

## **EXETER CATHEDRAL SAFEGUARDING**

**Policy, Procedures,  
Background, Guidance and Information**

**March 2016**

**Approved by Chapter, March 17 2016.**

## **1 FOREWORD**

The Bishop of Exeter  
The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy Statement  
The Cathedral Safeguarding Policy Statement

## **2 THE CATHEDRAL'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

- a) The Cathedral's Safeguarding Commitment
- b) The Cathedral's Safeguarding Responsibilities

## **3 PROCEDURES**

What to do if you're worried that a child or adult at risk of being abused or neglect is at risk:

## **4 BACKGROUND, GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION**

What is "Safeguarding?"

### **A. Safeguarding Children (anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday)**

- i. The Right of Children to be Protected
- ii. What do we mean by 'Harm'?
- iii. Who might harm children?
- iv. How might children be harmed?
- v. Where might children be harmed?
- vi. Children in the Church

### **a) Some Definitions, Signs and Symptoms of Child abuse**

- i. Physical Abuse
- ii. Emotional Abuse
- iii. Neglect
- iv. Sexual Abuse

### **b) Other forms of child abuse**

- i. Organised / Institutional Abuse
- ii. Spiritual Abuse
- iii. Abuse linked to Faith or Belief

### **c) Why don't children tell?**

#### **B. Safeguarding Adults at risk of Abuse or Neglect**

- i. What is being at Risk?
- ii. What do we mean by 'mistreatment' and 'harm'?
- iii. Who might harm adults?

- iv. How might harm to adults happen?
- v. Where might harm to adults happen?
- vi. The prevalence of abuse of adults

**a) Some Definitions, Signs and Symptoms of Abuse in Adults**

- i. Physical Abuse
- ii. Sexual Abuse
- iii. Psychological Abuse
- iv. Financial/Material Abuse
- v. Neglect (and acts of omission)
- vi. Discriminatory Abuse
- vii. Institutional/Organised Abuse
- viii. Spiritual Abuse

Signs & Symptoms of Abuse in Adults

**b) Good Practice Principles for Working with Adults**

- i. Creating Safer Environments
- ii. When might intervention be necessary?

**5 USEFUL CONTACTS**

## **1 FOREWORD**

### **Introduction by the Bishop of Exeter and Theological Statement**

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells his followers, 'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill top cannot be hidden' (Matthew 5. 14). Christians are to be a transformative presence in society bringing light and hope to others. In particular we are called to be a beacon of good practice in the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults. As Jesus says uncompromisingly, 'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea' (Matthew 18.6).

Today safeguarding is at the forefront of public consciousness. In recent years we have become acutely aware of the way in which historic incidents of abuse were sometimes hidden or even tolerated. There must be zero tolerance to such behaviour and the church needs to be at the vanguard, fostering a change of culture across society. We have to put our own house in order and embody best practice in our Cathedrals, schools and chaplaincies. As an organisation, it is vital that we keep people safe and support survivors of abuse, apologising for the wrongs of the past.

The church is a place where all sorts of people, including perpetrators of abuse, seek acceptance, redemption and forgiveness. Some perpetrators will be genuine in their repentance, but others may not be. This is why forgiveness and vigilance need to go hand-in-hand. Compassion and naiveté are not the same thing.

This document sets out best practice for all who are working with the young and the vulnerable in the Cathedral. Drawing upon the experience of professionals, it sets out principles to prevent abuse, as well as the protocols that must be followed should a problem arise. By operating within the legislative requirements and following this guidance we can ensure that everyone is given the safety and the security which is their right. It also lists information, resources and contact details if further help is needed.

We are determined that those who work with children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect, many of whom are volunteers, receive proper training and are appropriately supported. As one of the largest providers of voluntary children's and youth work in Devon, we are committed to ensuring that, with God's help, our churches, schools and chaplaincies are safe places where everyone is valued.

+ Robert Exon

The Rt Revd Robert Atwell  
Bishop of Exeter

## **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy Statement**

The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is an important part of all Church activities. Our Safeguarding Policy demonstrates and guides all within the Diocese of Exeter on the part that they play in safeguarding across the whole Church community. The Diocese of Exeter [*i.e. the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Synod and the Diocesan Board of Finance, whose clergy and lay membership is drawn from the Cathedral and deaneries throughout Devon*] is therefore whole-heartedly committed to the wellbeing and protection of all those who are vulnerable or at risk of abuse.

The Diocese of Exeter commends this commitment and its safeguarding policy to Exeter Cathedral and, mindful of their legal responsibilities, encourages them in the strongest possible terms to adopt and proactively implement an appropriate Parochial safeguarding policy as informed by national and diocesan guidance.

The Diocese of Exeter adopts and endorses the principal safeguarding policies of the Church of England: 'Protecting All God's Children' (4<sup>th</sup> edition 2010) and 'Promoting a Safe Church' (2006). Synod is also committed to the implementation of the policies and guidance contained in 'Responding well to those who have been sexually abused' (2011) and 'Responding to Domestic Abuse; guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility' (2006). It is further committed to safer recruitment for posts relating to children and other vulnerable people as set out in the joint Church of England and Methodist 'Safer Recruitment Policy' (2013).

The Diocese of Exeter will also monitor national developments, whether through updated policy and guidance or through reports from elsewhere in the country (such as the Commissaries Report into Safeguarding in the Diocese of Chichester) and undertakes to follow relevant emerging requirements and recommendations in a timely and fulsome manner.

*(Policy Statement adopted by Diocesan Synod on 17 May 2014)*

## **Cathedral Safeguarding Policy Statement**

As members of the Chapter we commit our Cathedral community to the support, nurture, protection and safeguarding of all, especially the young and vulnerable. We recognise that our work with children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect is the responsibility of the whole church community. We are fully committed to acting within current legislation, guidance, national frameworks and the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures. We will also act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Children and Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Probation Services and other agencies to safeguard children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. We welcome staff and volunteers who are recruited in accordance with House of Bishops' Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment 2015. This means we will ensure that those who are employed or who volunteer to work with children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect are suitable for the role, that they know what the role entails and that they are supported in carrying it out.

*(Policy Statement adopted at the Chapter Meeting on September 16 2015)*

The Very Revd Dr Jonathan Draper  
Dean of Exeter

## 2 THE CATHEDRAL'S POLICY

*This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Cathedral's Policies on:*

- *Health and Safety*
- *Safer recruitment of Employees and volunteers (including Recruitment of Ex-offenders)*
- *Management and training of paid and volunteer staff*
- *Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information (data protection)*
- *Work experience*
- *e Safety*
- *Chorister safeguarding*
- *Photography, media and promotional material*
- *Visitors*
- *The supervision of known sex offenders in the congregation*
- *and*
- *The Diocesan Policy on Safeguarding*
- *The Cathedral School's Policy on Safeguarding*

**Important note: a "Child" is defined in law as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday**

### **a) The Cathedral's Safeguarding Commitment**

The Cathedral Church of St Peter in Exeter, as part of the Diocese of Exeter, is committed to safeguarding vulnerable people who are linked with the Cathedral, and whole-heartedly endorses the commitment to safeguarding as described in the 'Joint Statement of Safeguarding Principles for the Church of England and Methodist Church of Britain' We are therefore committed to:

- the care, nurture, and respectful pastoral ministry for all.
- the safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- the establishing of a safe and caring community which provides a loving environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse, and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

To this end . . .

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any responsibility within the Cathedral, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records' disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that for any adult or child who may have been harmed we will cooperate with the police and other statutory authorities in any investigation.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognizes the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation.
- In as far as we are able; we will seek to protect survivors of sexual abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.
- We will 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 appropriate authorities, to any member of our Cathedral community known to have offended against a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect.
- We will follow current legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.
- We will draw in specialist support, as needed to achieve the above.

In liaison with the Diocese, this will be held within the Cathedral by the Dean and Chapter and the Cathedral Safeguarding Representatives. Across the Cathedral community it is recognised that it is the responsibility of everyone to uphold these principles.

