

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults from Harm



The key message of these Guidelines is that if a safeguarding concern arises within the Diocese then it should be discussed at once with one of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers who are:

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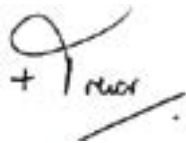
A Message from the Bishop of Dover (Bishop in Canterbury)

The protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse, be it physical, sexual or emotional abuse, continues to be never far from the headlines these days. So we cannot afford as a Church to be complacent nor to lower our guard; all God's children are far too precious for that. The House of Bishops has issued a recommended joint policy document on the subject of safeguarding and now as a Diocese we are issuing these new joint guidelines, which contain useful information about the combined subject of child protection and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and the procedures to be followed in this Diocese. May I take this opportunity to recommend them to you strongly as well as warn that although they are comprehensive, they cannot cover every eventuality.

Mrs Elaine Rose (01233 720930) is my Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. She can also be contacted via Diocesan House, Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury CT1 1NQ and will be happy to assist with any enquiries.

Perhaps I may emphasise two points – firstly, if you ever receive a report of abuse from a child or adult, your first action must be to telephone Elaine who will give you proper advice. Secondly, all those who hold licence in my name are required to undertake appropriate safeguarding training.

With all good wishes and every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rose', with a horizontal line underneath.

Gracious and loving God,

we ask you for your blessing as we seek, in our time together,

to discern your will and purpose for your church in safeguarding.

May we know your grace and love in all things

and may we be renewed in a commitment to safeguard all your children.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

1. Introduction

1.1

The purpose of these Guidelines is to help those in parishes and others in the Diocese to promote the safety of children and vulnerable adults within the church community by setting out safeguarding policies and procedures.

1.2

These Guidelines are complemented by practice guidance and other material available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website www.canterburydiocese.org/safeguarding. Any future changes or updates to the Guidelines will be placed on the website.

1.3

The Guidelines are based on: the House of Bishops (HOB) child protection policy for the Church of England “Protecting all God’s Children” 2010 (referred to as “HOB Safeguarding Children Policy” throughout this document); the vulnerable adult safeguarding policy document for the Church of England “Promoting a Safe Church” 2006 (referred to as HOB Safeguarding Adults Policy); and other national church policy documents issued since then. Key national church policy documents are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

1.4

These Guidelines replace our individual Diocesan Guidelines for children and vulnerable adults. They cannot provide for every eventuality. They are no substitute for common sense, consultation, training, sensitivity and all the other things that contribute to sound safeguarding practice. The Guidelines are designed to create a policy and procedural framework to encourage good practice.

1.5

The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy states: *“Clear robust procedures are essential to safeguarding. However, it is important to remember that above all it is people who protect, not procedures. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance by the Church.”* This applies equally to the protection of vulnerable adults and children.

1.6

The key message of these Guidelines is that if an issue of safeguarding concern arises within the Diocese then it must be discussed at once with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. They are always very ready to help:

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- Lesley Weaver Tel: 07971 626567. E-mail: lweaver@diocant.org

1.7

Canterbury Cathedral has its own safeguarding guidelines, broadly similar to those of the Diocese but reflecting aspects of its differing responsibilities such as the choir school and its many visitors.

2. Church of England's Safeguarding Principles

2.1

The Church of England is the largest voluntary organisation in the country working with children and adults. It opens its doors to everyone. Therefore people of all ages with a vast range of life experiences, including those with personal difficulties, come into its buildings every day. This is as it should be. The majority of people want to share their beliefs and positive life experiences to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are given the chance and opportunity to enjoy the Christian experience and benefit from the fellowship of others. Many people, particularly those who have not had the best start in life, may experience for the first time a sense of belonging and love by being part of a church activity or church community.

2.2

However, among those who come to churches and church activities are people who may possibly abuse children, or occasionally vulnerable adults. The abuser may be a man, a woman or even an older child. It is imperative that the church is a safe place for all. The House of Bishops has therefore issued their Safeguarding Policy which sets out the principles which underpin all the Church's work with children and vulnerable adults.

2.3

The following sections from the HOB Safeguarding Children Policy set out the key principles of the Church of England's approach to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults:

Principles of the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

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.*

(HOB Safeguarding Children Policy p.vii)

Our Theological Approach

Every human being 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 fulfilled by God's recreation 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.

The Church is intended to be a place where men, women and children, including those who are hurt and damaged, may find healing and wholeness. It is our calling to be agents of healing and recovery in such a way that enables all who have suffered from abuse to lead lives with dignity in a context that is as safe as possible.

As individual Christians and as part of the Church, our vocation is to reflect the character of God. We are called to welcome and care for the oppressed, the marginalized, and the victims of injustice. Safeguarding good practice concerns the development of safer expressions of care to all and underpins the love and welcome of God.

The Church must hold in tension concerns for both justice and compassion. Nevertheless, those who have suffered child abuse have sometimes found an unsympathetic hearing. They may be disbelieved, discouraged and damaged further. Some people may side with the alleged perpetrator. This occurs in all parts of society, but it is particularly hurtful when it occurs within the Church.

Because redemption and the possibility of forgiveness are so central to the gospel, the Church is not only well equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders but it is also challenged by the issues their presence raises for us.

Our congregations can be a refuge for those who have perpetrated abuse but are seeking help in maintaining a non-abusive way of life. We have also to be aware that some who abuse may see church membership as an opportunity to be close to children or vulnerable adults in order to continue their abusive patterns of behaviour. Experience shows that whether penitent or not, those who abuse need support in taking responsibility for their own actions and in stopping their abusive behaviour: in addition, of course, the vulnerable need protection from them.

(HOB Safeguarding Children Policy ps 1-3)

3. Definitions of Children and Vulnerable Adults

3.1

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being any person under the age of 18.

3.2

The HOB Safeguarding Adults Policy defines a vulnerable adult as:

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

Some factors which increase vulnerability include:

- a sensory or physical disability or impairment
- a learning disability
- a physical illness
- a mental illness, chronic or acute
- dementia
- an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties of old age
- being an unpaid carer
- those who are homeless
- immigrant families or individuals including those seeking asylum
- victims of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma.

3.3

Sometimes a person can have more than one vulnerability that can be missed; for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia or a frail housebound elderly person with underlying depression.

4. The Responsibilities of the Diocese

4.1 Diocesan Policy

The Diocese fully endorses the HOB Safeguarding Children and Adult Policies. In addition the Diocese has adopted the other key national church safeguarding policy documents which are:

- Responding to Domestic Abuse 2006
- Safeguarding Guidelines relating to Safer Recruitment 2010 and 2013 (interim versions)
- Responding Well to those who have been Sexually Abused 2011
- Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations 2014

All are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. The Diocese is responsible for implementing these policies and supporting parishes in their implementation.

4.2 Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

The key means of providing support to parishes is through the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers who are available to assist parishes with any safeguarding queries or concerns regarding both children and vulnerable adults, to raise awareness of safeguarding issues and to promote the training of all those working in this area.

4.3 Safeguarding Management Group

In compliance with the HOB recommendations the Diocese has a Safeguarding Management Group for children and vulnerable adults which has representation from parishes. This Group is responsible for developing policy, procedures and practice guidance to assist parishes and for monitoring the implementation of these. Details of the membership and terms of reference can be found on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

4.4 Risk Assessment Group

The Diocese has a Risk Assessment Group that evaluates and manages any risk posed by individuals or activities, including those with blemished DBS Disclosures. The Group is independently chaired, has a child care legal adviser as well as a representative from the parish clergy and reports to the Bishop. Its membership and terms of reference are on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

4.5 Disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Diocese provides access to the DBS so that parishes and other Diocesan organisations can obtain Disclosures for people applying to work with children and vulnerable adults. Some information about this is given in [Section 10](#); further information can be found on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

4.6 Complaints Procedure

The Diocese has a complaints procedure for those wishing to complain about the handling of safeguarding issues. If things cannot be resolved locally complaints (or compliments) can be made to the Bishop or Diocesan Secretary.

