someone may have been identified as having caused harm to a child which would not necessarily appear on the DBS Disclosure.

Step two

Take up the references provided by the applicant. One reference should be from the current employer or previous church, if possible, and at least one should be from someone who has known the person at least two years. Do not accept an open reference e.g. "To whom it may concern". All references should be specific to the individual and to the post, and signed by the person who is supplying the reference.

If the references or declaration give cause for concern, the incumbent or person responsible for running the group or activity should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

All references and declarations must be stored in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act and access to them restricted to those who need to be involved: for instance, the incumbent, the group leader and those who form the parish Safeguarding Children group.

Step three

Have an appropriate interview: at least one of those interviewing should be the leader of the group in which the applicant will be employed. Those taking on any role involving the caring for, supervision or training of children and young people must be appropriate individuals: the DBS Disclosure is only one aspect of determining whether someone is suitable to work with children and young people and the interview may assist that determination. It is also desirable that one member of the interviewing group should be a member of the parish Safeguarding group, or be the parish Safeguarding Children Representative/officer..

All interviewees should be provided with a copy of the Parish Safeguarding Children Policy and agree to abide by it.

Step four

The decision whether to employ anyone in work with children and young people (whether paid or a volunteer) must be conditional on a satisfactory DBS Disclosure and this should be made clear to the potential worker.

Obtain a DBS disclosure via the Diocesan system, now administered by Church House, Rotherham. Currently this is a paper based system but the diocese will be using an electronic-only system administered by an outside agency in the near future. The changes to the system will be circulated to all parishes and training for those doing the electronic applications will be given.

Step five

The decision to appoint should be made conditional on a probationary period, depending on the nature of the post (probably three months for volunteer posts) and confirmed in writing after satisfactory completion of that time.

Step Six

All workers with children and young people should be given the small white card guide called Safeguarding Children. Additional copies are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or from Church House.

Helpers aged under 18.

Young people aged under 18 are often a valuable source of assistance to children's work. However, they should not be asked to take formal responsibility for work with children. Helpers aged 16 and 17 should be interviewed and asked to complete a confidential declaration and sign an agreement to follow the Parish Safeguarding Children procedures. They should not be asked for a DBS disclosure. They should never be solely responsible for a group or creche and should always be supervised and supported by an adult. They cannot count towards fulfilling the required staffing ratios. Once they reach 18 they should be treated as adults and asked to apply for a DBS disclosure.

Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosures

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an executive agency of the Home Office. Its purpose is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions, and should be understood in this context. It is not an agency for deciding who is suitable to work with children, but as an aid to identifying those who are not. The DBS continues to operate, providing disclosures as before and employers still need to obtain one for potential employees and volunteers in relevant work with children and young people.

It is the policy of the Church of England, and of this Diocese, that:

 • all those who work regularly with children, including those who work on a rota, should have a DBS Disclosure

 • those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS Disclosure if they fulfil the legal requirements for DBS

 • those who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups will also be required to obtain a DBS Disclosure

 • those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding will be required to obtain a DBS Disclosure.

There can be confusion about who should be subject to DBS checks, arising from the complexity of church activities, from the need to translate activity from the statutory sector for whom most guidance is provided, and the church, from the changing thresholds suggested over time by different government departments, and the church's developing understanding of what is necessary and proportionate.

The next two sections provide an indicative list of those who should, those who may, and those who should not be subject to a DBS Disclosure, and a checklist for decision making in any individual situation. If there is still doubt about whether to carry out a DBS check then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be consulted.

The DBS has laid down guidelines as to how these checks should be obtained and the Diocese of Sheffield has to abide by these guidelines. The DBS process does not replace but enhances good personnel practices. Those making appointments should continue to ask for the confidential declaration to be completed, take up references, and adhere to safe working practices.

The Process

1. Identify those for whom a DBS disclosure is necessary. For clergy and readers, this is done directly by the Diocese. In parishes, use the list of posts which follows. The actual nature of the work must be taken into account and forms the basis for justifying the application, not solely the title of the work or post.
2. Obtain the DBS form from Church House Rotherham. This can be done by the clergy, or a member of the parish who has been nominated to undertake these enquiries, such as the Safeguarding Children Representative or a churchwarden, or a children's work leader.
3. The applicant completes the form (in Black ink).
4. The applicant takes the form with the identification specified in the information leaflet, to the validator. This will normally be the incumbent or other member of the clergy, or other person approved by the PCC.

5. The form is then sent to the counter-signer at Church House. The form can be sent by the applicant, or more usually the validator.
6. The DBS administrator will check the form for errors and if satisfactory will send to DBS.
7. The DBS returns one copy of the disclosure to the applicant.
8. It is essential that the parish recruiter sees the DBS disclosure, notes the name and number and informs Church House that the disclosure is clear. If the disclosure is not clear then the parish recruiter must obtain a photocopy, with the applicant's permission, and send it to Church House.
9. Where there is a blemished return, the assessors of the system will determine whether there is a safeguarding issue. If so, further enquiries will be made appropriate to the circumstances, resulting in a determination whether there is a potential risk to children. If a risk is identified, the applicant will not be able to proceed.
10. The outcome will be communicated confidentially to the appropriate responsible person(s).
11. There is an appeals process if the applicant is unhappy with the outcome and the applicant will be informed of this.
12. The diocese will keep a simple record of those who have been checked under this process and of the outcome. These records will be confidential and kept according to the requirements of the DBS.

Those roles which will usually require a DBS check

These roles must be assessed in advance of recruitment. Dioceses will need to stipulate a requirement for DBS, especially at the outset of selection or recruitment, or for ordination training, because the role will be highly likely to involve regulated activity both during training and following.

National, Diocesan, Cathedral, Parish task or role

Archbishop, Bishop, Dean, Archdeacon

Stipendiary Parish Clergy

SSM + NSM Clergy

Local Ordained Clergy

House for Duty Clergy

'Permission to Officiate' Clergy

Seeking ordination training or ordination

Safeguarding officers in a national, diocesan or parish context

Designated safeguarding leads on PCC (i.e. those who have a supervisory/ management role in relation to all safeguarding matters for and on behalf of the PCC)

Readers

Chaplains

Licensed evangelists

Pastoral Assistants

Churchwardens

Commissioned Lay Workers, including lay ministers, youth, children and family workers

Musical Director, Organist, Choir leader, where the choir or musical group is wholly or mainly for children and young people

Youth Club (u 18) Leaders & helpers
Sunday School (u18) Teachers & helpers
Leaders/Assistant Leaders Church Parent & Toddlers Group (not the parents who supervise only their own children)
PCC approved Home Visitors for schemes that are wholly or mainly for families with children or vulnerable adults where they meet the requirements for regulated activity.
All Tower Captains, Ringing Masters and Adults Ringers who train/teach children under 16*
Choir Directors, Music Directors and organists etc., where they teach, train or supervise children under 16*
PCC approved Drivers for PCC sponsored arrangements for children, young people or arrangements wholly or mainly for adults to access medical or social care services.

** where a group has only children aged 16–18, then checks are not mandatory but would still be advisable.*

Those roles which may require a DBS check

Careful evaluation of these roles will be needed.

Note: DBS regulations do not cover the sort of contact with children or vulnerable adults where there would be no more contact than a local shopkeeper.

Head Server (minimum two adults per group)
Sacristan/Verger
Church/Church Hall Cleaners/Caretaker
Church tour guides

These roles which do not usually qualify for a DBS check

(unless there are specified aspects of their role which mean this person will be responsible for children or vulnerable adults)

Musical Director, Organist, Choir leader, where the choir or musical group is for adults
Choir members (adults and those over 16)
Adult servers
Sidesmen and sideswomen
Those serving refreshments
People in the church welcome team for services
Flower arrangers
Family members or other vulnerable adults, assisting the leader in providing a regulated activity for people who experience the same situation as themselves

Individuals from outside the UK

For paid employees

To comply with the Government's immigration requirements anyone who comes from overseas and wishes to work in the United Kingdom must be sponsored by the employer in the UK in accordance with the UK Border Agency immigration points-based system. Employers must carry out the necessary immigration checks to verify that those they wish to employ have the right to work and

have no restrictions to work in the UK. Further information on preventing illegal working can be obtained from www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/.

For paid employees and volunteers

Safeguarding procedures, including the above recruitment process should be carried out for those from overseas, including those who have lived outside of the UK for a period of time, in the same way as for UK residents. This includes a DBS disclosure, if they have spent any time in the UK within the last five years. Additionally, a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy or police force should be obtained where this is available.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme

The Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly Independent Safeguarding Authority) is the public body charged with maintaining the list of those who are barred from working with vulnerable groups (both children and vulnerable adults). It is responsible for making decisions concerning barring of individuals when they receive referrals from employers and others. It is a criminal offence to knowingly permit anyone engaging in regulated activity (i.e. relevant work with children and/or vulnerable adults) and a criminal offence to seek or offer to engage in an activity if an individual is barred. The information as to whether an individual is barred will be supplied on the DBS Disclosure if the individual is undertaking regulated activity and the relevant box on the form has been ticked. It is therefore essential, in order to avoid the possibility of committing an offence, that a DBS Disclosure is sought for anyone undertaking regulated activity. Any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children frequently, intensively or overnight is regulated activity. The specified nature is defined as: teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation of children.

In relation to church activities please use the above list. If in doubt, do consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

When any changes to the system are implemented all parishes will be informed.

Dealing with Concerns

Managing Allegations against church officers and workers.

Allegations Policy

Key Principles

All staff and volunteers working with children in the Diocese must know who to contact to report concerns or allegations about anyone working with children and young people. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures should be followed as closely as possible.

No action should be taken that could undermine or jeopardise a subsequent statutory investigation. Examples of this are: checking an individual's story, visiting the parents of the child concerned. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) should be informed as soon as an allegation is made. Liaison with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will then take place and the relevant statutory bodies will investigate. The LADO is the person in each local authority area who has management and oversight of individual cases. That person is available to provide advice and guidance to employees and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible and with a thorough and fair process.

Reporting to the LADO does not transfer responsibility from the employer to take disciplinary action if appropriate. The LADO may convene one or more strategy meetings to plan the investigation; a suitable representative of the employer and the DSA should attend. All relevant information should be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know in the church and with the statutory agencies. Confidentiality should be maintained outside this group.

The emotional cost to someone of making a complaint can be very high. It is important that the church takes complaints very seriously. Complaints should be dealt with promptly and transparently. Careful records should be kept.

Dealing with Allegations of abuse of children made against clergy, staff or volunteers working with children

Any complaint or dispute should be dealt with at the lowest level necessary for resolution. When the allegation concerns behaviour that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, or the possible commission of a criminal offence against, or related to, a child, or that the individual has behaved in such a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children, the following process must be followed.

Allegations against clergy and lay ministers holding the Bishop's licence should be referred to the Bishop, either directly or indirectly through the Archdeacon or Warden of Readers as appropriate. The DSA will also be informed and the LADO consulted. Allegations against volunteer staff should be referred to the clergy responsible for the parish, who will then inform the DSA. The LADO will then be consulted. Where the allegation concerns a member of clergy the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 has specific provision and the Diocesan Registrar must be involved.

If the allegation concerns the possible commission of a criminal offence the police will be informed, either by the recipient of the allegation or the DSA or LADO if that is considered appropriate.

The DSA will discuss with the LADO whether any further details are needed and whether there is information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

Unless the police have requested a delay, as soon as preliminary enquiries and consultation indicate that a church officer or worker may have committed serious misconduct, the allegation should be put to him or her and he/she should normally be suspended while the complaint or allegation is investigated. At the time of the suspension the church officer or worker should be asked whether he or she undertakes any other work with children. Where there are other employers (paid or voluntary posts) the LADO must be informed and those employers will be told of the allegation. The church officer/worker will be told that this will happen. He or she should also be asked whether he or she lives in a household with children (who may need protective measures).

Employment Issues

Since 1st October 2004 employers have been required by law to comply with minimum dismissal and disciplinary procedures, which in most cases will involve a three stage process;

1. The employer notifies the employee in writing of the alleged disciplinary matter and invites the employee to attend a meeting. The employee must be told the basis of the complaint and given a reasonable time to respond, and no action (except suspension) may be taken until the meeting has been held.
2. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting, at which he or she is entitled to be accompanied. The employer must notify the employee of the decision taken and of the right to appeal.
3. If the employee notifies the employer that he or she wishes to appeal, a further meeting must be held, but any disciplinary action does not have to be postponed in the meantime. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal meeting and is, again, entitled to be accompanied. The employer must notify the employee of the decision made.

It is essential that these procedures are followed, as failure to do so could automatically render any dismissal unfair if a claim is brought in an employment tribunal. Legal advice should be sought as appropriate.

Volunteers

For the purposes of the allegation procedure it makes no difference whether the person is paid or a volunteer.

Insurance advice

Where clergy are concerned and in all cases concerning church officers where there may be liability issues, the employer or the relevant diocese should inform the claims manager of the insurance company as soon as any incident arises that may lead to a claim. Advice should be sought about the insurance position and any steps needed to be taken to safeguard it. The claims manager will also need to keep in touch with developments. Any person accused of abuse where they have the benefit of insurance should also inform their insurance company.

Pastoral Support

During the investigation the person making the allegation may need support. The person against whom the allegation has been made will also need support, by someone unconnected with the investigation and disciplinary process. It is important that those giving the support should not communicate with each other about the allegations to avoid the possibility of contaminating evidence.