### **b) The Cathedral's Safeguarding Responsibilities**

The Cathedral community should accept the prime duty of care placed upon the Dean and Chapter to ensure the wellbeing of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect in their care. In order to meet this responsibility, the Dean and Chapter, on behalf of the Cathedral, will:

- Agree and implement the Cathedral Safeguarding Policy.
- Create a culture of 'informed vigilance', which takes children and adults at risk seriously.
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities with children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect that are undertaken in the name of the Cathedral. (Local ecumenical projects should agree which denomination's Child Protection Policy to follow, and this decision should be ratified by the D&C and other appropriate church leaders).
- Ensure that current Health and Safety requirements are met for all groups involving children or adults. (Child care providers e.g. pre-school and nursery groups or afterschool clubs will take advice from the Diocesan Children's & Youth Advisor about the regulations for their activity including the possible need to register the group with the Local Authority).
- Appoint a Cathedral Lead Safeguarding Canon and Safeguarding Representatives, and inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor of their details. (The Cathedral Lead Safeguarding Canon and Representatives should be people without other pastoral responsibility for children or adults in the Cathedral). The Cathedral Safeguarding Representatives must ensure that any concerns about a child or adult, or the behaviour of an adult towards others, are reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, and that appropriate confidential notes are handed over of any disclosure of concern to the Lead Safeguarding Canon. The Managing Director will inform the Cathedral's insurers of any allegation which are being investigated
- Ensure that appropriate pastoral care is available for any adults who have disclosed that they have been abused as children.
- Provide, as appropriate, support for all parents and families in the congregation, being particularly aware of parents whose children have suffered abuse.
- Ensure that people who may pose a threat to children and adult at risk of abuse or neglect are effectively managed and monitored.
- Appoint a person, to be a children's advocate and ensure that their name is publicized in a way that is accessible to children. (This person should be someone whom children know they can talk to about any problems, if they so wish).
- Display the "Childline" and "Silverline" telephone numbers prominently on an accessible notice board.
- Ensure that all those authorised to work with children and adults at risk of neglect or abuse, or who are in a position of authority (including volunteers), are recruited according to current Safer Recruitment Practice guidelines, and appropriately appointed, trained and supported while in post. Specific Safeguarding training will form part of the training.
- Require all personnel authorised by the Dean and Chapter to work with children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect to read the 'Cathedral Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance Document', and to sign to indicate that they have done so. The Lead Safeguarding Canon will audit this on a six monthly basis.
- Pay particular attention to children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect at times of special crisis (e.g. following bereavement, change of dwelling etc) and any with special needs (including any who might be isolated by a limited understanding of English) to ensure their full integration within the Cathedral community, as people who are isolated in any way may potentially be more vulnerable to abuse.
- Review the implementation of the Cathedral Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance at least annually, to ensure that the Cathedral is adhering to the practice laid down within the Policy.
- The Dean and Chapter will formally adopt the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### **What to do if you're worried a child/adult is at risk of being abused**

It is important that any individual who has been abused or suspects or is worried that a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect is being abused or may be at risk of abuse, is able to make that concern known without delay. The Cathedral therefore provides the following procedures:

One of the Cathedral Safeguarding Representatives should be contact as soon as possible. Details of their names and telephone numbers can be found on the Cathedral Website, or on noticeboards at the Visitors' Reception desk, in the Song School, or by asking a member of the Cathedral staff.

The Cathedral Safeguarding Representative will arrange to meet with you at a mutually agreed location, and will listen to your concerns. A written confidential record will be made by the Safeguarding Representative to whom you speak, who will sign and date the record detailing your name, your concern, allegation or disclosure. This will then be passed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (or Assistant). Only those who 'need to know' will be informed of your disclosure and any notes will be kept in accordance with the Cathedral policy on data protection.

It should be noted that if making contact with any of the above becomes problematic and risks delay causing the potential for greater or further harm, the concern must be referred directly to the police. In the case of an emergency, contact should always be made with the Police.

The Department's contact details are as follows:

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor:

Tel: 01392 345909

Email: [safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org)

Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding

Advisor:

Tel: 01392 245910

Email: [safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org)

Email addresses should not be used as the initial point of contact for any safeguarding concerns where there is the need for swift advice, unless there is no other means of making contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

*The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy contains a Flowchart which gives further detail on the process. The Policy can be viewed on the Diocesan Website*

<http://www.exeter.anglican.org/church-life/safeguarding/> (Control and click to follow link)

*A further list of Contacts is in Section 5 of this Document*



## 4. BACKGROUND, GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

### What is “Safeguarding?”

The safeguarding of children (anyone under the age of 18) and adults at risk of abuse or neglect is an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. The Cathedral believes that the welfare of the child is paramount and that all children should be protected from harm or abuse. The welfare of adults at risk of abuse or neglect is also vitally important. Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and protect them from harm – it is everyone’s responsibility. More than simply responding well to abuse where it is suspected or alleged; safeguarding also requires a wider set of measures, actions and systems that promote a safer culture and environment for children and adults at risk such that abuse can be prevented from occurring. That is the background to the Cathedral’s policy.

