



# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **Child Protection & Adult Safeguarding**

Originally prepared by Claudia Gordon, Yvonne Gordon and Revd Henriette Howarth with the advice of Jo Musson, the Bishop's Adviser for Children's Work, May 2007.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Church of *England's Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (2016)*, *Promoting a Safer Church (2017)*, the *Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2018)* and the *Church of England Birmingham's Supplement to the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (2018)* all of which St Christopher's PCC has adopted. These documents are available online or in the Church Office.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

<b>Version 1</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Version 2</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Version 2.3</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Version 2.4</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Version 2.5</b>	<b>2025</b>

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator (PSC) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

St Christopher's Springfield Parish Church Council recognises the need to safeguard the children, young people and adults in our care and guard against the possibility of any form of abuse of children, young people and adults by persons who may be acting in the name of our parish. We aim to create a safe environment for the nurture and development of children, young people and adults, in order for them to feel valued and confident to ask for support and help.

We will create a culture that maintains the protection and safeguarding of the children, young people and adults entrusted to our care and sees this as our highest priority. A ***Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator*** will be appointed to ensure the implementation of this policy.

- We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives and we commit ourselves to the safeguarding and respectful pastoral care of all people in our church.
- The parish commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
- We commit to informing the whole church community about our safeguarding policy and procedures and recognise that it is the responsibility of each of us to prevent and report abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We will ensure the children, young people and adults in our care know who they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- We recognise our responsibility to always respond to and report abuse in whatever context, inside or outside the church environment and will always listen to and take seriously any child, young person or adult who reports that they have been abused or are at risk of abuse.
- We will always report all allegations of abuse against Church Officers to the appropriate statutory agency and to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and co-operate with any investigation.
- We will keep all records in relation to safeguarding concerns, allegations and the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers securely.
- We commit to providing a safe physical environment for work with children, young people and adults.
- We will assess all new and current Church Officer roles and, in every case where the role is deemed to be eligible, apply for an appropriate level DBS check every three years.

- We commit to providing every Church Officer with clear instructions and information in respect of their role, adequate resources and support and regular opportunities for review.
- We will ensure that all Church Officers working with children, young people and adults experiencing or at risk of abuse due to their age, illness or disability, or are in a trusted role, undertake Church of England safeguarding training every three years.
- We will inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, and ensure appropriate supervision, of anyone who is known to have offended against a child, young person or an adult at risk of abuse due to their age, illness or disability who attends activities organised by the St Christopher's PCC and will follow all recommendations of the DSO in this regard. Please also see our appendix on the recruitment of ex-offenders.
- We require all hirers of our premises to have their own safeguarding policy and procedures, to provide us with an assurance that these are implemented and to provide us with a copy.
- The parish will also adopt the policy and guidance of The Church of England and The Church of England Birmingham and we will review this safeguarding policy every three years to monitor progress and ensure we meet current legislation and guidance.
- We will complete and implement a Safeguarding Action Plan and update this regularly.
- The parish will complete the Church of England Parish Dashboard where we record actions on a quarterly basis.
- Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints CLAUDIA GORDON to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies as the **Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator**.

This church appoints LUCY EMO as a **Parish Identity Verifiers** to process online Disclosure and Barring Service applications.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN POLICIES:**

A '**Church Officer**' is anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

**Significant Harm** - The Children Act 1989 and 2004 introduced the concept of significant harm as a threshold justifying compulsory intervention into family life in the best interest of the child or vulnerable person. The local authority has a duty to make enquiries or cause them to be made where it is felt that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

### **RECOGNITION OF HARM - TYPES OF ABUSE**

Detailed descriptions and indicators of these forms of abuse can be found on the Church of England's national website [Definitions | The Church of England](#) or from locally delivered training.

#### **Physical**

Physical injury may involve hitting, smacking, shaking, throwing, burning/scalding, drowning, or suffocating.

#### **Neglect**

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

#### **Emotional**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. Such behaviour may involve conveying to the person that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate on the basis of their race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, etc.

#### **Sexual**

Sexual abuse occurs where a child or vulnerable person has been forced or enticed into taking part in sexual activities whether they are aware this is happening or not.

**Spiritual – NB** This is not a separate category of abuse; it is a form of emotional and psychological abuse relevant for faith contexts. It is important to be clear about this when discussing cases with statutory services who may be unfamiliar with its use.

