

The Parish of Christ Church Fulwood

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following policy (along with its Annex) was agreed by the Parochial Church Council at Christ Church Fulwood on [date]. The implementation of our Safeguarding Policy is guided by The Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook which can be found online at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

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 Officer (PSO) 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 Adviser (DSA) 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.

Reviewed: Feb 2023.

Next review date: Feb 2024.

Annex to Parish Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

1. This is an Annex to the Christ Church Fulwood Safeguarding Policy.
2. It seeks to respond to the recommendations of the 31:8 Review commissioned by the Christ Church Fulwood Safeguarding Trustee Group in the Summer 2020, and to lay out the expectations and responsibilities of the Incumbent, Wardens and Staff Team when a concern or complaint is raised which may have a safeguarding element.
3. This Annex is not a replacement to the Christ Church Fulwood Safeguarding Policy, the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, The Church of England Safeguarding e-Manual, or other Church of England Practice Guidance, which should also be consulted:
 - a. The Safeguarding e-Manual may be found here:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>
 - b. The Parish Safeguarding Handbook and other Church of England Practice Guidance may be found here:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>
4. This Annex should be circulated amongst the Incumbent, all staff members, the Wardens and the PCC at Christ Church Fulwood. It will be displayed on the Church Website alongside the Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities of the PCC, Incumbent, Staff and Wardens at Christ Church Fulwood

5. The PCC, Wardens and the Incumbent have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in the church community. Staff members, as employees of the PCC, share in this responsibility.
6. This is a spiritual as well as legal responsibility. God's care for the vulnerable and marginalised is apparent throughout scripture. For instance, in Isaiah 1:17, we are called to "learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow".
7. The PCC, Incumbent, Wardens and Staff must follow the Safeguarding Policy, which includes acting to promote a safer environment and culture, responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation, caring pastorally for those affected, and responding to those who may pose a risk to others.

Who could be affected by safeguarding concerns?

8. It is important to be aware that safeguarding concerns can affect everyone, irrespective of social class, race, education or gender¹.
9. However, as explained in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, those who are particularly vulnerable include:

¹ Safeguarding e-Manual – Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, section 1, para 1.5

- a. Children and Young People aged under 18
- b. Vulnerable Adults, defined as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired²

10. The definition of vulnerable adults, above, recognises³:

- a. People may move in and out of being vulnerable at various points in their life or when context changes
- b. the ability of people to keep themselves safe can depend on the context they find themselves in, as well as on their own personal characteristics or abilities
- c. some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility

11. Factors which may increase vulnerability could include [but are not limited to]⁴:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute.
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- A learning disability.
- A physical illness.
- Dementia.
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- Failing faculties of old age.
- Those who are homeless.
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum).
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion.
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood.
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma

² Clergy Disciplinary Measure 2016, section 6

³ Safeguarding e-Manual – Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, section 1, para 1.2.4

Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Appendix – Further Information on Vulnerable Adults, pg 54

⁴ Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Appendix – Further Information on Vulnerable Adults, pg 54

12. Power dynamics may also be an important consideration. In some settings or relationships, people may find themselves in less powerful positions than others, and this could, depending on all the circumstances, significantly impair their ability to protect themselves from physical abuse or exploitation by the person who is in the more powerful position⁵. Examples of such power imbalance may include where there is a significant disparity in age, senior and junior positions in the employment hierarchy, or simply from the spiritual power a church leader has – particularly in the context of a culture of loyalty within a church⁶.

Dealing with concerns

13. Where a potential Safeguarding Concern is raised, the Incumbent, Staff and Wardens must always inform the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) at the earliest opportunity. In their absence, or if they are unavailable, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) should be informed instead.
14. Safeguarding should always be considered when concerns are raised, even if it then later discounted. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the PSOs and/or Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST).
15. It is important that when concerns are reported and when any action is taken to progress them, that contemporaneous records are kept at all times, and that these records are retained securely.
16. Upon receipt of any potential safeguarding concerns, the PSOs will seek advice from the DST, unless the concern is clearly and obviously not of a safeguarding nature.
17. Where the concern is confirmed to be of a safeguarding nature, the PSOs will, in consultation with DST, and if appropriate, inform the Incumbent and Safeguarding Warden and also consider whether the Safeguarding Trustee Group should be advised of the nature of the concern and those involved.

Seeking external advice

18. The DST should always be informed of safeguarding and potential safeguarding concerns, and advice sought, at an early stage, as part of extended confidentiality. The temptation to resolve issues of this nature “in-house” should be avoided.
19. Where appropriate, the PSOs will, in consultation and in conjunction with the DST, Safeguarding Warden, Incumbent and Safeguarding Trustee Group, obtain external independent legal or other specialist advice.
20. Without wishing to be prescriptive, situations where external independent legal or other specialist advice should be sought may include where:
 - a. The safeguarding concern is of a complex, difficult or particularly serious nature;
 - b. The safeguarding concern relates to current or recently-departed members of Christ Church Fulwood staff or the Incumbent;

⁵ Safeguarding e-Manual – Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, section 1, para 1.2.4

⁶ Adapted from 31:8 Review

- c. The safeguarding concern may engage issues of Employment or Charity Law;
- d. There may have been serious errors in how Christ Church Fulwood has handled the safeguarding concern in the past

Informing the PCC

- 21. Where there has been a Serious Safeguarding Incident, the PSOs and Incumbent shall inform the PCC of the nature of the incident so that they can, as trustees, be assured that appropriate action has been taken and can monitor any trends of concern.

Review

- 22. This Annex should be reviewed annually alongside the Safeguarding Policy.