#### A. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. The Church is in a special position in that it has significant contact with children within the context of their families, schools, and clubs as well as in Cathedral itself. This presents great opportunity as well as great responsibility. ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2015, states:

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 grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

*‘Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children’, H M Government, 2015*

#### i. The Right of Children to be Protected

For too long children have died or been abused at the hands of those who should have protected them. Therefore the work of safeguarding children is now guided by a significant body of legislation and policy. This serves to reinforce the importance of this work and the basis from which we should be operating. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) challenges us to take measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Within England this is reflected in the Children Act 1989 which provides the statutory powers for the Local Authority to investigate and intervene where there are concerns for significant harm to a child. More specifically, statutory and voluntary organisations are guided by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), which provides specific guidance for faith organisations. The Cathedral policy has been developed against this legislation.

#### ii. What do we mean by ‘Harm’?

The primary concept in safeguarding is recognising and responding to the potential *significant harm* of children. Significant harm is any single or multiple maltreatment or impairment to the health and development of a child and is determined by careful assessment.

#### iii. Who might harm children and young people?

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children, including bullying and abuse through the use of digital technology. Someone may abuse or neglect a child

by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Most child abuse is perpetrated by an adult, male or female, who is known to the child; most often a family member or close friend. Such trusted adults may be in the child's community; they may be trusted professionals, leaders or members of a child's Church.

#### **iv. How might children be harmed?**

Children can be harmed in many ways. Maltreatment of a child occurs where their health or physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, spiritual or social development is damaged or diminished by other people. All abuse is a betrayal of trust and a misuse of relationships and power. The Cathedral community must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically. Abuse can be both an act of commission (doing things we know we should not do), such as physical or sexual abuse or omission (things we know we should do, but fail to do), such as neglect.

Child abuse affects girls and boys, babies and young people of all ages up to 18. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities and/or physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable. Children from all kinds of family and social background can be abused. It occurs in all cultures and religions.

Digital technology such as the Internet and mobile phones are being increasingly used as a medium for abuse. Amongst their peers children may experience 'sexting', 'cyber-bullying' or be enticed to have taken or send explicit photographs of themselves. With adults it may also take the form of the production and distribution of photos or video displaying abusive images of children. Children can also be entrapped and blackmailed by these practices.

#### **v. Where might children be harmed?**

It is important to remember that children might be at risk of abuse in a wide variety of settings, including the family home, the homes of friends or the places in which they learn or are cared for. For this reason it is important to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to create safer cultures, environments and working practices to assist in the prevention of abuse.

Recent studies suggest that there may even be greater risk of harm posed to children who are part of institutional settings, including the Church. The reasons given for this are; the potential for abuse to occur and be over-looked, institutions putting their own needs above those of children, the development of unsafe cultures and leadership practices, the high social regard for the work of the institution creating false security amongst the public, loyalty of workers to the mission over that towards children.

*See: 'The Foundations of Abuse: A thematic assessment of the risk of child sexual abuse by adults in institutions'. Child Exploitation and on-line Protection/ National Crime Agency, 2013*

#### **vi. Children in the Church**

People who look for an opportunity to abuse children often target church communities, sometimes by seeking to become staff members, lay workers or volunteers or by targeting families with children in the church, so that they become trusted and helpful to that family. That is why the national Church and the Diocese now requires every Church Community, including the Cathedral, to set in place rigorous safeguarding and vetting procedures, and is making everyone aware of the fact that the Church was often seen as a soft target by people who wish to abuse children. The more embedded those procedures become, the less opportunity will exist for someone to target a Church community with the intent on abusing a child.

##### **a) Some Definitions, Signs and Symptoms of Child abuse**

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) and represent the recognised categories of abuse that will be used across all organisations and agencies involved in working with children and young people. Under each heading are listed some indicators that a child may possibly be experiencing some form of abuse. They are not exhaustive lists and should not be used as a definitive guide as to whether abuse has or is being suffered. However, in using these signs as a

guide, the presence of any of these signs should cause us to stop and consider the possibility that a child may be being abused.

**i. 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.

***Physical signs:***

Bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse, but they are not the only ones. Other signs include:

- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back abdomen
- Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns, human bites
- Scalds and burns

***Behavioural Signs:***

Sometimes if a child is being physically abuse they may show changes in behavior, such as:

- Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping
- Behaving aggressively or being disruptive
- Showing fear of certain adults
- Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Using drugs or alcohol

**ii. 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 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 the 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 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.

***Physical signs:***

- Speech disorders
- Delayed physical development
- Substance abuse
- Ulcers, severe allergies

***Behavioural Signs:***

- Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting), antisocial, destructive
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
- Passive and aggressive – behavioural extremes
- Delinquent behavior (esp. adolescents)
- Developmental delay

**iii. 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 and 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 and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use

of inadequate care-givers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

***Physical signs:***

- Abandonment
- Unattended medical needs
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Consistent hunger
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor hygiene
- Lice
- Distended stomach or emaciated
- Inadequate nutrition

***Behavioural Signs:***

- Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, or falls asleep in class
- Steals food, begs from classmates
- Reports that there is no carer at home
- Frequently absent or late
- Self-destructive
- School dropout (esp. adolescents)
- Extreme loneliness and need for affection

**iv. 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, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

***Physical signs:***

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal area
- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

***Behavioural Signs:***

- A marked change in the child's general behavior. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically.
- A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected.
- They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult, or refuse to continue with their usual social activities.
- They may start using sexually explicit behavior or language, particularly if the behavior or language is not appropriate for their age.
- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person.

**b) Other forms of child abuse**

Additional forms of abuse are also recognised as being apparent within our communities. Whilst these do not find the same level of consistent understanding or application, they are particularly relevant for the church context, as follows:

**i. Organised/Institutional Abuse**

may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

## **ii. Spiritual Abuse**

is similar to emotional abuse on many levels, in that inappropriate expectations may be imposed upon children and young people. It may involve conveying to children the consequences of sinfulness in an inappropriate manner causing them fear and manipulating them into accepting what someone is preaching /teaching /saying. To say “You won’t go the heaven if you get run over by a bus on your way home” is a form of bullying, exploitation of emotions, manipulation of young minds and a corruption of the Gospel message. For further information, see the relevant sections of national Church of England guidance, particularly ‘Protecting All God’s Children (2010)’ and ‘Responding Well’ (2011).

## **iii. Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief**

is based in a belief in ‘possession’ and ‘witchcraft’ and is widespread throughout the UK. It is not confined to people from particular countries, cultures or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in the UK. Nationally, the number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of ‘possession’ or ‘witchcraft’ is small, but children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, capacity to learn, ability to form relationships and self esteem. Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being ‘different’, attributes this difference to the child being ‘possessed’ or involved in ‘witchcraft’, and attempts to exorcise him or her – either by themselves or through a faith leader. A child could be viewed as ‘different’ for a variety of reasons, such as disobedience, independence, bedwetting, nightmares, illness or disability. The attempt to ‘exorcise’ may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing, and/or isolation (physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect) and usually occurs in the household where the child lives.

This form of abuse has attracted attention from government and the ‘National Action Plan for Tackling Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief’ (2012) states: ‘Child abuse is never acceptable wherever it occurs and whatever form it takes. Abuse linked to belief, including belief in witchcraft or possession, is a horrific crime which is condemned by people of all cultures, communities and faiths.’

## **c) Why don’t Children tell?**

It is commonly believed that a child or young person would resist abuse at all costs or immediately tell a trusted adult. In fact children often need to overcome a number of barriers which may be emotional or intellectual but are very real for them. Children and young people often don’t tell because they:

- are scared - because they have been threatened by the perpetrator
- believe they will be taken away from home and put in care
- believe they are to blame
- think it is what happens to all children
- feel shame, embarrassment or guilt
- don’t want the abuser to get into trouble
- have communication or learning difficulties
- may not have the vocabulary to explain what happened
- are afraid they won’t be believed

All of us have a natural revulsion upon hearing someone has maltreated a child and must resist our inclination to dismiss its possible truth in favour of a more comfortable rationale. The reasons adults do not share their concerns may be because we:

- find it hard to believe what we are seeing or hearing
- cannot believe the suspicion that may be about someone we know
- fear we might ‘get it wrong’ or make it worse
- fear the consequences of getting it wrong – for the child, young person or vulnerable adult, their family and/or for ourselves
- simply ‘don’t want to be involved’
- believe we do not have the information on what to do or who to contact.

In putting the needs and interests of children first in our thoughts and actions, we must be prepared to take what we see and hear at face value and act accordingly. Adults are usually more capable of recovering from misinterpretations and false allegations than a child is capable of recovering from the long-term effects of abuse that have gone without appropriate intervention by those that could have acted but didn't.

## **B. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

'Promoting a Safe Church' (2006) seeks to raise the awareness of members of the Church of England of the needs of adults both within society in general and more particularly within the church community. It should be read in conjunction with the Church of England document 'Responding to Domestic Abuse – guidance for those with pastoral responsibilities' (2006). Society is recognising that people are being harmed when they are vulnerable for various reasons whether permanently or on a temporary basis and this abuse can take place in their own homes, in residential care, at work or in other activities including those provided by the Church. Some adults, who do not see themselves as 'vulnerable' may still find themselves exploited, bullied or abused. The safeguarding of adults who are at risk of abuse or neglect when harm occurs is the responsibility of everyone. Awareness of the ways people can suffer harm encourages Church members to be vigilant both within and outside the church community.

There is a particular responsibility for members of the Cathedral to ensure that all people are treated with respect and that any complaints against church workers are dealt with promptly and fairly. Safeguarding adults within the Cathedral is based on sound pastoral care and good practice.

### **i. What is 'Being at Risk'?**

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is 'invulnerable'; some people may consider themselves to be strong but, when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognize and support those who are identified as being more at risk. In supporting a person at risk we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity. Being at risk is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labeled as 'at risk' in the same way as a child is regarded as being. Childhood is absolute: someone who is not yet eighteen years of age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with an adult at risk of abuse or neglect. Some of the factors that increase risk include:

- A sensory, or physical disability, or impairment
- A learning disability
  - A physical illness
    - Mental ill health (including dementia), chronic, or acute
    - An addiction to alcohol, or drugs
    - The failing faculties of old age
    - A permanent, or temporary reduction in physical, mental, or emotional capacity brought on by life events e.g. bereavement, trauma, or previous abuse

Within this policy, the term 'Adult' will be used to describe an individual for whom any or all of the above may be applicable and for whom the working definition in the next paragraph may be applicable.

## **ii. What do we mean by 'mistreatment' and 'harm'?**

To help us focus on those people for whom the Church should have a particular care, "Promoting a safe church" offers this working definition of vulnerability to help:

*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.*

Mistreatment is defined in 'No Secrets' (2000) as *'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person, or persons'*.

*'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse', Department of Health, 2000*

In the church this could be any misuse of a pastoral or managerial relationship, from the most serious to less severe behaviour, which lies at its root. The term covers abuse, bullying and harassment. Harm is what results from mistreatment and abuse.

## **iii. Who might harm adults?**

Adults may be abused by a wide range of people including relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers. This includes those who work within the context of the Cathedral.

There is often particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of power or authority who uses his or her position to the detriment of the health, safety, welfare and general wellbeing of a vulnerable person. Agencies not only have a responsibility to all vulnerable adults who have been abused but may also have responsibilities in relation to some perpetrators of abuse.

Stranger abuse will warrant a different kind of response from that which is appropriate to abuse in an ongoing relationship or in a care location. Nevertheless, in some instances it may be appropriate to use the locally agreed inter-agency adult protection procedures to ensure that the vulnerable person receives the services and support that they need. Such procedures may also be used when there is the potential for harm to other vulnerable people.

## **iv. How might harm to adults happen?**

Abuse of adults may occur on a single occasion or on multiple occasions. Those adults who are particularly vulnerable due to their circumstances (especially those within residential or institutional care settings) may benefit from additional safeguards that assist to prevent the potential for abuse.

