

# **Safeguarding children**

## **Policy and Guidelines for the Diocese of Bath and Wells**

**2008**

## The Bishop's Foreword

In recent years we have learned a lot about how the Church can best look after the children in its care. This updated booklet is aimed at helping those in parishes who have particular responsibilities – clergy and Appointed Persons – to be up to date with legislation. The guidance in the book has been updated in the light of experience in parishes, and should be read through and then kept to hand.

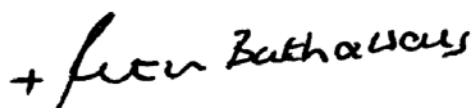
In the Church we have, I hope, got past the attitude that sees Child Protection as a bureaucratic burden laid on us. What this booklet is about is ensuring that we do all we can to care fully for children, not as a bolt-on-extra, but as something at the heart of our mission.

You will notice that the word “safeguarding” appears a number of times. This is because following national practice, we recognise that “safeguarding” children is a better description of what we are trying to do than just “protecting” them. In particular, safeguarding implies

- That all agencies (and not just the Church) will take reasonable steps to ensure risks to children’s welfare and minimised
- That where there are concerns, all agencies will work to agreed policies together to address the concerns.

One very important aspect of this work is what is known as “safer recruitment”. This is not just about getting CRB checks done on key people: it is about ensuring that all who volunteer to help with children’s work are recruited with clear expectations about what their ministry might involve, and that they are frank about their past experiences of working with children and young people. The appendices to this document provide helpful resources for your parish in this area.

I am keen that each of our churches has its procedures as closely aligned as possible with government standards for safeguarding children. There can be no short cuts in these matters. This policy booklet will set out how things should be done. Thank you for what you do with children and young people.



+ Peter Bath & Wells

January 2008

## Introduction

Safeguarding children and child protection is now the responsibility of everyone and national guidelines clearly state that all organisations that work with children and young people share a commitment to safeguard and promote their welfare

For faith communities to fulfil this commitment and for there to be an integrated approach there needs to be the following arrangements in place:

- Each parish needs to have appropriate arrangements in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and young people involved in the Church community
- Those involved with working with children and young people in the parish need to know how to report concerns that they may have about the children they meet that are in line with national procedures
- Those involved in working with children and young people need to adopt appropriate codes of practice
- All who work directly with children and young people; some of those involved in mixed age activities, and some in positions of trust and responsibility need to undergo safe recruitment procedures

# **The diocesan policy guidelines for safeguarding children**

## **1. Key definitions and concepts**

### **A Child**

In this document, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. “Children” therefore means children and young people throughout.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

### **Child Protection**

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

#### Definitions of Abuse

- I. Physical Abuse
- II. Emotional Abuse
- III. Sexual Abuse
- IV. Neglect
- V. Domestic Abuse
- VI. Other forms of abuse relevant to the Church

As an employee or a volunteer in the Church community we are **not responsible** for diagnosing child abuse, but the document '*Working Together to Safeguard Children from Harm*', 2006, outlines categories of abuse that act as useful indicators to **assist us in protecting** children from harm. These definitions can be seen only as broad markers and often with overlap across the categories. It is also important to emphasise that sometimes signs of abuse such as being physically intrusive or over-tactile can be extremely subtle reflecting a general misuse of power and manipulation by trusted adults which may lead to on to specific harm through the crossing of boundaries and inappropriate 'relationship'.

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

**Emotional abuse:** emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Domestic abuse:** domestic abuse is controlling and often violent behaviour, involving physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological abuse of adults within all kinds of current and former intimate and family relationships. Domestic abuse affects children as it can cause emotional, psychological, and/or physical harm. It has the potential to affect the daily lives of children through fear, insecurity, and lack of confidence. Children worry about their parents more than may be recognised, particularly if they fear for their parents' safety.

Further categories relevant to the church community:

**Spiritual abuse:** In the context of the church community there is a further form of abuse that can have devastating effects on the spiritual development of the child. When trusted members of the Church community abuse children in their care this also constitutes spiritual abuse. Whatever the nature of the abuse the child's trust is betrayed and the child's belief in natural and divine justice is damaged. One effect may be that the child turns away from the Church and from God.

**Organized abuse:** organized or multiple abuses can involve one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children or young people. The abusers may be acting as part of a network or in isolation and may use an institutional framework or a position of authority or trust to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children.