4.7 Training

The Diocese has a responsibility to provide safeguarding training to parishes, clergy, Readers, Authorised Lay Ministers and Diocesan organisations and individuals involved with children and vulnerable adults. The HOB Policy puts particular stress on safeguarding training for all licensed clergy which the Bishop **insists** upon. A group of trainers has been set up to deliver basic safeguarding training to parishes regarding children and vulnerable adults. To book this training contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator or the Safeguarding Office at Diocesan House. Alternatively, training can be booked online on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

4.8 Other HOB Key Policy Recommendations Accepted by the Diocese

- Ensuring that the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers are informed of any safeguarding concerns including any allegations against the clergy.
- Including the monitoring of safeguarding in parishes as part of the Archdeacons' responsibilities.
- Ensuring that individual clergy files include any allegations of safeguarding concern against a child or vulnerable adult.
- Ensuring that the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers have full access to clergy files and other confidential material.
- Ensuring that relevant safeguarding information is shared with other Dioceses, denominations or church groups as appropriate.

4.9 Church Schools

Church schools in the Diocese are not covered by these guidelines. Safeguarding responsibilities come under Kent County Council and, in the case of independently run schools, by the Kent Safeguarding Children Board through the Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding (LADO).

5. The Responsibilities of the Parish

5.1 HOB Policy

The HOB safeguarding policies set out a number of clear and distinct responsibilities of the parish relating to safeguarding. These are summarised below.

5.2 Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Bishop **insists** that every parish in the Diocese certifies, adopts, displays and implements a parish safeguarding policy statement, as set out in the proforma document at [Annexe A](#) and downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. This should be adopted annually as an agenda item at the first meeting of the new PCC and then displayed prominently in each church. This ensures a PCC discussion of safeguarding at least once a year. This should be an opportunity for an informed debate and not a tick-box exercise. See paragraph [5.10](#) for the PCC insurance implications should a parish not comply with basic safeguarding guidance.

5.3 Parish Safeguarding Coordinators

The Bishop **insists** that every parish in the Diocese appoints a Parish Safeguarding Coordinator to be the key link between the Diocese and the parish on safeguarding matters. She/he will have an overview of all parish safeguarding issues and will monitor the implementation of Diocesan guidance. There can be separate Coordinators for children and adults or one person can carry the combined responsibilities.

5.4

The Safeguarding Team at Diocesan House should be advised of any change of Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. A job description can be found at [Annexe B](#) which is downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

5.5

The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator will help the parish to coordinate the response to any safeguarding issue and must inform the incumbent and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser of any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

5.6

It may be appropriate for the Coordinator to be someone without other pastoral responsibility for children/adults in the parish although this is not essential. The coordinator can be a member of the PCC but if not they should have a right to attend PCC meetings as appropriate – certainly at least once a year. What is of primary importance is that the parish appoints a Coordinator and that this person is someone capable of carrying out the responsibilities listed in the job description at [Annexe B](#).

5.7

Small rural parishes or parishes held in plurality may consider joining together to implement the policies and procedures under one Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. However, legal responsibility for safeguarding will still rest with the PCC of the individual parish.

5.8 Parish Disclosure Officers

Parishes should appoint a Parish Disclosure Officer (PDO) to liaise between the parish and the Diocese on the administrative aspects of DBS Disclosures. The PDO is responsible for ensuring that those working with children/adults who require a Disclosure are checked and that checks are updated every 5 years. PDO's have a very different role to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator but the same person may hold both positions. The Safeguarding Team at Diocesan House should be advised of any change of PDO. A job description for the PDO is available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

5.9 Childline and Family Lives

The Bishop **insists** that every parish displays in church premises the Childline telephone number for children (0800 1111) and the Family Lives number for support for parents and other carers (0808 800 2222). The Parish Safeguarding Policy document in [Annexe A](#) contains these numbers so is sufficient, if displayed, to meet this requirement as far as the church building itself is concerned.

5.10 Insurance

The HOB safeguarding policy documents require parishes to have appropriate insurance cover. Insurers require the parish to adopt best practice regarding safeguarding, based on available guidance. Therefore a parish runs the risk of invalidating its insurance cover relating to safeguarding issues if it fails to follow basic guidance provided by the HOB safeguarding policies and the Diocesan Guidelines. The parish insurers should be notified of any serious safeguarding allegations/actions involving paid or voluntary parish workers. Similarly consideration should be given in such circumstances, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, as to whether the Charity Commission should be informed.

5.11 Safe Recruitment

Great emphasis in the HOB Safeguarding Guidelines for Safer Recruitment policy is placed on parishes adopting a robust safe recruitment policy for both paid and voluntary staff. This is discussed further in [Section 11](#).

5.12 Cultural Awareness

In any work relating to child and adult protection it is important to recognise, be attentive to and respect a person's religious and ethnic identity.

5.13 Hire of Church Premises

Responsibility for implementing safeguarding policies and practices is down to the hirer of church premises. However the church, usually the PCC, has a responsibility of observing 'reasonable care' to ensure that basic safeguarding policies and practices are being followed and that their building meets health and safety standards. It is strongly advised that a written agreement is drawn up with the hirer. Detailed guidelines and a template for a hire agreement are downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

5.14 Music Lessons in Church

Music lessons with young people will normally be arranged through a school or as a private arrangement between parent and teacher. However, if the church organ is going to be used the PCC retains a general responsibility for health and safety in activities carried out on its premises and needs insurance cover. The organist should, in these circumstances, complete a Confidential Declaration and have a DBS Disclosure if this has not already been done. No music lessons with a young person should take place in a church without the parent or another responsible adult present. A brief agreement should be drawn up to this effect for both to sign. Copies of the Model of Safer Working Practice should be given to the organist and parent; this is downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

5.15 Key Tasks for the PCC

A checklist of key safeguarding tasks for the PCC is set out at [Annexe C](#).

6. Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Children

6.1

The abuse of children can take many forms. Children and young people with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection.

6.2

Crucial to any assessment is knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious patterns. Whilst differences must be taken into account, all children have a right to protection. Differences in child rearing do not justify child abuse; no racial group advocates the abuse of children.

6.3 Statutory Definitions

The central government document “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (Department for Education, 2013) categorises and defines abuse in terms of:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect

Full definitions of these categories are on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

6.4 Spiritual Abuse

The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy (para 3.35) comments: *“Within faith communities harm can also be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can also include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries”*. The enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié found that she had been severely traumatised by “deliverance prayer” at her church which led her to believe that she was possessed by demons and was evil and wicked. A child should never be told this or encouraged to believe it. Sensitivity and discretion is required in prayer for children. These issues are equally applicable to vulnerable adults.

6.5 Sexual Exploitation

Recent court cases have highlighted the serious problem in some cities of vulnerable adolescents, particularly children in care, being targeted by criminal gangs for sexual exploitation. Guidelines and advice on recognising the plight of such children are on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website listed under Human Trafficking and Exploitation.

6.6 Abuse by Children and Young People

Abuse by children and young people is more common than is generally realised. Whilst it is not unusual for children and young people to be curious about the opposite sex and for them to experiment sexually, where a child or young person is in a position of power and responsibility over another and abuses that trust through some sexual activity, then this is abuse. Where one child forces themselves on another child of any age, this also is abusive. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved and would be investigated in the same way by the child protection agencies. This is important as the

effect on the child victim may be as great, and the perpetrator could himself/herself be a victim of abuse and in need of help. Approximately 30% of the sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by children and young people under the age of 18.

6.7 e-Safety and Abuse

With the ever-growing use of the internet, mobile telephones and social media there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages in social networking sites and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings. Diocesan safeguarding guidelines in the context of electronic communication in a church setting are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

6.8

The downloading, keeping or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences. Such offences are sometimes referred to as non-contact sexual offences. However, it must be remembered that children will have been abused in the making of the images. The texting of sexual messages and photographs (sometimes referred to as 'sexting') can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

6.9 Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Possible signs and symptoms of child abuse are listed in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

Vulnerable Adults

6.10

All vulnerable adults should be treated with respect and dignity. Their privacy should be respected. They should be allowed to lead as independent a life as possible. They are entitled to the full protection of the law as much as anyone else.

6.11

All adults, including vulnerable adults, have a fundamental human right to choose how and with whom they live, even if to outsiders this appears to involve a degree of risk. The only occasion when that right should be superseded is in situations where other people are put at risk or where the adult is mentally incapacitated and decisions need to be taken on the basis of their best interests.

6.12 Who Abuses Vulnerable Adults?

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

- relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer.
- neighbours
- workers in places of worship
- people who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service
- confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes

6.13 Relatives who are Main Carers

Carers can experience considerable stress, exhaustion and frustration without respite or support. This can lead to unintended poor care or abuse. Relatives who are the main carers may also be subject to abuse by those they are caring for. Such abuse is often endured for long periods and unreported.

6.14 Institutions

All living in institutions have, by definition, a degree of vulnerability. The national Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for inspecting and regulating hospitals, nursing homes and other care homes. In the CQC 2014 annual report they highlighted concerns about the quality of care in some residential care homes and nursing homes; they received on average 100 complaints a day in 2013 to 2014 in England and Wales regarding such units. Some in parishes are visiting adults in institutions – hospitals, prisons and residential homes. If as part of their church responsibilities they have concerns about the care being given and/or the way that someone is being treated the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be contacted.

6.15 Definitions of Adult Abuse

Six categories of adult abuse are identified in the government publication “No Secrets” which provides guidelines on protecting vulnerable adults (Dept. of Health 2000). They are:

- *Physical abuse* including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- *Sexual abuse* including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting
- *Psychological abuse* including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- *Financial or material abuse* including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- *Neglect or acts of omission* including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- *Discriminatory abuse* including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

To these should be added:

- *Survivors* of abuse perpetrated in childhood or adulthood who may need specific pastoral care
- *Domestic abuse* that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors. Research evidence and practice experience is increasingly highlighting the profound emotional harm and sometimes physical harm caused to children witnessing domestic abuse. Detailed guidelines are available in the Church House publication: “Responding to Domestic Abuse,”

2006. This can be accessed via the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

6.16 Human Trafficking

The number of people trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, 'sweat-shop labour', or other exploitation has risen sharply in the UK. Violence, intimidation and restriction of liberty often go hand in hand. Detailed guidelines on the recognition of human trafficking are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

6.17 Deliverance Ministry Best Practice

Clergy may well encounter situations or individuals where evil or oppression is thought to be at work. The Church has much to offer through Christ's healing ministry including pastoral care and counselling. The Diocese has a team of deliverance ministry advisors who are available to provide advice to parishes and minister to those concerned. Particular caution must be exercised where children or vulnerable adults are in the household. If an enquiry about deliverance ministry involves a child or vulnerable adult then the Bishop's Adviser on the Deliverance Ministry and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be consulted. Further information on the deliverance ministry team, what they can offer and the referral process is available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website, together with a flow chart for deliverance ministry referrals.

7. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns Regarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Action to be Taken

7.1

If there are safeguarding concerns about a child or vulnerable adult the key message is to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser immediately.

7.2

In rare cases where immediate safety may be in jeopardy the police or Social Services should be contacted immediately.

7.3

If a child or adult needs urgent medical attention the appropriate emergency services should be called or the person taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. The hospital staff should be told of any suspicions and the parish priest and/or Parish Safeguarding Coordinator informed. They **must** then inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

7.4

If the person is not in immediate danger then concerns **must** be discussed immediately with either the parish priest or Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be contacted too. If there is uncertainty over whether abuse has occurred the same procedures apply. Concerns can always be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser without initially disclosing the names of the people involved.

7.5

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will discuss how best to deal with the matter, in particular whether a referral should be made to Social Services and who should do that.

This would normally be done by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. In child safeguarding cases advice from Social Services will also be sought on the issue of the involvement of the parents. During the investigation careful consideration will need to be given to support for the victim of abuse and in some cases their family too. It may also be appropriate to consider support for the person referring the matter and for the alleged perpetrator.

7.6

Adults will sometimes disclose historic abuse that occurred when they themselves were children. This is discussed in [Section 8](#).

7.7

It can be problematic when someone in the congregation is under investigation for a sexual offence but not convicted. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should always be consulted in such circumstances. They are then responsible for initiating a strategy discussion with the Incumbent and Parish Safeguarding Coordinator to decide how best to manage the person concerned pending a final determination of their case. This discussion can be on the telephone but more likely at a face-to-face meeting.

7.8

[Annexe D](#) shows a flow chart on how to act if there is a safeguarding issue in your church both in emergency and non-emergency situations.

Particular Issues Concerning Children

7.9

Contact with Children's Social Services would normally be made by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – although this can be done by the parish. Where there are serious safeguarding concerns under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 Children's Social Services have a duty to investigate where they have *“reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.”*

7.10

Immediately following a Section 47 referral, Children's Social Services will hold a strategy discussion to decide on how the matter will be dealt with and the person making the referral will be included. The strategy discussion can be by telephone or a face-to-face meeting. If Children's Social Services decide to pursue the investigation the child may be interviewed by a social worker and specially trained police officer in plain clothes.

7.11

If serious concerns are maintained following investigation a Child Protection Conference will be called and the child may be made the subject of a Child Protection Plan. It is important to stress that the majority of children subject to child protection investigation and child protection plans remain at home.

7.12

If there are lesser concerns a written referral can be made to Children's Social Services as a possible “child in need.” The Local Authority then has a duty to assess that child/family for support services.

7.13

If there are doubts about whether or not to make the referral and under what route, a consultation can be sought with Children's Social Services. Consultations and referrals would normally be initiated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Hearing a Child's Disclosure/Allegation

7.14

When a child discloses or alleges abuse it is important to “actively listen” to what the child is saying but not to start asking questions since this might put ideas into the young person's mind that were not there before and might prejudice a formal investigation should that be necessary. Never attempt to undertake an investigation yourself or speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made.

7.15

It is important to tell the child that you will need to pass on the information to someone else. Never promise confidentiality. Let the child know what you are going to do next, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and tell them that they were not to blame for what happened and that what they are saying will be taken seriously.

7.16

It is critical to make a written note of the conversation including:

- what the child said, if possible including their exact words over critical points
- where the interview took place
- your responses to the child
- circumstances leading to the disclosure
- the physical and emotional appearance of the child, e.g. the child crying
- the length of interview
- the date and time of the conversation and your signature

The written record should, if possible, be made within an hour of the discussion and kept in a secure place. The above list is equally applicable when interviewing a vulnerable adult.

7.17

The dos and don'ts of responding to disclosures/allegations for children and vulnerable adults are summarised in [Annexe E](#).