Patterns of abuse and abusing vary and reflect very different dynamics. These include:

- serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' vulnerable individuals. Sexual abuse usually falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse;
- long term abuse in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations; opportunistic abuse such as theft occurring because money has been left around;
- situational abuse which arises because pressures have built up and/or because of difficult or challenging behaviour;
- neglect of a person's needs because those around him or her are not able to be responsible for their care, for example if the carer has difficulties attributable to such issues as debt, alcohol or mental health problems;
- institutional abuse which features poor care standards, lack of positive responses to complex needs, rigid routines, inadequate staffing and an insufficient knowledge base within the service; unacceptable 'treatments' or programmes which include sanctions or punishment such as withholding of food and drink, seclusion, unnecessary and unauthorised use of control and restraint or over-medication;



- Failure of agencies to ensure staff receive appropriate guidance on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice;
- failure to access key services such as health care, dentistry, prostheses;
- misappropriation of benefits and/or use of the person's money by other members of the household;
- fraud or intimidation in connection with wills, property or other assets.

**v. Where might harm to adults happen?**

Abuse can take place in any context. It may occur when an adult lives alone or with a relative; it may also occur within nursing, residential or day care settings, in hospitals, custodial situations, support services into people's own homes, and other places previously assumed safe, or in public places, including churches.

Intervention will partly be determined by the environment or the context in which the abuse has occurred. Assessment of the environment, or context, is relevant, because exploitation, deception, misuse of authority, intimidation or coercion may render an adult incapable of making his or her own decisions. Thus, it may be important for the adult to be away from the sphere of influence of the abusive person or the setting in order to be able to make a free choice about how to proceed. An initial rejection of help should not always be taken at face value.

**vi. The prevalence of abuse of adults**

Information from small-scale studies (e.g. MENCAP 1999, DH/Action on Elder Abuse 2005) indicates that the prevalence of such abuse (within the population that is served by the accepted definitions of an adult who is at risk of abuse or neglect) is higher than in the rest of the adult population. MENCAP's Report 'Out of Sight' (2012) explores this issue further. Aspects of peoples' lives that can explain this increased vulnerability to abuse include:

- Lack of inclusion in protective social networks, including education and employment
- Dependency on others (who may misuse their position) for vital needs including mobility, access to information and control of finances
- Lack of access to remedies for abuse and neglect
- Social acceptability of low standards for care and treatment
- Social acceptability of domestic abuse
- Dynamics of power within institutional care settings

It follows that a key aspect of the prevention of abuse and neglect is that local forums and planning processes (including churches) are accessible to, influenced by and monitor inclusion of, people covered by 'Safeguarding Adults' policies.

*See: 'Safeguarding Adults: A national framework of standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work', ADSS, 2005*



### **C Some Definitions, Signs and Symptoms of Abuse in Adults**

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. The following are taken from 'No Secrets':

ix. **Physical Abuse**

may include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

x. **Sexual Abuse**

may include rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

xi. **Psychological Abuse**

may include 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.

xii. **Financial/Material Abuse**

May include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

xiii. **Neglect (and acts of omission)**

may include 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.

xiv. **Discriminatory Abuse**

may include racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

xv. **Institutional/Organised Abuse**

may occur where there is poor professional practice in a setting. This may take the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice, at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems.

As in the case of definitions of abuse for children and young people, we also need to be aware of forms of abuse that are perpetrated in the name of religion, faith or spirituality that do not find consistent understanding and application outside of the church/faith environment:

xvi. **Spiritual Abuse**

may occur when inappropriate expectations are imposed upon adults. It may involve conveying to them the dire consequences of sinfulness so causing them to accept what someone is preaching /teaching /saying through bullying and causing them to be fearful, not least in people who are frail because of terminal illness, or who suffer from poor mental health.

**Signs & Symptoms of Abuse in Adults**

It may not always be obvious that an adult is being subjected to mistreatment or abuse; and it may not be appropriate to question them at the time. However there may be general indicators that something is amiss and that the adult is unhappy about their situation. Marked change in their behaviour or disclosure of concerns should be discussed with the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.