**No form of abuse can ever be justified and the child is never to blame.**

## **2. Responsibilities of the diocese**

- i. Responsibilities of the diocese
- ii. The role of the Bishops Child Protection Group
- iii. The role of the Child Protection Adviser

### **i. Responsibilities of the diocese**

- Provide a structure to manage safeguarding and child protection in the diocese
- Provide a structure to support, inform and advise parishes on their responsibilities
- Provide training and support on child protection matters to parishes and other relevant groups
- Provide a handbook of procedures and recommended good practice to enable parishes and others to undertake their duties, encouraging them to implement such procedures and good practice according to their local needs.

### **ii. The role of Bishop's Child Protection Group**

The Bishops Child Protection Group includes diocesan personnel and professional experts in the field of child protection; the group meets four times a year. The function of the group is as follows:

- To monitor child protection policy and guidelines
- To ensure that appropriate responses are made to incidents including referral to statutory agencies
- To advise the Bishop on specific situations

### **iii. The role of the Child Protection Adviser**

- Develop and renew the policy
- Provide appropriate training in safeguarding
- Advice and respond to child protection incidents
- Advise and support those who are managing those who pose a risk of harm
- Liaise with statutory agencies and other advisers

### **3. Responsibilities of the parish**

Each parish should:

- Ensure the well-being of children and young people in the Church community
- Adopt and implement a safeguarding policy and procedures
- Establish an appointed person to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures
- Appoint a person, who may be different from the coordinator, to be a children's advocate; this should be someone whom children know they could talk to about any problems, if they so wish
- Display the Child Line telephone number
- Ensure that all those authorized to work with children and young people or in a position of authority are appropriately appointed, trained and supported, and provide all authorized personnel with a copy of the safeguarding policy, procedures and good practice guidelines
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities to ensure their full integration and protection within the Church community
- Create a culture of informed vigilance which takes children seriously
- Ensure that appropriate pastoral care is available for those adults who have disclosed that they have been abused as children
- Provide, as appropriate, support for all parents and families in the congregation, being aware particularly of parents whose children have suffered abuse
- Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored
- Ensure that appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Review the implementation of the safeguarding policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually
- Rural parishes or parishes held in plurality may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures. It should be noted, however, that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable and care should be taken to implement the policy in full
- Local ecumenical projects should agree which denomination's child protection policy to follow and this decision should be ratified by the bishop and other appropriate church leaders

## Procedures and Associated Guidelines

1. What you should do if you are concerned about a child or young person (see the accompanying H M Government booklet, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*)
2. What happens when an allegation is made involving an employee or volunteer in the church
3. Safer recruitment in the church
4. Risk assessment, managing those who may pose harm to children
5. Support for those who are survivors of abuse

All allegations of actual harm, whether they are about neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, must be acted on immediately (see flow diagram 1).

**If you are concerned or have a sense of unease about any behaviour toward a child or young person, or if a child tells you that they, or someone they know, is being abused take your concerns and the concerns of the child seriously.**

All and any concerns should be shared.

### **Do:**

- **Listen carefully** to the child, rather than directly question him/her
- **Accept what the child says** – children rarely tell lies about being abused
- **Take the abuse seriously** (no incident of abuse is ever insignificant)
- **Reassure the child** who has spoken to you, that they have done the right thing in bringing it to your attention
- **Write down** exactly what was said, including any inappropriate language that might have been used, whilst it is still fresh in your mind, making a note of the timing, setting and people present
- **Explain to the child** what actions you are going to take – that the information must be shared
- **Report what you have heard, seen or suspect**, either to children's social care, the police, or the NSPCC, or to the appointed person in your parish. He or she then needs to inform the statutory agencies. Always inform the diocesan Child Protection Adviser as soon as possible

## **Do not:**

- **Dismiss your concerns** – the diocese will take them seriously
- **Approach the person about whom you have concerns**, instead seek advice from either the diocesan Child Protection Adviser, your local Children's Social Care (previously Social Services), the police or the NSPCC
- **Confront** the alleged abuser
- **Ask questions** to obtain further information – children will only want to tell their story once
- **Promise confidentiality**, or make promises to the child that they cannot keep
- **Stop a child** who is freely recalling what has happened. If they are interrupted at this stage, they may not continue and might not let you, or anyone else know what has happened

**Telephone the diocesan Child Protection Adviser:**

**Fiona Gardner**

**The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG**

**01749 685135 email: [fiona.gardner@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:fiona.gardner@bathwells.anglican.org)**

flow diagram 1

When abuse is suspected or alleged



Where the evidence, or the allegation is clear, (e.g. if a child discloses abuse, or there are injuries to the child) make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care or the NSPCC, or the police

If your suspicions are unclear, or you are not sure what to do, contact the diocesan Child Protection Adviser for advice. Do **NOT** talk to the suspect at this stage or the child's parents.