In the case of an allegation against a priest, the archdeacon will be responsible for managing the impact of the investigation on the parish.

Media enquiries

The Diocesan Communications Adviser should be informed and should handle all contact with the media. Their advice will help to avoid compromising any future legal proceedings. Where the matters are likely to appear in a criminal court or tribunal the National Safeguarding Adviser should be informed.

Outcome

The outcome of the investigations may result in various actions. The investigation may conclude there is no case to answer. The person may be charged with a criminal offence and the Crown Prosecution Service asked to consider prosecution. The person may admit the allegation and accept a police caution. Further advice will be given to those involved in this process by the Archdeacon, Registrar or DSA.

If the investigations are inconclusive or if concerns remain, the incumbent, PCC or other body responsible for appointing the individual will need to consider carefully whether the suspension should be lifted, and, if so, on what conditions. The strategy meeting and the LADO may give advice in this situation. Professional advice (e.g. from the diocesan registrar or DSA or diocesan risk assessment panel) should always be sought

It is important that employers keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken, whether by the church or by statutory agencies, and decisions reached. This should be retained indefinitely.

Disclosures and Barring Service (formerly ISA)

A referral must be made to the **DBS** when the employer withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred, because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in **relevant conduct** or satisfied the **harm test** or has committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list. This is a statutory duty on all employers and a failure to refer in such circumstances is a criminal offence. Even when the duty has not been triggered, for example when the allegation is unsubstantiated, employers are empowered to refer an individual.

The referral should be made to DBS when the employer has gathered sufficient evidence as part of their investigations to support their reasons for withdrawing permission to engage in regulated activity, and following good practice, consulted with their LADO.

Relevant Conduct is conduct that falls into any of these categories:

- It endangers, or is likely to endanger, a child or vulnerable adult,
- It is conduct that, if repeated against a child or vulnerable adult, would endanger them or be likely to endanger them,
- It involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material).
- It involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images),
- It is inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child or vulnerable adult.

The Harm Test is satisfied if, in the view of the relevant person (e.g. the P.C.C.) the individual :

- May harm a child or vulnerable adult,
- May cause a child or vulnerable adult to be harmed,
- Puts a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm,
- Attempts to harm a child or vulnerable adult,
- Incites another to harm a child or vulnerable adult.

Advice for any person receiving an allegation or having a concern

DO:

Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind

Inform the responsible clergy, the Archdeacon and/or the DCPA immediately

Make a written record of the allegation or concern as soon as possible after receiving information or observing behaviour that causes concern, including the date, time persons involved and what was said/observed. Sign and date this and keep in a safe place until required by senior staff or the investigating authorities.

DO NOT:

Attempt to investigate or deal with the situation yourself

Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the alleged incident/s

Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality

Discuss the allegation or concern with anyone other than those to whom you have reported the allegation.

Disclosures of abuse from a child or young person.

Only a proportion of abused children talk about their experience while it is happening. It is therefore of vital importance that disclosures from children are:

- listened to carefully, avoiding the use of leading questions;
- taken seriously;
- acted upon;
- carefully recorded as soon as possible and kept in a secure place. (See Appendix 6.2 for a model form)

Confidentiality should not be promised as others will need to be involved if the abuse is to stop.

If a child or young person speaks about being harmed physically, emotionally or sexually by another person, whether an adult or another child, or if signs of abuse are observed you must:

- never speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made;
- never attempt to investigate the situation yourself;
- inform the person in the parish or diocese who is responsible for safeguarding children;
- make a referral to the social services department (children's services) seeking advice about who else should be told, for example, the parents; continue to support the child and seek support for yourself;
- keep a record of what actions you have taken and keep it in a secure place. (See Appendix 6.2)

If a child needs immediate medical help this should be the first consideration and the hospital staff informed of the child protection concerns. If it would be dangerous or the child is unwilling to return home the police should be contacted..

If you are not certain that abuse has occurred you must still discuss the concern with the appropriate person. It is always possible to discuss concerns with the DSA or social services children's services without disclosing the names of the people involved. If in doubt it is always better to make a referral to children's services rather than do nothing.

Any issue of possible child abuse concerning the church community must be reported to the DSA as soon as it becomes known.

A child may make allegations about an adult who is not part of the church community, for example a member of the family, a teacher, a scout leader. These matters must be referred to the LADO or police following the procedures above. The DSA should be informed so that advice and support can be offered.

Referral Flow Chart

Concerns about a child