***Physical signs***

Some general indicators that may be noticed about the adult at risk of abuse or neglect are:

- Covering up or rationalizing injuries or demeaning behaviours toward them
- Confusion and / or denial that anything is amiss despite marked deterioration
- Withdrawal from things that they normally engage with or do
- Not being allowed to speak for themselves, or see others without permission
- Flirtatious, precocious or expressive sexual behavior out of character
- Indications of unusual confinement (e.g. closed off in a room)

***Behavioural signs:***

Behaviours that may be observed about the carer, family member or the person close to the adult at risk include:

- Getting the person at risk to pay for their (e.g. carer's) shopping / petrol / tickets
- Taking advantage of the person at risk's naivety or trust
- Attitudes of indifference or anger towards the person at risk
- Blaming or chastising them – (e.g. suggesting that soiling themselves was deliberate)
- Aggressive or harsh behavior (threats, insults, harassment)
- Inappropriate display of affection or care
- Social isolation of the person at risk, or restriction of activity
- Obvious absence of assistance or attendance

**c) Good Practice Principles for Working with Adults**

All Cathedral activities which support an individual deemed at risk should follow these five principles:

- presume capacity – that people are capable of making decisions, unless there is evidence otherwise
- support individuals to make their own decisions – giving all practicable help before considering making any decisions on their behalf

- distinguish unwise decisions – recognise that the person retains the right to make seemingly eccentric or unwise decisions
- act in their best interests – in all decisions or activities on their behalf
- take the least restrictive option – in any action that might affect their basic rights and freedoms

### **i. Creating Safer Environments**

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. The Cathedral can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers. A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity;
- have their privacy respected;
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible;
- be able to choose how to lead their life;
- have the protection of the law;
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background;
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication;
- Be heard.

### **ii. When might intervention be necessary?**

In determining how serious or extensive abuse must be to justify intervention a useful starting point can be found in 'Who Decides?' Building on the concept of 'significant harm' introduced in the Children Act, the Law Commission suggested that:

*“‘harm’ should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development’.”*

See: 'Who Decides: Making decisions on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults', The Lord Chancellors Office, 1997

The seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear when anxiety is first expressed. It is important, therefore, when considering the appropriateness of intervention, to approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In making any assessment of seriousness the following factors need to be considered:

- the vulnerability of the individual;
- the nature and extent of the abuse;
- the length of time it has been occurring;
- the impact on the individual; and
- the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults.

What this means in practice is working through a process of assessment to evaluate:

- Is the person suffering harm or exploitation?
- Does the person suffering or causing harm/exploitation meet the NHS and Community Care Act (1990) eligibility criteria?
- Is the intervention in the best interests of the vulnerable adult fitting the criteria and/or in the public interest?
- Does the assessment account for the depth and conviction of the feelings of the person alleging the abuse?

## **5 Useful contacts**

### **Safeguarding of children and adults at risk**

#### **NAPAC**

National Association of People Abused in Childhood 0808 801 0331 [www.napac.co.uk](http://www.napac.co.uk)

#### **MACSAS**

Minister and Sexual Abuse Survivors 08088 01 03 40 [www.macsas.org.uk](http://www.macsas.org.uk)

**NSPCC** (24/7 helpline) 0808 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### **ChildLine**

0800 1111

#### **Stop it now**

For people worried about someone else's sexual behavior. For those worried about their own thoughts and behaviors. Friends and relatives of people arrested for sexual offences. For professionals and survivors 0808 1000 900 [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

**Devon Domestic Abuse Support Services** 0345 155 1074

#### **Silver Line**

0800 4 70 80 90 [www.theSilverline.org.uk](http://www.theSilverline.org.uk)

#### **SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone)**

030 30 30 0112 Stop Abuse for Everyone (SAFE) works as part of a multi-agency strategy, to end domestic violence in Devon. SAFE continues to work collaboratively with other domestic violence and abuse organisations in the South West, as well as with a wide range of statutory bodies and other voluntary agencies.

#### **Womens aid**

0808 2000 247 [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) Freephone 24 hr national domestic violence helpline.

#### **Victim Supportline**

08 08 16 89 111 Information and support for anyone affected by crime. Can also put you in touch with your local Victim Support office. Open 9am–9pm weekdays, 9am–7pm weekends, 9–5pm bank holidays.

March 2016 JS/CH/NM.