Spiritual abuse occurs where there is an inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching or intrusive healing or deliverance ministries.

### **Institutional**

Institutional abuse is where a child or vulnerable person is mistreated systemically by an institution or organization which should be caring for them.

### **Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery**

Involves being transported, recruited or held by others against their will for the purpose of exploitation, through use of violence, threats or coercion. This exploitation can take the form of forced prostitution, forced and unpaid labour, 'County Lines' – use of underage children to move illegal narcotics across demographic boundaries, exposure to radicalization, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and online protection, illegal organ removal, including female genital mutilation (FGM).

### **Domestic Violence**

Where a child or vulnerable person has been witness to or a victim of incidents of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (of any kind) between adults who are or have been family members.

### **Financial Abuse**

This includes the illegal use of or appropriation of another's money, bank cards, property, possessions or benefits or coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

This includes LGBTQ+ people, racist, sexist, gender identity and orientation, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

This policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard all under 18s attending St. Christopher's church groups and activities.

### **Statement of Values**

St. Christopher's Church Springfield adheres to the principles and values laid out above and seeks to demonstrate the highest standards in all its activities which include children and young people:

#### **1. Recognition of abuse**

Child abuse is a comprehensive term used to encapsulate ways in which a child's physical, sexual, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, or social development or well-being may be damaged by other people.

Child abuse is, in the main, perpetrated by an adult either male or female, a member of the child's family or by a stranger who has no prior connection with the child. Child abuse affects girls and boys, babies and all young people from 0 up to the age of 18 years from any kind of family background.

#### **2. Actions to be taken following disclosure of abuse**

It should be recognised how difficult it will be for a child/young person to share what is happening to them and great sensitivity will be required.

##### **In case of disclosure:**

- Any disclosure should be taken seriously.
- The child/young person should be advised sensitively that the disclosure will be passed on to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and all clergy.
- Report to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible following disclosure. (It is the responsibility of the PSC to make any statutory referrals – Social Services / Police). If the PSC is on holiday one of the clergy or church wardens should be informed instead.
- An accurate record of the disclosure needs to be made using the agreed Record of Disclosure Form or a simple written record if those forms are not available.

- The record should be factual (using child's own words) and made as soon after the conversation as possible. Original notes should be destroyed once the disclosure is formally recorded.
- Any injuries seen should also be recorded accurately (i.e. a bruise on the upper right arm). Never ask a child to reveal their injuries.
- No discussion should be held with the alleged perpetrator
- Discussion between the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Vicar will dictate next steps in passing information on to the relevant agencies (Diocese/local authority).
- The Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator will seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (if required), who can be contacted via the Diocesan Office. During an Interregnum, the DSO will advise the PSC as to who else needs to know and what actions need to be taken.
- If an allegation is made against one of the clergy, PSC or one of the churchwardens then they are bypassed in these reporting procedures.

Should there be suspicions or a concern regarding a child/young person but no disclosure has been made, a record should be made of anything that has been said or noticed and information passed on to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator whose duty it is to store such records in a confidential and secure location. The PSC should also inform the church clergy and ask advice of the DSO.

N.B. Reporting for Seedlings will be through the Springfield Project and Seedlings will operate under the Springfield Project's safeguarding policy.

### 3. **How to Manage the Presence of Persons Posing a Risk to Children**

- Any such information should be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the incumbent and to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- The DSO will offer advice as to who else needs to know and his/her advice will be followed at parish level to ensure that the protection of children is the paramount consideration at all times.
- If necessary, a written agreement will be entered into **clearly establishing roles, responsibilities boundaries and expectations between the 'risky' adult and designated church officials** (see pro forma in *God's Children: Our Diocese* 5.12)



#### **4. Pastoral Support, Confession and Confidentiality**

It is vital that pastoral care is available to those suffering from the effects of abuse, be they children, adult survivors, or the families of those abused. In order to provide sensitive support and care, those offering such support should receive advice and training from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in the pastoral care of people who have been abused.

Confidentiality is an important principle in any dealings with people in pastoral situations. However, where children's safety may be compromised, confidentiality has to take second place to protecting children.

Any information regarding an offender should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Information which indicates that a child or children may be placed at risk must be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the clergy who will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguards are put in place.

