

The PCC of Christ Church with Saint Ewen, All Saints' and Saint George
Broad Street, Bristol BS1 2EJ

Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults

POLICY DOCUMENT 2019

Introduction

Christ Church PCC is committed to assuring the safety of all who worship or visit or work here, to protecting them from abuse or other offences, and to promoting their wellbeing. Our commitment operates through robust procedures and policies that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. These procedures derive from principles set out in Law, in documents drawn up by the Church of England (for example 'All God's Children', 2010) and from guidance provided by the Diocese of Bristol through its Safeguarding Adviser and Team. We aim to be fully aware of the need to comply with legislation, statutory and non-statutory government guidance, as well as being compliant with the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

However, these procedures are successful only with the vigilance of all members of the congregation and community. All need to be aware of potential risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to know what action to take, should they have concerns. Action normally consists of alerting the Safeguarding Officer or any member of the PCC. Occasionally it may involve contacting Local Authority personnel, or the Police, or Diocesan contacts. Everyone should feel free to speak to any member of the PCC at any time about concerns.

Contact details of relevant members of the PCC are available from our Church notice-board, or from our Parish website: <https://www.christchurchcitybristol.org/>

The Diocese provides Safeguarding Training Courses that are obligatory for those having direct responsibility for safeguarding and adjacent matters. As is recommended for PCCs throughout the Diocese, Christ Church requires that all members of the PCC who are directly concerned with Safeguarding attend appropriate courses, chiefly:

C1 Safeguarding Foundation Module

C2 Safeguarding Leadership Module

WHO NEEDS TO BE SAFEGUARDED?

Everybody, although some individuals are potentially more vulnerable than others, as in these categories:

ALL CHILDREN

The definition of a vulnerable child is very clear. The age at which an individual reaches adult status is 18. Until their 18th birthday, all have rights to be protected as children. Even after reaching 18, young people will inevitably have limited knowledge or experience of contacting and dealing with local services or equivalent, and will lack experience in other ways. They may also suffer particular problems concerning integration into communities and encountering threatening contacts, for example with drugs culture.

ADULTS AT RISK

The definition of a vulnerable adult is less clear, as several separate patterns may contribute. The Care Act of 2014 contains the following general definition: ‘the safeguarding duties apply to an adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of these needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect, and is as a result of these care and support needs unable to protect themselves from either the risks or the experience of abuse or neglect.’ Individual cases may need to be related to contexts concerning situational issues, ill health, disability or other factors. Individuals may be vulnerable at various points in their lives. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability are: sensory or physical disability or impairment, physical illness, a learning disability, mental ill health, frailty, dementia.

WHAT IS HARM OR SIGNIFICANT HARM?

The terms **harm** and **abuse** are both used and mean similar things. Harm is what results from mistreatment or abuse. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children, and gives local authorities a duty to make inquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. However, we must respond to any concern that a vulnerable individual has been or may be harmed. By reporting our concerns early, we may avoid ‘significant harm’ from ever happening. Authorities have a statutory duty to intervene where significant harm has occurred; they can and do have a wide range of support to prevent and minimise harm.

SAFE RECRUITMENT

The limited range of activities organised within Christ Church Parish means that Recruitment is limited, and concerns essentially recruiting new members of the Choir. The Director of Music is responsible for recruitment to the Choir. Reliable and thorough procedures are in place to ensure safe recruitment. These include discussion with the parents or next of kin of applicants, where appropriate, and the issuing of full information. In this domain, DBS checks are available for inspection. DBS checks are processed normally through the Diocese, although professional checks can also be available. In all cases, the Safeguarding Officer of the Parish ensures the keeping of records of DBS checks.

SAFE RESPONSE

We at Christ Church are committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are listened to, and that they can make their voices heard freely. This ensures that we can respond without delay and appropriately to disclosures of harm or abuse. Safeguarding Officers and other members of the PCC have been instructed in how to respond through Training Courses organised by the Diocese. Regular attendance at these courses is required in the case of those holding Parish Safeguarding responsibilities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Possible confidentiality arises when information which is not already in the public domain is provided. Confidentiality normally results from a request made by the provider of information. Alternatively, it can arise if legitimate expectation of confidentiality on the part of the provider is clear and apparent. Nonetheless, information can be disclosed if this can be justified as being within the public interest. For example, if the information relates to crime or abuse, the public interest criterion is met and information can be disclosed.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENTS

- 1 Christ Church PCC is committed to the care of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 2 Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday is a child. The welfare of all children is paramount.
- 3 All confidential material will be appropriately and securely stored.
- 4 Safeguarding will be a standing agenda item at all PCC meetings, and the PCC as a whole will ensure that the correct procedures are in place.
- 5 The Christ Church Safeguarding Policy Document will be reviewed every year at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (normally in April), where all present will be able to discuss issues.

CONCLUSION

Safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all people are fundamental to our commitment to the Gospel as well as to our responsibilities as members of the Church and of our society. We will seek to carry out the principles outlined in this Policy with the levels of care and diligence that they require. This Policy reflects both local and national policies, and, as they change, we will review the Policy to ensure that we are working to best practice. Websites that contain information that is wider in scope than this Parish Document can be consulted, for example:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/safeguarding/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding>