

Behaviour Code for Adults Working with Vulnerable Adults

This Code outlines the expectations of the Church for all those who work or volunteer with adults. It reflects our desire to follow Jesus in all we do, reflecting his love to those we minister to. It follows from our determination to ensure that our church is a place where vulnerable adults can not only be safe, but feel safe. It reflects our unwavering commitment to the highest possible standards of safeguarding practice.

The Government definition of a Vulnerable Adult is a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself, or unable to protect himself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some ways and at certain times, some people, by reason of their physical or social circumstances, have higher levels of vulnerability than others. Some of the factors which increase vulnerability are:

- 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 in old age
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Following this code will help to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from other adults. It will also help staff and volunteers maintain the standards of behaviour expected of them, and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

Upholding the Code

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report breaches of this code to Sue Bowers (Parish Safeguarding Officer) under the parish's Whistleblowing Policy, or, if necessary, under the parish's Safeguarding Policy.

Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or the local authority children's social care department.

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers

When working with vulnerable adults for the Church, all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by these adults. They therefore must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

When working with vulnerable adults, it is important to:

- Treat them with respect and dignity.
 - Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
 - Protect their individuality - e.g. always use their name.
 - Value their contribution and take their views seriously.
 - Encourage them to participate in, and contribute to, all aspects of church life.
 - Respect their right to personal privacy.
 - Ensure that they know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
 - Provide a warm, nurturing environment for vulnerable adults whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour.
 - Ask about personal preferences, forms of address, how much help may be needed.
 - Share information appropriately.
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- Respect the choices they make, even if they may appear risky.
 - Consider whether they have the capacity to make choices and whether safety concerns might require intervention.
 - Give them the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances.
 - Consult with them about who they wish to be included in affecting their life - in a way that does not further highlight to others their vulnerabilities.
 - Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise their independence.
 - Give them a choice about where they sit, and what activities they participate in, recognizing that some people find making choices stressful.
 - Ensure that there is clear access to all areas which are available to members of the congregation, e.g. where coffee is served, the bookstall, where meetings are held.
 - Do not assume that someone's level of comprehension matches their verbal communication.

Conflicts and disagreements

- Recognize that the church has a duty of care to both perpetrators and victims or survivors if they are both parishioners.
- Bullying and harassment either by or of anyone in the church community is not acceptable.
- Recognize that vulnerable adults may be perpetrators as well as victims of abuse.
- Be fair, sensitive and confidential.
- Set a good example: challenge inappropriate behaviour but do so courteously.
- Be aware of your own power, even if you don't feel powerful.
- Ask for help if you feel out of your depth.
- Think before you act.
- Listen to your instincts.
- It will usually be necessary for a different team or individual to support a perpetrator from that supporting a victim.
- In some cases, it may be appropriate to consult a trained mediator. The Diocese has access to these.
- In exceptional cases it may be necessary to ask the perpetrator to move to a different church. This should then be carefully facilitated. The Archdeacon may need to be involved.

If a volunteer has particular concerns about a vulnerable adult the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be contacted, and if appropriate an incident report written.

These recommendations apply to all church activities with adults who may be vulnerable - for instance, during worship on Sunday mornings, on outings, in groups and when visiting at home. They are designed to protect the adults who may be vulnerable in our care.

They apply as much to church 'in house' activities for regular attendees as to activities which are run in and for the local community.

Activities set up specifically for adults known to be vulnerable will need planning and preparation of a kind not needed for activities open to all. Ensure there are supervision arrangements as necessary.

Date adopted by PCC	17/01/18
Date last reviewed	09/01/19
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