Having made your referral to the appropriate authority, inform the diocesan Child Protection Adviser

are unable to make contact with the diocesan Child Protection Adviser, contact Children's Social Care, the police or the NSPCC immediately for advice. DO NOT delay reporting your concerns or suspicions



You will be advised by Children's Social Care, or the police what you should do next

Inform the diocesan Child Protection Adviser as soon as possible afterwards



If agreed continue to support the child/family (if they want this) whilst the investigation is conducted

## **2. What happens when an allegation is made involving an employee or volunteer in the church.**

No individual within the Church community involved in disclosure need or should act alone.

This guideline should be used in respect of all situations in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- Consideration by an employer (this includes organisations that use volunteers) of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

All allegations (even apparently less serious allegations) are to be followed up and referred to statutory services and/or the Child Protection Adviser

- The person involved should be suspended pending investigation. Suspension is to be seen as a neutral act
- Pastoral support should be offered to all parties
- All involved should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation
- The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up
- Employers need to keep a full record of the situation
- If an allegation does not lead to a conviction but concern remains a risk assessment will take place by the Child Protection Adviser
- If someone tells you that they are involved in committing abuse then follow the procedures for disclosure by a child
- If there is a conviction then procedures for managing the risk of harm will be followed

### **3. Safer Recruitment in the Church**

The appointed person is the link person with the diocesan Child Protection Adviser and the child protection and CRB administrator.

The appointed person oversees the selection of adults in contact with and involved in voluntary activities with children. Follow the recruitment flow chart, diagram 2.

The following forms need to be completed

- Job description form
- Application form
- Self Disclosure form
- CRB form
- Reference Request form
- Appointment Letter

Diagram 2

## RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

Person shows interest in volunteering to help with children/youth work in church



This person is then asked to complete an application form & a self disclosure form. Identity is also checked



- An interview or review then takes place with the volunteer
- The appointed person and 2 others need to be on the interview/review panel
- This is also a time to agree the job description and discuss what the volunteer will be doing
- This information needs to be fed back to the PCC



References on the volunteer are taken up. CRB disclosure form is completed



Appointed person is informed of disclosure outcome



Depending on outcome the volunteer can now work with children and young people



The PCC need to minute the appointment at their next meeting

#### **4. Risk Assessment, managing those who may pose harm to children**

If there is someone who may pose a risk of harm to children then a formal risk assessment takes place involving appointed person, clergy, and relevant others. This is facilitated by the child protection adviser.

A booklet *Managing the risk in the Church 2007* is available.

Details are completed on an initial form and a written agreement is drawn up in consultation, which is then signed by relevant parties.

This is monitored and reviewed.

#### **5. Support for those who are survivors of abuse**

Pastoral care is offered to adult survivors of childhood abuse and appropriate support services can be offered. Please contact the Child Protection Adviser for further information.

If the perpetrator could still pose a risk of harm to children then statutory authorities may need to be approached

#### **Additional Information**

The 2008 Diocese of Bath and Wells procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children are based on the following:

*Every Child Matters, Working Together to Safeguard Children* HM Government 2006

*Protecting all God's Children* House of Bishops of the Church of England 2004

Diocesan publications:

*Understanding Child Protection in the Parish* 2005

*Acting in Good Faith*

*From Fear to Freedom*

*Good working practice cards*

*Telling cards*

Further information can be found also at the following:

Children Act 2004 [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/social\\_care/safeguarding/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/social_care/safeguarding/)

Child Protection without the jargon [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

Stop it now! UK [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)

### **Useful telephone numbers**

#### 1. Children's Social Care

##### Somerset

Somerset 0845 3459122

Out of hours 01458 253241

##### North Somerset

Nailsea 01275 851231

Weston Super Mare 01934 627611

Out of hours 01454 615165

##### Bath and North East Somerset

Bath 01225 477000

Out of hours 01454 615165

#### 2. Local Police Station or child protection teams covering Avon and Somerset constabulary area

When reporting a concern state that you wish to report a situation of alleged child abuse. In most offices such a referral will go to a senior officer.

3. NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Child Line 0800 1111

**Diocesan Child Protection Adviser 01749 685135/ 670777**