Particular Issues Concerning Vulnerable Adults

7.18 Reporting Concerns about Vulnerable Adults

Referrals of suspected abuse can be made to Adult Social Services, the police and other statutory bodies in the following circumstances:

- For a person over 18 with their consent.
- If the person is a vulnerable adult with the capacity to make the decision, the information belongs to them unless there is a public interest concern (see below).
- The person does not have capacity to make the decision (see below).

7.19 Public Interest Concern

There are some circumstances in which sharing confidential information without consent will normally be justified in the public interest. These are:

- When there is evidence or reasonable cause to believe that a child or adult is

suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.

- To prevent significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult, including through the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

(From “Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers, HMSO 2010, Section 3).

7.20 Consent and Capacity

Consent: For a vulnerable adult to give consent they should be able to understand and retain relevant information that is being given to them, believe it to be true and, weighing it in the balance, be able to make a choice.

Capacity: The starting point should be based on the presumption of mental capacity and on the consequent right of an adult to make their own choice in relation to their own personal safety.

Specific advice on consent and capacity is provided by Kent County Council Adult Social Services.

7.21 Good Practice in Sharing Information about Vulnerable Adults

Never make these decisions on your own. Safeguarding concerns should always be discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. This can be done, at least initially, without identifying the individual concerned both within the church and with the statutory services. Except in emergencies, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser would be the person who would normally liaise with the statutory agencies.

7.22 Responding to an Adult Experiencing Domestic Abuse

When supporting a person (women are more likely to face issues of domestic violence *but not* uniquely) consider the following:

- Do believe what he/she is telling you.
- Do reassure them.
- Don't minimise the danger.
- Give him/her contact details of local Refuges and where they can obtain legal advice/representation.
- Do support and respect their choices – even if they choose to return to their abuser.
- Help them with a safety plan, such as setting aside some money, collecting important papers or copies of papers (passports etc.) and having a change of clothes packed. Plan how they can exit the house safely.
- Protect confidentiality.

Where there are children in the household consideration will need to be given as to their protection. Under such circumstances total confidentiality cannot be promised as the family may need to be referred to Children's Social Services. The advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be sought on any domestic abuse case whether or not it involves children. Further guidelines on responding to domestic abuse are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

Other Issues

7.23 Record Keeping and Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 contains principles governing the use of personal data. Records, including parish records, in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should not be destroyed without reference to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Such records should be kept securely in a secure locked filing cabinet by the incumbent. If the incumbent leaves the parish then the records should be passed to the member of the clergy responsible for the parish; in the case of an interregnum this should be the Archdeacon who should return the records to the next incumbent once appointed. Safeguarding records should not be destroyed without prior consultation with the Safeguarding Adviser.

7.24

The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy reminds us that there is nothing in data protection legislation which limits appropriate disclosure in order to protect a child or adult who might be at risk. What matters is that our information sharing should be reasonable and proportionate. Safeguarding issues will always take precedence over data protection.

7.25 Allegations or Concerns Against Church Officers

Where there are concerns that a member of the church (ordained, lay, paid or volunteer) is thought to have harmed a child or vulnerable adult and/or has behaved in a way that raises questions as to their suitability in working with children or adults a referral must be made to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who would then have to consider contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7.26 Situations where there is no Conviction or Court Determination

There are many reasons why a particular case may not come to court including of course a person being innocent of the initial allegations. However, sometimes concerns remain. Even following an acquittal there may remain evidence of inappropriate or misguided behaviour which needs to be addressed. The advice of the statutory agencies should be sought about any continuing risk to children or adults. It may still be appropriate in some circumstances and in accordance with legal advice to continue disciplinary action if the allegations relate to an employed Church Officer.

7.27

If there remain unresolved matters of concern a professional risk assessment should be carried out to try to ascertain whether it is safe for the person to continue work that brings them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

7.28 Referral for Barring

Where a paid or voluntary worker in the Diocese has offended against a child or vulnerable adult or their behaviour raises safeguarding concerns about their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will give consideration as to whether information should be passed to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS will then determine whether the person concerned should be placed on one of the barred lists to prevent them working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults. Prior to any referral the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will contact the DBS professional advice line not least to determine whether there is a legal obligation on the Diocese to refer.

7.29 Whistle Blowing

Paid staff, volunteers and members of the congregation should be encouraged to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour to the attention of the Incumbent, Church Warden, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or, in certain circumstances, the Bishop.

8. Pastoral Care for Survivors of Historic Abuse

8.1

Many churches are likely to have adults amongst their members who have experienced abuse when they were children. If someone discloses such abuse great sensitivity is required as it is likely to have been a major step for the individual to trust someone enough to tell them and the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be sought.

8.2

There is no single, correct procedure for dealing with a disclosure by an adult of historical abuse. The wishes of the person disclosing the abuse will be central. 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.

8.3

It is helpful to remind those who disclose historic abuse that people who have committed abuse against someone many years ago could well be continuing to abuse children today. A survivor should be encouraged and supported to report the matter to the police if they have not already done so. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will assist in doing this.

8.4

A survivor needs to be aware that if the alleged abuser is known to be still working with children in either a paid or voluntary capacity a referral must be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser would normally make this referral.

8.5

No pressure or encouragement should be given by the church to the survivor to forgive the perpetrator. This would be abusive in itself. It is for God to forgive the perpetrator, not the victim to be pressurised into doing so. Some survivors may need professional help. On the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website is a selection of bodies that might assist in accessing counselling help. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is also available to help as is the Authorised Listener service described below. A pastoral team is available for counselling support for clergy and their families within the Diocese.

8.6

If the church was involved with the alleged perpetrator in any way, even if the person has died, the Diocese must examine its actions at the time and consider whether the way they dealt with the case was appropriate in terms of what was known good practice at the time.

8.7

Any serious safeguarding allegation made against a member of the church who has died **must** be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. They will then pass on the details to the National Safeguarding Adviser at Church House and the police. This is to ensure that the information is formally logged on their respective data bases should others make allegations against the same person in the future.

8.8

The Church of England policy and guidance on working with those who have been sexually abused is contained in the Church House publication "Responding Well to those who have been Sexually Abused", 2011. The document is available on the Diocesan Website. Further guidelines are also on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website regarding working with survivors of abuse.

8.9 The Authorised Listener

“Responding Well” recommends that each Diocese should appoint “Authorised Listeners” to be available if someone in a parish wishes to discuss their experiences of past abuse. The listener will provide an attentive and attuned ear to help individuals reflect on their feelings, assist in thinking about their next step and generally provide them with support. The Diocese has appointed a group of Authorised Listeners, all of whom are qualified professionals with counselling experience. They are able to offer up to 4 sessions free of charge. A request for an Authorised Listener should be made via the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Parishes are encouraged to draw attention to this service in their parish buildings.

9. Offenders in the Congregation

9.1

If someone in the congregation, either an adult or a young person, is known to have a conviction for abusing a child or vulnerable adult or moves into the parish with such a conviction then the parish priest must consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. A discussion will also need to take place with the person concerned and efforts made to sustain open communication. It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries both to protect the children/vulnerable adults in the congregation and to lessen the possibility of the person concerned being wrongly suspected of any form of abuse in the future. The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy provides detailed guidance on ministering to people who are known to have sexually abused children. The central points of the guidance are set out in [Annexe F](#).

9.2

Because sexual offences are often addictive, it is naïve to assume that the offender has learnt their lesson and that it is possible simply to “forgive and forget”. They may well be tempted to re-offend, may fantasise about abusing and may try to gain access to children and young people by befriending parents. They may try to manipulate and control, and start attending the church specifically to come into contact with children. Sex offenders tend to be highly manipulative people.