When an allegation/suspicion arises in a church, a period of investigation will follow. Under no circumstances should anyone in the congregation conduct an investigation. Any situation must be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the investigation done by the PSC, the vicar or a respected third party of the allegations relate to one of them. The church should provide support to the suspected perpetrator without compromising the children or their families. This is one reason why information should be limited to those who 'need to know'.

It will be necessary for the sake of the child/young person or to satisfy the needs of any investigation for the alleged perpetrator to worship elsewhere for the period of the investigation. In such cases the church leader of the other church will need to be informed.

The Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will hold responsibility for liaising with the authorities whilst those with designated responsibility for providing pastoral support should offer support to the victim, their family and the alleged perpetrator and their family. Pastoral support should not be offered by the same church officer to the victim and their family and the alleged perpetrator and their family.

People who have been abused may feel very angry with God, and the church needs to offer sensitive support and care towards such individuals. Counselling should be considered though this might prove to be a painful process.

Any child or young person who seeks out an adult to confide in is showing their level of trust; this is both a privilege and a responsibility.

**NB:** Be aware that some young people may manipulate such a situation (but this is very rare).

## **5. Video, Photographs, Online Devices and Social Media**

At St. Christopher's Church, we recognise that using the internet (& other forms of technology) is an important part of the development of the children and young people that we work with. In accordance with all good safeguarding, we recognise that we must take all possible steps to protect young people from significant harm or risk whilst using the internet or any other form of technology.

- Permission (verbal or written) must be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or web cam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded. Normally this permission is included in the annual registration form completed for each child at the start of the school year.
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- Leaders and helpers should not take photographs for their personal records unless specific permission has been given and an appropriate explanation provided to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large numbers of people such as a major service or outside celebration, permission is not necessary.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- There is a separate procedure for weddings.
- Where children and young people are taking pictures or films of each other at events supervised by St Christopher's Church leaders then those leaders should be attentive to assure that no cyber bullying takes place using those images.

- Children and young people should be strongly encouraged not to use mobile phones whilst at Church events unless the activity requires it.
- Instant messaging through social media should not be used by leaders when communicating with children. Instead communication should be done through private groups set up by the leaders of each specific ministry. We also advise that any communication with a young person under the age of 18 be done openly with parents or other adults copied-in.
- Best practice is that leaders and helpers should not be friends with people under 18 on Facebook or any other social media platform.
- Leaders should observe good data protection practice by keeping details of names, addresses, phone number, email address and social media account details safely.
- Leaders should be accountable to one another and to the Under 18s Minister/PSC/clergy about all their communications with the children and young people. For example, Whatsapp groups should have a designated administrator (who knows who is in the group). Best practice is to enable as wide a group as possible to see the conversation and to be able to review all comments.
- Any form of cyber bullying or abuse of children by children should be referred to the PSC.

## 6. **Staffing Ratios**

For safety reasons at least two church officers should be present at each session. If two church officers are not present then the group cannot take place and children/young people must return to their parents, go into the main church service or wait in a public space until they can be collected. It is preferred 'best practice' for groups where young people are aged 14yrs and over that there be a male and female leader present.

With the minimum of two leaders present, the following ratios are then to be observed:

Age Group	Staffing	Children
Age 0-3	1 for every	3
Age 3-5	1 for every	6
School Years 1-5	1 for every	6
School Years 6-8	1 for every	8
School Years 9-12	1 for every	10

Any leader/helper under eighteen years of age cannot be included in staff ratios but should be included in the number of children present.

Where a session is led by a married couple, they should ensure an additional volunteer or parent assists in the group also.

Preferred best practice when working with teenage groups:

- Where more than one room is used for a session, activities in all rooms should be visible to a group lead or volunteer at all times.
- There should be a male and female leader present for each session where the groups are mixed gender
- Volunteer representation from minority communities should be aspired to, but not when to do so would be detrimental of the group or reputation of the church.

## **7. Group Activities**

Any activity involving children and young people should have a registration procedure, the purpose of which is:

- To record the presence of people in case the building has to be evacuated upon hearing an alarm for fire, or to keep track of people on an excursion
- To have a record of the numbers of children and young people on the premises at any given time
- To have a record of people working with particular groups
- To be able to contact a parent or guardian when necessary

## **10 Transport (Use of private cars)**

It is the responsibility of car owners to check that their vehicle is insured for the transportation of children and young people. While the transportation of passengers without reward (i.e. for petrol money only) would normally be covered under “social/domestic use,” vehicle owners must check with their insurers. Paid staff would normally be expected have business insurance to cover such usage. Additional cover can very often be included for a small charge. Children/young people should not be transported by an adult on their own unless specific

permission is given by parents or to leave the child without a lift would pose a significantly greater risk to their safety.

