



Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults (Adults at Risk)

St. Paul's United Reformed Church, Harrogate

Church Safeguarding Coordinator (CSC): Mary Ann Steers (01423 509278)

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The purpose of this policy is to ensure procedures are in place, and all adults working on behalf of St. Paul's Church are clear about roles and responsibilities, for the protection of vulnerable adults. It is supported by the detailed overarching Safeguarding Policy of the Yorkshire Synod, and the national URC Safeguarding Guidelines.

Everyone working in or for our church shares an objective to help keep vulnerable adults safe by contributing to providing a safe environment for all.

Church commitment

St. Paul's Church recognises that all its members and congregation may be vulnerable at times in their lives and there needs to be particular care taken for those whose vulnerability is increased by certain situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ADULTS

A Vulnerable Adult is any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or temporarily unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against actual or potential abuse or neglect.

Aims

- To encourage all adults to treat each other with respect and dignity
- To help vulnerable adults view themselves as part of the church community and to establish and sustain relationships
- To allow all vulnerable adults to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions
- To establish and maintain procedures so that all adults in church know how to act if they have concerns or need support regarding a particular person
- To provide a model for open and effective communication between all adults and children in the congregation and all other church groups

Objectives

- To provide adequate and appropriate staffing to fulfill needs whilst vulnerable adults are in any church organised activity or group
- To create an environment within the church where every person is valued as a member of the community and all members of the community are sensitive and responsive to the needs of others

Procedures

- It is not the responsibility of the church to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. However, all adults have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind.
- The serious issue of the abuse of vulnerable adults may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, psychological, online, spiritual or institutional abuse or neglect. We acknowledge the effects these may have on people and their growth and development, including spiritual and religious development. The church accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. There is a responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. The church takes seriously the issues of promoting an individual's welfare so that each of us can aim to reach our full potential in God's grace.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy, working with the Yorkshire synod, commit themselves to respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a vulnerable adult may have been harmed during any church-based activity of whatever type. The church commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
- **Regulated activities.** A description of the regulations in force at the time of issue of this policy is at Appendix II. The Elders should keep under review whether any Church activities involve a role within the then current regulations. If so, in relation to any person undertaking that role, the Church should make an application for an enhanced criminal records disclosure certificate (plus Barring List check) from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The application for the certificate should be made through Due Diligence Checking Limited (or whatever route is at the time specified by the United Reformed Church). If an application for a certificate does not result in clearance from CAS, the individual concerned must not assist in the role.
- URC guidelines state that disclosure certificates must be renewed every 5 years.

Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of church

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the church that he or she has:

- a. Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a vulnerable adult; or
- b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a vulnerable adult; or
- c. Has behaved in an unsuitable manner towards a vulnerable adult;

detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be securely retained. Whilst we acknowledge such allegations (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is therefore essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Initial Action

- It is the responsibility of all adults to identify and report all possible causes for concern or cases of abuse.
- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the CSC and make a record. Where the CSC is unavailable or is implicated in the allegations or event, the Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed.
- The Incident Reporting Form at Appendix I will be used where appropriate.
- The CSC or Deputy shall report the matter to a meeting of Elders, held on an emergency basis if appropriate.
- The CSC or Deputy may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation; however, no person will be interviewed at this stage.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the families of vulnerable adults.
- Where considered necessary or appropriate, the CSC or Deputy will inform the Yorkshire Synod Safeguarding Officer and ask for support if necessary.

Useful Telephone Numbers

URC Safeguarding Team 0207 520 2729 (safeguarding@urc.org.uk)

North Yorkshire Adult Social Services 0845 872 7374

Police Non -emergencies 101 (Emergencies 999)

Appendix I – Incident Recording Form

Date and time of incident:

Date on which this report is written.....

(This should preferably be immediately or no later than up to 48 hours of the incident taking place)

Your name:

Name of Vulnerable Adult and date of birth

.....DOB.....

Address if known.....

Recording:

Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible – do not interpret what was said using your own words. Do not make suggestions as to what might have been said. **Listen carefully** to what is being said rather than just hearing the account.

Record what **you** said as well as what the vulnerable adult said.

Include details such where the conversation took place and who else was present, if anyone.

If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion. It would assist, where possible, to also include descriptions of tone of voice, facial expression and body language.

Record of incident(s)

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Synod Safeguarding Adviser? Namedate.....

Social services? Name.....date

Police? Name.....date.....

NSPCC? Namedate.....

Parent/carer? Name.....date.....

Other? Name.....Organisation.....date.....

Is there any follow up work taking place that you are involved with?

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix II - Regulated Activity for Adults (2012)

Eligibility for Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List check.

The Regulated Activity definition has been changed and tightened. In future, Regulated Activity for adults will be defined by the role and not by the characteristics of the recipient – i.e. their type or level of vulnerability.

Within a Church setting, those undertaking Regulated Activity with adults will be limited to the small number of roles where the person concerned is involved in the activities set out below.

Differing from the children's definition, there is no frequency test for these activities. If the worker is expected to do them as part of their role at any point, then the role becomes Regulated Activity. An Enhanced Criminal Record plus Barred List check must be applied for.

Apart from the work of health or social work professionals, the activities are:

- help with washing/dressing; eating/drinking; toileting; or teaching someone to do one of these tasks.
- help with a person's cash, bills or shopping because of their age, illness or disability. (A good example is helping someone pay a household bill. Posting the letter for the housebound person is not Regulated Activity but taking the money from them to take and pay at the PO counter is Regulated Activity. This would not usually be part of any church role but is included here for the small minority of exceptional occasions.)
- helping someone in the conduct of their affairs (for example, a Power of Attorney for someone who is not a relative or friend. This would be very unlikely in a church context).
- driving someone (because of their age, illness or disability) to/from places in order to receive health, personal or social care. (Note: not as family or friend but as part of the church role.)

Eligibility for an Enhanced Criminal Record check (without Barred information).

Where a worker has a significant level of involvement through their work with adults who are in need or at risk because of age, illness, disability or factors arising from social exclusion (and we recognise that the need or risk may be temporary or permanent) then an Enhanced Criminal Record check should be carried out.