9.3

Details about a convicted offender should be shared, on a ‘need to know’ basis, by the parish priest with key individuals such as the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator and certain individuals in the leadership team of the church. The person should never be on their own with children and young people.

9.4

Clear boundaries need to be placed around the offender. The parish priest and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will draw up a written contract as quickly as possible for the person concerned to sign. The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed and assist if required. The police and probation service should be involved if working with the offender. A model agreement can be found at [Annexe G](#).

9.5

The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy states categorically that no one who has sexually abused a child *“should accept any official role or office in the church which gives him or her status or authority; a child may deem that person to be trustworthy.”*

9.6

As well as those with convictions against children, there may be others whose position in the congregation requires sensitive assessment in order to determine whether they pose a

risk to children. This might include people convicted of violent offences against adults, people involved in severe drug or alcohol addiction and adults with a mental disorder which might in rare cases result in erratic or threatening behaviour. Advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must always be sought in cases where a member of the congregation is considered to pose a possible risk to children or vulnerable adults.

9.7 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

The police manage the MAPPA service. A MAPPA meeting is convened if someone, a sex offender or otherwise, is thought to pose a significant risk to the community. Occasionally members of the congregation on parish contracts are also subject to MAPPA procedures. In such circumstances the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will attend the regular MAPPA meetings.

9.8

It is known that a high proportion of sex offenders (at least 30%) worship within faith communities on release from prison. The Bishop expects that the police, probation service and Children's and Adult Social Services inform the Diocese of anyone coming out of prison who has offended against a child who is planning to worship in one of our church communities. The Bishop also **insists** that prison chaplains pass on this information. The statutory confidentiality restrictions to withholding such information have now been eased so long as only key people are informed on a need to know basis.

10. Disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

10.1 DBS Disclosures

An enhanced disclosure lists any criminal convictions including cautions. This may include 'spent' convictions and cautions that do not come under the DBS filtering rules introduced in 2013. It can include police information on someone which did not result in a conviction but which the police chose to pass on due to the information being of relevance to the safeguarding of a child or vulnerable adult. All disclosures applied for by the Diocese are enhanced. Disclosures should be renewed every 5 years in line with HOB policy.

10.2 Arrangements in the Diocese

The Diocese has registered with the DBS as an 'Umbrella Body' so that it can access the Disclosure Service on behalf of parishes and other Diocesan staff, both paid and voluntary. It has issued comprehensive guidance on the process and criteria for obtaining Disclosures which can be found on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

10.3

A clear DBS Disclosure does not guarantee that the person is not a risk to children or vulnerable adults. The Disclosure becomes out of date almost immediately as a person may commit an offence after the Disclosure has been made. They may be an offender but never been caught. They could also have provided a false name and identification details. The Disclosure process is just one of a number of measures to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, alongside such things as a careful recruitment policy, clear safeguarding procedures and staff training. However, evidence from the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) has shown that those who wish to abuse children are less likely to join church communities that have a robustly managed DBS Disclosure policy.

10.4 Policy on those Requiring DBS Checking

It is the policy of the Church that all those who regularly work with children, including those on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks. DBS checks are also required of people who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups and of those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 has meant that fewer people are now allowed to be DBS checked within the church context. For example in mixed age activities involving children, such as choirs, bell ringers and serving teams, the expectation is for just the leader and those responsible for the supervision and/or teaching of children in the group to be DBS checked. This puts greater responsibility on the leaders/supervisors and has implications for their training. It also demands high standards in safe recruitment. Detailed guidelines on procedures for bell ringers are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

10.5

A person for whom a DBS Disclosure has been sought must not take up post until the Disclosure is returned.

10.6 What to do if Unsure

The Diocesan Safeguarding Office (01227 459401) can advise on any queries over which individuals and which activities require a DBS Disclosure and in what circumstances a Disclosure in one job can be carried over into another job in the Diocese.

11. Safe Recruitment

11.1

A key way of protecting children from harm is to ensure the careful recruitment of those working with them. These Guidelines cover the recruitment of unpaid workers. Expert advice should be taken about the recruitment of paid workers where employment law will apply. Some of the principles will apply to both groups.

11.2

The HOB documents “Safeguarding Guidelines relating to Safer Recruitment,” 2010 and 2013 (interim versions) reflect the emphasis and expectations the Church of England is giving to the recruitment of both paid staff and volunteers. The following summarises the HOB guidance.

11.3

In the recruitment, supervision and support of volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults the following good practice points should be followed:

- The parish should follow safe recruitment practices which are set out in full in the HOB “Safeguarding Guidelines for Safer Recruitment” 2010 and 2013.
- Prospective volunteers should be regarded as job applicants.
- They should have a defined role with a written job description provided by the parish (see 11.5).
- They should fill in a job application form (see 11.5).
- Two references should be sought (see 11.5).
- For those under 18 in education one of those references must be from school. Any young person on work experience must have a reference from their school.

No young person under 18 should be expected to take on a role with sole responsibility.

- A DBS Disclosure should be obtained if appropriate preceded by the filling in of the Confidential Declaration (see 11.4); the person should not take up post until the Disclosure is returned.
- Their appointment should be confirmed in writing.
- There should be a 3 to 6 month probationary period before confirming the appointment depending on the role.
- There should be clear and consistent supervision arrangements.
- There should be an annual review and supervision meetings should be not more than 3 months apart.
- Each parish should create and retain adequate records on all those working with children/vulnerable adults, taking care to store them securely.

11.4 Confidential Declaration

Parishes should ask all those for whom a DBS Disclosure is to be sought to fill in the Confidential Declaration form (downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website). This seeks details about any previous offences and includes questions about prior statutory involvement with children and vulnerable adults in civil proceedings.

11.5 Forms

Downloadable from the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website are the following forms, adapted slightly from the HOB Guidelines to Safe Recruitment:

- a suggested application form for voluntary workers proposing to work with children and/or vulnerable adults
- a suggested reference request form to send to nominated referees
- a proforma for a job description and job agreement
- the Confidential Declaration

11.6

Some may find such processes and procedures over-bureaucratic. However, the primary concern must be the need to protect children and vulnerable adults. In addition, a well conducted recruitment process protects the interests of both the PCC and the person appointed; it also makes clear to the person appointed the value the parish places on the work being undertaken and the contribution that the person appointed is making.

12. A Safe Environment for Children

12.1 A Safe Working Environment

Church groups involving children under 6 without their parents that meet regularly for more than two hours in any one day or for more than fourteen days a year must be Ofsted registered. Registration involves ensuring good practice standards across a wide range of issues including group leaders, staffing ratios, suitability of premises, health and safety and facilities for children with special needs. Such issues of course need to be considered within any Church group regardless of whether or not OFSTED registration is required. A helpful Model Code of Safer Working Practice is provided in the HOB Safeguarding Children Policy (p. 63-70). Key sections of this code are reproduced in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

12.2

The minimum staffing levels for registered groups are as follows. Non-registered Church groups should aim for the same adult/child ratios:

	Adult		Children
2 years and under	1	:	3
3 years	1	:	4
4 to 8 years	1	:	8

Over 8 years 1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children.

Each group should have at least two workers, if possible with one male and one female. Information on Ofsted registration can be obtained from Kent County Council Children's Information Service, Freephone: 03000 412323.

12.3

For children over 8 staff ratios should always be based on a risk assessment. For example staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk or potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved.

12.4

For all groups:

- A register should be kept and be available at all group meetings.
- A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up to date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs. A suggested registration form is available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.
- A First Aid kit should be available on any premises that are used by children.
- An accident and incident logbook should be available and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place.

- Any significant incidents should be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
- There should be access to a telephone.
- In premises where children's groups are held the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed.
- Parents must sign a consent form before children are taken off site for activities. A suggested consent form is available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.
- When taking children off site a detailed programme and list of contacts should be left with someone in the parish.
- Activities planned to take place away from church premises should have PCC agreement in order to be covered by insurance.

Many of these items are equally applicable to groups involving vulnerable adults.

12.5

Further advice on any matter concerning groups and activities involving children and young people can be sought from the Diocesan Children and Young People's Ministry Adviser who is contactable at Diocesan House (Tel: 01227 459401).

12.6 Good Practice in Working with Children

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children as part of their coming to understand human relationships. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs.
- Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or could be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).
- Ensure that workers at all levels take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact with children. They should be encouraged to challenge another worker if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse should always be reported.

(Guidelines drawn up by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service - CCPAS)

12.7

For further details on good practice see the Model Code of Safer Working Practice on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. Many of the good practice guidelines listed in the Code and in this section are equally applicable to vulnerable adults.

12.8 e-Safety

Detailed guidelines on the use of electronic communications and internet safety are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. In summary:

- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.
- If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Do not make any relationships with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site.
- Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

12.9 Private Fostering

Those who privately foster children, who can include friends of the child's family, often do not know that they have to notify Children's Social Services of the arrangements. The definitions of private fostering and procedures involved are explained on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. Advice on the issue and/or specific cases can be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.

13. A Safe Environment for Adults

13.1 Attitudes

Places of worship and relevant activities should be welcoming and accessible to vulnerable adults. An adult with a disability is not necessarily vulnerable, nor is a vulnerable adult necessarily disabled. However, discrimination faced by disabled people is not uncommon. It is essential therefore that every effort is made to create an environment that is inclusive and accessible and where vulnerable adults are free from fear of being exploited, marginalised or abused.

13.2 Good Practice Regarding Visual Impairment

- Identify yourself by name.
- Reserve seats near the front so the partially sighted person has the option to sit closer to what is going on. Offer to assist someone who is blind to find their way around. Don't push; always allow them to take your arm and if necessary provide space for a guide dog to lie down.
- Make sure that all corridors, approaches and circulating areas are free from obstructions.
- Ensure large print versions are available for songs/hymns and other written material (e.g. Bible, news sheets etc.). Print for partially sighted people should be in a Sans Serif typeface (e.g. Arial).
- Good lighting is required for partially sighted people.
- The international symbol for visual impairment can be shown on literature and notice boards to indicate what facilities are provided for blind and partially sighted people.



13.3 Good Practice Regarding Hearing Impairment

- Get the attention of a deaf person before speaking to them.
- Address the deaf person directly, not the person who may have accompanied them.
- Be aware that they may not be able to speak if they have been deaf from birth.
- Ensure that your face and mouth can be seen clearly. Look directly at the person and speak at normal speed and volume with clear lip patterns. Avoid exaggerated lip patterns that are harder to read. Keep your hands away from your face and remember eating or chewing gum whilst talking hinders effective lip reading. Don't speak directly into the person's ear.
- A hearing induction loop should be provided whether you are aware of people using hearing aids or not. It is not always obvious someone has a hearing aid and most people do not like to draw attention to the fact.
- Where someone is asked to sign what is said and sung they need to be in a clearly visible well lit place.
- Be aware that background noise can make life very difficult for people who use a hearing aid because it often distorts sounds they are trying to hear.
- Be prepared to write things down if necessary; the important thing is not to give up if communication is difficult. Change/simplify your language if the deaf person does not understand, avoiding jargon.
- The international symbol can be shown on literature or notice boards to indicate that facilities are available for the deaf or hard of hearing.



13.4 Good Practice Regarding Impaired Mobility

- Internal or external access needs to be level or ramped.
- Don't designate one area for wheelchair users; this unnecessarily draws attention to their disability.
- Think about a seat being reserved alongside a wheelchair user so that a friend can sit next to them.
- When talking to a wheelchair user it is polite to sit down so that you are on the same level, making eye contact easier.
- Remember that a wheelchair is part of the user's personal space – so don't lean on it, hold it or attempt to move it/push it unless asked. However, offers are usually welcome, even if declined.
- The international symbol can be shown on literature, notice boards and facilities such as toilets to indicate that there is access for those with impaired mobility.



13.5 Good Practice Regarding Learning Disability

- Adults with learning disabilities may well have limited or no reading ability so where possible signpost facilities and directions (fire exits, toilets etc.) using images as well as words.
- Offer assistance if people seem to be experiencing difficulties understanding or if they require help with certain instructions.
- Speak in short sentences.
- Check out they have understood. Beware of “veneer skills” where someone gives the impression of understanding when they do not.
- Give them time to process questions and answers.
- Avoid completing sentences for them.
- It can sometimes be helpful to check out how best to communicate with the person with someone who knows them well.
- Be patient if individuals are noisy or move about when it seems inappropriate; don't immediately pick up on the norms of how things are usually done within your place of worship.

13.6 Good Practice for Those Working with People with Dementia

- Those with dementia have varying skills dependent on where they are on the wide spectrum of dementia. It is important to find out what those skills are, so get to know them and consult with them and their carer.
- Those with dementia require stability, attention, calm ordered routines, familiar faces and a familiar home environment. These can make a huge difference to their contentment and wellbeing.
- Some of the good practice points on communication in the previous section can assist in speaking to those with dementia such as: speaking in short sentences; checking out that what is said is understood; and giving time for people to process and answer questions.

Training for parishes on dementia is available through the Diocese. To book this training contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator or the Safeguarding Office at Diocesan House. Alternatively, training can be booked online on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

13.7

Those with a learning disability should be embraced into church life and church activities. However difficulties can emerge when an adult or young person with a learning disability is given responsibilities in a children's group. Thought needs to be given over whose needs this will be serving. Attention needs to be given to: supervision arrangements; the age and vulnerability of the children in the group; how well boundaried the adult is able to be; and whether they have the intellectual ability to pick up on the cues presented by the children. If in any doubt the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be sought.

13.8 Lone Working

Good practice guidelines are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website for those undertaking pastoral visits alone. This includes visits to vulnerable adults and others in the community including the work of street pastors. The guidelines also include

advice on the prevention of financial abuse.

14. Confidentiality

14.1

The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy states:

“Where a child or an adult is judged to be at risk of significant harm and in need of protection, it will normally be necessary to share all relevant information with the statutory agencies.”

Section 7, particularly paragraphs 7.18 to 7.21, discuss the circumstances for sharing confidential information with the statutory authorities regarding vulnerable adults.

14.2

As far as children are concerned, both law and sound morals impose a general duty not to pass on information that has been received in the clear expectation that it will be treated in confidence. That duty is not absolute, however, and the courts will not intervene to restrain disclosure where (a) the information relates to a crime or other serious misconduct and (b) disclosure is in the public interest. Thus where a child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting children.

14.3

The key factor in deciding whether or not to disclose confidential information is proportionality: is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of the child? The amount of confidential information disclosed, and the number of people to whom it is disclosed, should be no more than is strictly necessary to meet the public interest in protecting the health and wellbeing of a child. The more sensitive the information is, the greater the child focussed need must be to justify disclosure and the greater the need to ensure that only those professionals who have to be informed receive the material. This test applies equally to vulnerable adults.

14.4

It is important to discuss with children and young people and their families the issue of confidentiality and with whom information will be shared. If in any doubt consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

14.5 Confession

A particular issue regarding confidentiality is raised by the practice of formal confession. The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy offers the following guidance:

“It is possible that relevant information may be disclosed in the particular context of confession.

It is in everyone’s interest to recognise the distinction between what is heard in formal confession, however this might take place, which is made for the quieting of conscience and intended to lead to absolution, and disclosures made in pastoral situations. For this reason, it is helpful if confessions are normally heard at advertised times, or by other arrangements, or in some way differentiated from a general pastoral conversation or meeting for spiritual direction. A stole might be worn and a liturgy should be used.

Canon law constrains a priest from disclosing details of any crime or offence which is revealed in the course of formal confession: however there is some doubt as to whether this absolute privilege is consistent with the civil law. Where a penitent’s own behaviour is at issue, the priest should not only urge the person to report it to the police or the local authority social care, if that is appropriate, but may judge it necessary to withhold absolution. In such a case the priest may consider it necessary to alert the Bishop to his or her decision in order to safeguard himself or herself and seek advice on the issues, though the penitent’s details would not be shared without their permission. The priest may also judge it appropriate to encourage the penitent to speak personally to the Bishop.”

(HOB Safeguarding Children Policy, p. 35).

14.6

Although this national church guidance specifies issues of concern relating to children it applies equally to adults.

14.7

The Bishop emphasises that:

No priest should hear confession on a regular basis unless he/she is under the discipline of the confessional themselves (i.e. confession is part of their own spiritual practice and they are under supervision).

Any priest hearing a confession, regularly or otherwise, must say prior to hearing that confession the following statement of confidentiality and safeguarding:

“If you touch on any matter in your confession that raises a concern about the wellbeing or safeguarding of another person or yourself, I am duty bound to pass that information on to the relevant agencies, which means that I am unable to keep such information confidential.”

15. Further Help and Guidance

15.1

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers are qualified and experienced practitioners who work for the Diocese in order to provide advice and guidance to parishes whenever necessary. The Advisers are available to the clergy, Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, Diocesan staff and others to discuss and give advice on specific and general safeguarding concerns, worries or procedures. If you have any concerns or worries, or just want to discuss a situation generally, then do not hesitate to pick up the telephone to speak to them. Alternatively you can send an e-mail.

15.2

These Guidelines have been prepared to help make the Church a safe place. They are not the last word. They will be supplemented by updated information in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website and periodic training opportunities for those working in the parishes.

Useful Contacts

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Please see inside front cover for contact details.

Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website:

www.canterburydiocese.org/safeguarding

Diocesan House Safeguarding Office and DBS Helpdesk

01227 459401, e-mail safeguarding@diocant.org

Booking Parish Safeguarding Training

- Diocesan Safeguarding Office 01227 459401 or safeguarding@diocant.org
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Diocesan House

Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1NQ

Tel: 01227 459401

Childline

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

Tel: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

(Note: children can write to Child Line rather than telephone if they wish)

Family Lives

Tel: 0808 800 2222

e-mail: parentssupport@familylives.org.uk

Website : www.familylives.org.uk

Provides help and support to parents and carers in all aspects of family life

Kent County Council Central Duty Team - Children

Tel: 03000 41 11 11

Kent County Council Central Duty Team - Adults

Tel: 03000 41 61 61

Kent County Council Out of Hours Central Duty Team – Children and Adults

Tel: 03000 41 91 91

Further addresses and contacts can be found in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.

Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement

Parish of

This parochial church council has adopted the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Church of England. In particular we are committed to:

- the safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable adults
- carefully selecting and training paid and voluntary staff who might come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, using the Disclosure and Barring Service amongst other tools, to check their suitability
- responding without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed
- cooperating fully with the police, local authority and any other appropriate statutory body in any investigation
- ministering appropriately to anyone, child or adult, who has experienced abuse
- extending pastoral care to those known to have offended against children or vulnerable adults whilst ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected from them

We have appointed

Tel:

as the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator(s)

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on

Signed Date
(Parish Priest)

Signed Date
(Church Warden(s))

Any child wishing to talk about a problem can contact Childline on 0800 1111

Any parent or carer wishing to talk about parenting problems can contact Family Lives on 0808 800 2222

The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator(s) is available to speak with adults or children.

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator - Job Description

The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator is the key link between the Diocese and the parish concerning safeguarding matters. She/he will have an overview of all parish activities involving children and vulnerable adults and will monitor the implementation of diocesan guidance. The role can be taken by one person or the role shared, for example with one person covering children and the other vulnerable adults.

The key tasks of the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator are to:

1. Have an overview of all parish activities involving children and vulnerable adults and keep a record of these activities.
2. Be familiar with Diocesan safeguarding guidance and ensure that leaders of activities are fully aware of, and are implementing, this guidance.
3. Liaise with the incumbent over safeguarding issues.
4. Keep in touch with the leaders of all activities and offer them advice and support over safeguarding matters.
5. Liaise as necessary with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and other Diocesan staff.
6. Attend training offered by the Diocese for Parish Safeguarding Coordinators.
7. Assist with safeguarding training in the parish as appropriate.
8. Attend the PCC at least annually to ensure safeguarding issues are discussed and that the PCC adopt the annual Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement.
9. Ensure that the Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement is displayed in the Church.
10. Keep good records of any safeguarding concerns that may arise and ensure that others do the same.
11. Promote inclusiveness in places of worship and within parish activities.
12. Keep the church leadership informed of good safeguarding practice.

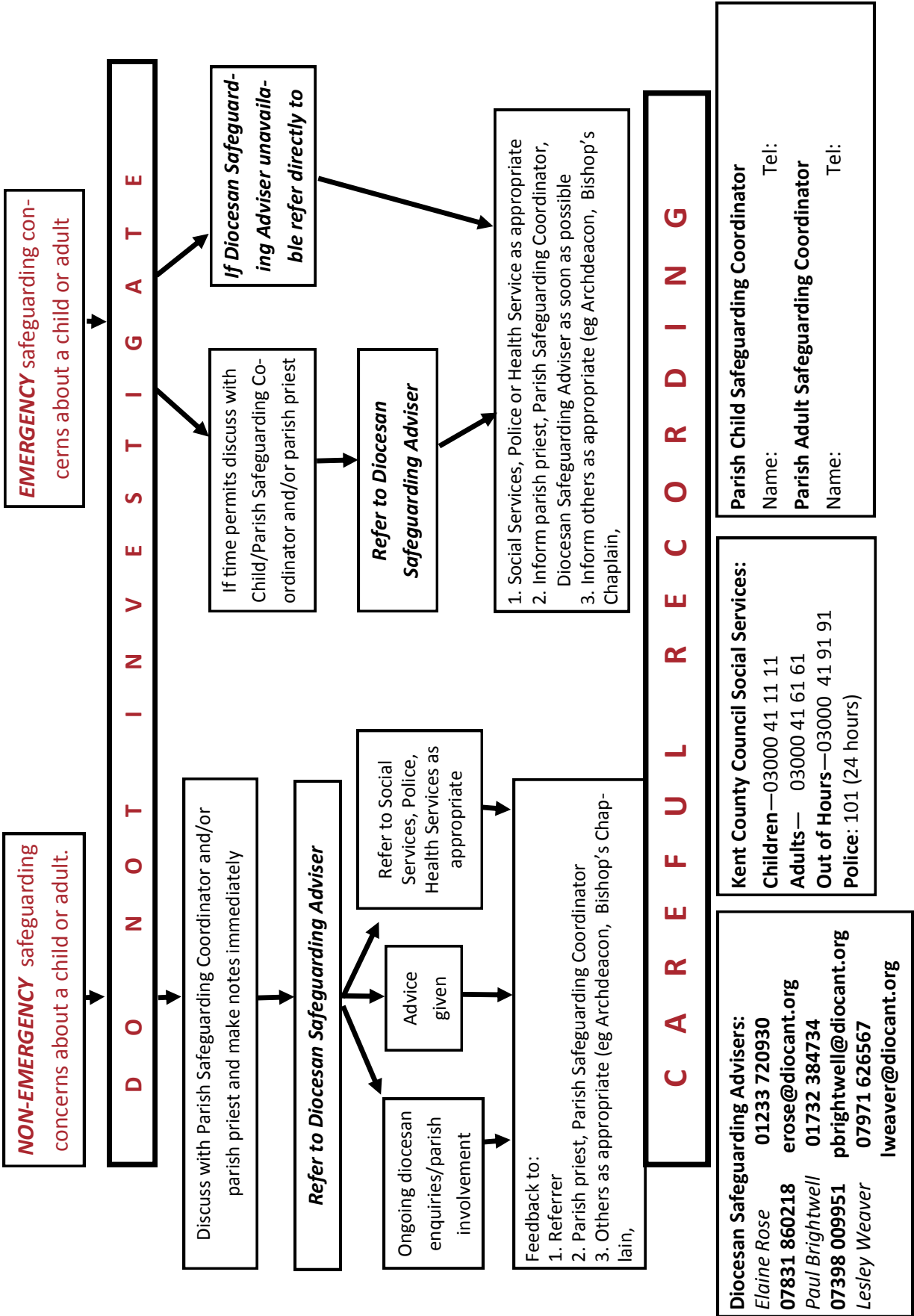
Safeguarding in the Parish

Key Tasks for PCCs - Checklist

- Adopt annually a Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement.
- Display this policy.
- Review annually the implementation of this policy and of the Diocesan Safeguarding Guidelines.
- Appoint Parish Safeguarding Coordinator(s) and advise Diocesan House of any change.
- Display the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers.
- Keep a record of all activities in which children and vulnerable adults are involved.
- Ensure that a record is kept of all unaccompanied children and vulnerable adults attending parish activities.
- Ensure that all those working with children and vulnerable adults are appropriately recruited, trained and supported under Safer Recruitment Guidelines.
- Ensure that all those working with children and vulnerable adults have a DBS Disclosure subject to role, which is renewed every 5 years.
- Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored, always taking advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Ensure that appropriate Health and Safety procedures are in place.
- Notify the parish insurers of any serious safeguarding incident involving a parish worker, paid or unpaid.
- Carry out an audit of premises in which activities involving children and vulnerable adults take place to assess safety and suitability.
- Ensure that good records are kept of safeguarding concerns/unusual circumstances and that they are stored securely.

Annexe D

HOW TO ACT IF THERE IS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE IN YOUR



Dos and Don'ts in Responding to Disclosures/Allegations

Just occasionally a child or vulnerable adult might disclose or allege abuse to a person they trust within the church or elsewhere. It is important not to discourage the person concerned from doing this. Active and empathic listening is required rather than investigating yourself.

Dos

- Actively listen
- Clarify if necessary – e.g.: “can you say a bit more about that?” or “what happened next?”
- Stay calm and reassure
- Make notes as soon afterwards as possible – within an hour. Record: their own words where possible; their emotional presentation e.g. if crying; date; time; length of discussion; sign notes.
- Tell supervisor, incumbent, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as quickly as possible
- Consider immediate safety of the person concerned
- Support for yourself

Don'ts

- Ask leading questions – e.g.: “was it your Grandad who bruised you?”
- Investigate yourself
- Speak to the person against whom the allegation is made
- Draw your own conclusions
- Promise confidentiality
- Keep it to yourself

Ministering to Sexual Offenders

Where a sex offender is known, befriended and helped by a group of volunteers to lead a fulfilled life without direct contact with children, the chances of reoffending are diminished and the church has thus an important role contributing to the prevention of child abuse.

When it is known that a member of the congregation has sexually abused a child, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser **must** be consulted, so that a safe course of action can be agreed in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies. A written agreement or contract (sometimes referred to as a 'Covenant of Care') will usually be entered into with the offender which reflects research evidence about the compulsive nature of child sexual abuse.

Where a small group is formed the membership should be chosen carefully. It should include the priest, a churchwarden, possibly a representative of the children or youth work team and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be consulted on the constitution of the group, and training of the group may be necessary.

If the offender's victim, or in some cases the victim's family, attends the church the offender should be introduced to another congregation. Consideration must also be given to other people in the congregation who have been abused in the past.

The offender should not accept any official role or office in the church which gives him or her status or authority; a child may deem that person to be trustworthy. Some roles, for example that of churchwarden, are statute-barred to people with convictions of this kind, including offences against the person.

A meeting should be held with the offender, explaining that the appointed small group and a few others from the congregation will need to know the facts in order to create a safe environment for him or her. Those needing to know are likely to include the clergy, churchwardens, the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator and any befriending volunteers. Any children's work leader will normally need to be informed so that he or she does not inadvertently ask the person to volunteer. The police should be invited to the meeting, in addition to the probation service and Social Services representative if they have a role.

Consideration should be given to whether, with the offender's agreement, the congregation should be told. The advantages and disadvantages of this course of action should be carefully considered, including the offender's need for protection as a vulnerable adult. This would not normally happen. However, if it is decided to do so, the assistance of the Diocesan Director of Communications should be sought. It is inappropriate for the offender themselves to speak to the congregation publicly.

It must be made clear that no one else apart from those identified on the agreement will be informed of the facts without the offender's knowledge. The highest levels of confidentiality should be maintained unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or vulnerable adult.

The group should offer support and friendship as well as supervision. They should endeavour to keep channels of communication open.

It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries, both to protect children and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should assist in drafting a written agreement/contract which might include the following elements:

- attend designated services or meetings only
- sit apart from children

- stay away from areas of the building 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
- take no official role in the church
- never contact a child or young person directly or indirectly through social media.

The agreement should be enforced, and no changes made without consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and other parties involved. It should be made clear that a breach or other relevant information could lead to a referral to the police and probation service and advice that the offender attends a different church.

The agreement should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least annually, with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. A review must take the form of a face-to-face meeting with the offender and at least two members of the group. The meeting should be recorded and the record retained.

If the person leaves the church for another church, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will contact the incumbent of the new church about the offender whether that be within the Church of England or another denomination. The police and probation service will also be contacted if they are involved. If the person leaves without informing anyone where or whether they might attend for worship, the police should be informed.

This approach is equally applicable to those who have sexually abused vulnerable adults.

(From HOB Safeguarding Children Policy 2010, central points only, p. 50-53)

Possible Contract for Someone with Sex Offences or Posing other Serious Risks

N.B. this list is NOT definitive. They are only examples, which will need to be personalised to take into account the particular circumstances of the individual and the church involved.

- I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people.
- I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the church leadership.
- I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people.
- I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where children's activities are in progress.
- I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
- I accept that "x" and "y" will sit with me during church activities, accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a sex offender/registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act.
- I accept that there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care.
- I accept that contact will need to be made with my police VISOR officer and my probation officer, who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary (where appropriate).
- I accept that "z" will provide me with pastoral care.
- I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. police, probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation.
- I understand that any concerns will be taken seriously and reported.
- I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every ----- months and will remain for an indefinite period.

This outline contract was first published by The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service and has since become the basis for procedures adopted by various denominations and used by many local churches throughout the UK. This document can be adapted for use with offenders other than sex offenders.

A more detailed draft contract is set out in the HOB Safeguarding Children Policy, p. 72-74.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must always be involved in the drafting of any such safeguarding contract.



The Diocese of
Canterbury

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