### **Mini-Buses**

Appropriate insurance must be in place and the driver must be in possession of the required level of certification to drive the mini bus.

## **11. Health & Safety**

The Parochial Church Council acknowledge that one of its functions is to make and put into effect any provision made by Church of England Birmingham regarding health and safety and the protection of children. St Christopher's has a separate Health & Safety Policy and will always seek to implement best practice in this area. Particular areas for safeguarding are:

- The vicar, churchwardens, PSC or delegated person is responsible for maintaining an accident book in church to record any incidents, however minor, involving a child or adult involved in children's work.
- The Lead Church Officers responsible for different children's groups will ensure a risk assessment is undertaken of their group setting and proposed activities (annually or more often if the setting or activities change significantly).
- A PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) will be implemented for the safe evacuation of children and young people with special or additional needs from the building should an emergency occur.
- There will be a fire marshals designated to aid with evacuation in the event of fire. Torches and hi-vis vests will be provided in church are provided in church.

### **First Aid – Adults and Children**

- The Church has a properly equipped first aid kit – the contents are regularly checked by a designated person. There are also first aid kits situated in the Springfield Centre.
- There is a defibrillator situated at the reception desk of the Springfield Centre for use in emergencies.

- A list of all people who are first aid trained or have medical experience (qualified G.Ps or nurses) should be available for volunteers supervising groups on Sunday mornings. This will be complied by Church Wardens and the Vicar. This list will be reviewed and updated bi-annually and volunteers encouraged to undertake first-aid training. They should be aware of the current positions of the first aid kits.
- We aim to have at least one first-aid trained person should present at all events or activities run by St Christopher's.

### **Fire Safety**

- As part of the best practice in fire precaution the Churchwardens and/or clergy will undertake an assessment of risks to the building and members on a Sunday. An action plan and appropriate evacuation training /drill will be implemented, to ensure that church members will know what to do in the event of a fire.

### **Lone Working**

- A policy is in place to outline steps to be taken to mitigate risks arising from situations where paid staff or volunteers may find themselves engaged on church business on their own.

## **12 Recruitment of staff and volunteers (DBS- Disclosure Barring Service)**

All church officers who are to work with children regularly (who are present on planned rotas) should be recruited using the procedures consistent with the Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment 2017. In summary these include:

- They will be given a simple job description for their role with details of to whom they will be accountable.
- They will be given a copy of this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- All staff and volunteers shall complete an application form (with 2 referees) and a confidential declaration. References should always be taken up.
- By completing the application form and confidential declaration all staff and volunteers agree to a DBS check being made on them.

- All staff and volunteers agree to the Parish Identity Verifier seeing and taking copies of the necessary documents to verify their details.
- Once the DBS check has been made and the certificate is issued, they will be given an informal interview by the incumbent or another leader.
- If the person has lived outside the UK it is the responsibility of the incumbent and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator to find satisfactory evidence equivalent to a DBS check.
- They will be expected to attend safeguarding training through the Church of England's national scheme every three years.
- All records will be kept securely and confidentially.

### **DBS - Positive Disclosure**

Only the Archdeacon is privy to positive disclosure outcomes (i.e. where there is a criminal record of some kind) and he will co-ordinate or carry out a risk assessment. It is hoped that the applicant (volunteer/staff) would have shared the information voluntarily before getting to this stage. Please see the appendix on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

### **13. Public liability**

The Church has Public Liability Insurance which provides protection from legal liability for accidental injury. However, it excludes the following:

- Where a false allegation is made
- Where there is no actual injury and
- Where incidents took place prior to commencement of the Public Liability insurance.

## **ADULT SAFEGUARDING**

We are committed to the values and understandings laid out earlier in this document and to applying these to the protection of any adult in St Christopher's who may be vulnerable for any reason. In this work as in all our shared life, St Christopher's aims for practice based on the example of Jesus Christ, whose actions and behaviour towards those who were vulnerable show the highest standards of compassion, respect and love.

### **What is a vulnerable adult?**

Any adult aged 18 years 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 protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

'other situations'\* can include those vulnerable through medical issues, social/economic position, immigration status etc.

This policy is underpinned by the following values and principles

- Choice
- Confidentiality
- Access to Information and Support
- Consent
- Dignity and Respect
- Diversity and Cultural differences
- Independence
- Privacy
- Safety

St. Christopher's Church Springfield will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- Seeking to work in a non-abusive way that respects the right of individuals to enjoy privacy, dignity, independence and choice.
- Engaging with vulnerable adults to encourage and support them to become actively involved in church life.
- Having a Parish Safeguarding Coordinator (PSC) Claudia Gordon.



- Complying with the St. Christopher's Safeguarding Policy and establishing clear procedures.
- Complying with current Church of England best practice for the recruitment and selection of paid staff and volunteers, where the post / role may involve direct work with vulnerable adults
- Working in co-operation with Birmingham Adult Service and the Police if and when required.
- Supporting clergy, paid staff and volunteers in the development of their awareness of the issues that cause vulnerable adults harm, and in establishing and maintaining a 'culture of vigilance', responding to and reporting concerns via the appropriate channels.
- Ensuring that general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to
- Ensuring there are clear procedures for the management of personal information, sensitive data, confidentiality and the sharing of information in line with statutory requirements.
- Ensuring that this policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

## **2 Consent and Capacity**

It is important that all clergy, staff and volunteers understand the issues of consent and capacity in order to establish an individual's ability to give meaningful consent to the abusive act or situation or, to any help or intervention. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. The vulnerable adult may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal consideration of consent and appropriate steps should always be taken to ensure that consent is valid. Clergy, staff and volunteers should remember that no-one can give or withhold consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision has been made for this, usually in law. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden, if it is in the public interest to do so, as for example when it involves the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health.

The term 'Capacity' refers to the ability to use and understand information to make a decision, and communicate any decision made. An individual would be perceived to lack capacity if their mind is impaired or disturbed in some way, meaning that they would be unable to make a decision at the time of crisis. One might be considered 'impaired' due to a mental health condition, dementia, learning disability, state of confusion, drowsiness or loss of consciousness caused by drugs or alcohol misuse or medical condition.

### **3. Pastoral Support, Confession and Confidentiality (Paid staff / volunteers)**

It is vital that pastoral care is available to those suffering from the effects of abuse, be they children, adult survivors, or the families of those abused. In order to provide sensitive support and care, clergy, readers, the parish missionary, Anna chaplain or other authorized visitors should receive advice and training in the pastoral care of people who have been abused.

- Church workers should exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or close family relationship
- Church workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise
- Church workers involved in healing / prayer ministry should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work. Best practice includes the use of 'Mental Health First Aid' Those trained in this practice will be made known to the congregation.

Confidentiality is an important principle in any dealings with people in pastoral situations.

- Church workers should recognise their limitations and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (eg. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence or their perpetrators or giving legal advice). In such instances they should be referred to a professional or agency with the appropriate expertise. At all times such workers should have a designated person in the congregation (usually the vicar) from whom they will receive support and accountability.

- Church workers should avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.
- Church workers should treat those with whom they minister or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.
- Extreme care should be taken when helping with physical needs, washing and toileting always respecting the choices of the individual concerned. Care of an intimate nature should always be avoided unless to do so would cause extra and substantial harm.
- Pastoral relationships can develop into romantic attachments and such situations should be handled sensitively but clearly. Workers need to recognise such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements should be made for the on-going pastoral care of the person concerned.
- Church workers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs.
- Church workers should normally undertake any new external (to the congregation) pastoral work in twos to assess any future possible risks.

#### **4 Process –**

If the person disclosing abuse informs you that there is a medical issue or concern then you should refer them to their GP or, in an emergency, call an ambulance. If they have capacity then their permission must be sought before further action can be taken, unless their disclosure relates to a child or another vulnerable adult. If there is an ongoing risk to a child or vulnerable adult then their consent is not required and you should proceed as you would with the disclosure of abuse under the Safeguarding including if necessary calling the police to avoid immediate and serious danger to a child or vulnerable adult.

A record of the disclosure should be made in writing as soon as possible and pass those notes to the PSC, the vicar or churchwarden. This should include the fact that advice was given, especially if that advice was not followed.

## WHO TO CONTACT

**If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone  
please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer,  
Claudia Gordon, on 07890 682715  
or the vicar, Revd Tom Thomas, on 07980 650801.**

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If you cannot contact the person above and someone is being harmed or is not safe and needs immediate help, dial 999, or contact social care services, or, for a child, the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000

### **Other Important Telephone Numbers:**

Bishop's Safeguarding Children's Advisor (Diocese Office)

Tel: 07342 993844 or 0121 426 0400

Local Children's Social Care Team: Tel: 0121 303 1888

Out of Hours Children's Social Care Team:

Tel: 0121 675 4806

Adults' Social Care Team: Tel: 0121 303 1234

Out of Hours (EDT) Social Care Team: Tel: 0121 675 4806

Police (For non-emergency): 101 (or 999 for emergencies)

West Midlands Police: 0121 626 5000

Anti-terrorist 24/7 Hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

## Other Local Authority Children's Social Care Services

0121 569 3100 (Sandwell)	0121 569 2266 (Sandwell)
0121 788 4333 (Solihull)	0121 704 8007 (Solihull)
0800 1313 126 (Staffordshire)	0345 604 2719 (Staffordshire)
01926 414144 (Warwickshire)	01926 412080 (Warwickshire)
01905 822666 (Worcestershire)	01905 768053 (Worcestershire)

## Other Useful Contacts:

National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid	0808 800 0028
Birmingham and Solihull Urgent Mental Health 24/7 Helpline	0121 262 3555 or 0800 915 9292
Birmingham Crisis Centre 24/7 Domestic Abuse Helpline	0121 507 0707 (women & children)
West Mercia Women's Aid	0800 980 3331
Staffordshire Women's Aid	0870 2700 123
Black Country Women's Aid	0121 552 6448
Trident Reach Domestic Abuse Services:	0800 111 4223 (women, men & children)
RSVP (Rape and Sexual Violence Project)	0121 643 0301
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327
Galop (LGBTQ+) Helpline	0800 999 5428
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Family Lives Helpline	0808 800 2222
Samaritans	116 123

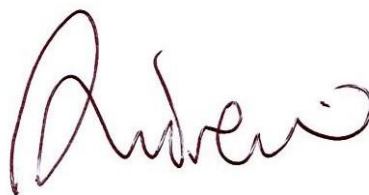
National Association of People Abused in Childhood	0800801 0331
Stop It Now! Helpline	0808100 0900
CALM (Mental Health	0800 58 58 58
Salvation Army Homeless Link	0121 236 6554
Trident Reach Homeless Prevention Pathway	0800 880 7157

For further reading on the adopted policies from Church of England Birmingham please see the website: [Diocese of Birmingham | Parish Safeguarding \(cofebirmingham.com\)](https://www.cofebirmingham.com/parish-safeguarding)

Signed.....  
Tom Thomas (Incumbent)



Signed.....  
Andrew Smith (Churchwarden)



Date 20/05/25 (agreed at PCC)

## APPENDIX A – POLICY ON RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

St Christopher's Church PCC agreed on 20/05/25 to adopt the policy commitments below when considering applications for roles within our organization from ex-offenders.

- We are committed to the fair treatment of our current and potential employees, volunteers and office holders, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are exempt from the Rehabilitations Act 1974 using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), we will comply fully with the DBS *code of practice*, all relevant legislation and House of Bishops' *Safer Recruitment & People Management* guidance and undertake to treat all applicants for roles fairly.<sup>1</sup>
- We are committed to equality of opportunity for all applicants and aim to select people for roles with us based on their skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where needed, qualifications and training. We will consider applicants who have a criminal record on their individual merits.
- For roles covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act we will not ask an applicant to disclose any criminal history that is spent. We will only ask an applicant about their unspent criminal history.
- For roles that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act we will ask applicants to disclose all criminal history, spent and unspent (other than protected cautions and convictions). Where we wish to select the person for the role, we will ask them to apply for a DBS check appropriate to the role.
- Where criminal history, or a potential risk of harm, has been disclosed in the recruitment process we will refer this information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for a risk assessment. The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will advise

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<sup>1</sup> Information for applicants about disclosing criminal history is available on the NACRO website: <https://www.nacro.org.uk/>

whether the person may be offered the role. The relevance of the nature of the criminal history to the role applied for will always be assessed and an application will not automatically be refused just because criminal history has been disclosed.

- We will only submit an application for a criminal record check to the DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the role. For those roles where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- We will ensure that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders and eligibility of a role for a criminal record check.
- This policy will be made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.
- This policy will be reviewed annually, alongside the main Safeguarding Policy.