



Safeguarding

Contents

- A General Policy Statement
- B The Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- C Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns
- D Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff
- E Recruitment and Selection Procedures

A General Policy Statement

The Village MCC has a moral as well as a legal duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all people, including vulnerable adults. Throughout these policies and procedures reference is made to "vulnerable adults", however it is recognised that we all have strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions, and all of us can, at times, be vulnerable.

Because of physical or social circumstances some people have higher levels of vulnerability, yet vulnerability is not an absolute and an adult cannot be labelled as "vulnerable" in the same way as a child can (i.e. someone under 18 years of age). 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 a vulnerable adult 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."

Here are some factors that increase vulnerability and people who are in the groups below are likely to meet the criteria for being considered a "vulnerable adult":

- A sensory, or physical disability, or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Mental ill health chronic, or acute
- Dementia
- 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

It is also important for people within a church community to recognise when other members of that community may be being abused outside of church, for example within a relationship or within a residential care home and that they know what to do if they suspect abuse is occurring. The board of directors are committed to ensuring that The Village MCC and umbrella organisations:

provide a safe environment for all people including children and vulnerable adults

Identifies vulnerable adults who are suffering

Takes appropriate action to see that such vulnerable adults are enabled to keep themselves safe from harm, or if necessary are protected from harm

In pursuit of these aims, the board of trustees will approve and annually review policies and procedures

with the aim of:

Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of vulnerable adults and the promotion of a safe environment for all people

Providing procedures for reporting concerns

Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff

The safe recruitment of staff

The organisation will nominate a person with special responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults. This person will have undertaken appropriate training and will be known as the Safeguarding Officer.

Pastors and volunteers working with vulnerable adults will continue to receive training adequate to familiarise them with safeguarding issues and responsibilities and the organisations procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every 3 years.

If appropriate the Board of Directors may delegate this responsibility to a member to the leadership team who may through their employment background have particular expertise in Safeguarding Adults. The Board of Directors will receive from the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults an annual report which reviews how the duties have been discharged. The Board of Directors recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

Discriminatory Abuse:

Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals. It includes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability or religion.

Examples of behaviour: unequal treatment, verbal abuse, inappropriate use of language, slurs, harassment, deliberate exclusion.

Physical abuse:

The non accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment. (Stein, 1991, quoted in McCreadie 1994, taken from the Pan Sussex Multi Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults)

Examples of behaviour: hitting, pushing, slapping, scalding, shaking, kicking, pinching, pulling hair out.

Note inadvertent physical abuse may also arise from poor practice e.g. poor manual handling techniques.

Sexual Abuse:

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without valid consent. Consent to a particular activity may not be given because:

A person has capacity and does not want to give consent

A person lacks capacity and is therefore unable to give consent

A person feels coerced into activity because the other person is in a position of trust, power or authority

Examples of behaviour: Non contact – inappropriate looking, photography, indecent exposure, harassment, serious teasing or innuendo, pornography. Contact: touch, e.g of breast, genitals, anus, mouth, masturbation of either or both persons, penetration of attempted penetration of the vagina, anus, mouth, with or by penis, fingers, other objects. (Brown and Turk, 1992, 1994)

Psychological Abuse:

The use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing and other verbal conduct, or any other form of mental cruelty, that results in mental or physical distress. It includes the denial of basic human and civil rights, such as choice, self expression, privacy and dignity *Examples of behaviour: treating a person in a way which is appropriate to their age and or cultural background, blaming, swearing, intimidation, insulting, harassing, „cold shouldering“, deprivation of contact*

Financial Abuse:

„the unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources belonging to an individual“ (Stein, 1991, quoted in McCreadie 1994)

Those who financially abuse may be people who hold a position of trust, power, authority or has the confidence of the vulnerable adult

Examples of behaviour: misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing changes to a will or last

testament, preventing access to money, property, possessions or inheritance, stealing.

Neglect and acts of omission:

The repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including a failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others, including poor manual handling techniques.

Note: Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 it is now a criminal offence punishable by up to five years imprisonment to „wilfully neglect“ or „ill treat“ an adult lacking capacity.

Examples of behaviour: failure to provide food, shelter, clothing, heating, medical care, hygiene, personal care, inappropriate use of medication, or over medication

Institutional Abuse:

Is abuse which arises from unsatisfactory routines generally in residential or hospital care units. It occurs when the routines, systems and norms of an institution override the needs of those it is there to support.

Examples of behaviour: inflexible routines set around the needs of staff rather than individual service users e.g requiring everybody to eat together at specified times, bathing times limited to suit staff, no doors on toilets. The behaviour arises from lax, uninformed or punitive management regimes. It is cultural and not specified to particular members of staff.

Spiritual abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting an the right of an individual to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Examples of behaviour: telling people that God does not love them because of factors such as their sexuality, gender, past experiences. Telling people that they must undertake specified activities against their will to „please God“

Domestic Violence:

‘...any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.’ (Home Office Website)

There are overlaps between Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Policies and it is important that this does not result in incidences of domestic violence „falling between the two“ Concerns about domestic violence should be passed to the Safeguarding Coordinator as with all other forms of suspected abuse.

Local information on domestic violence is available from Brighton and Hove Domestic Violence Projects

B Designated Staff with Responsibility for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults

Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility

The Safeguarding Officer has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the organisation of issues relating to the welfare Vulnerable Adults and the promotion of a safe environment for Vulnerable Adults.

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring that exempted questions are asked on relevant volunteer and employment application forms. The question will be worded as follows–

This post meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, any applicants for this post who are offered employment or who become volunteers for this organisation will be subject to a criminal record check from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions. A criminal record will not automatically bar a person from successfully taking up this post. All members of the leadership team and any volunteers working with children and young people will be subject to legal checks as required by law.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will have received appropriate training and should keep up to date with developments in adult safeguarding issues. They will also have responsibility for making new staff and volunteers aware of the existing Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults protection policy.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will be the main contact point for Adult Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers. This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police Public Protection Unit..

C Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

If a vulnerable adult tells a member of staff about possible abuse:

Listen carefully and stay calm.

Do not interview the adult, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what they are telling you.

Do not put words into the mouth of a vulnerable person .

Do not promise that you will not tell anybody else.

Reassure the vulnerable adult that by telling you, they have done the right thing.

Inform the vulnerable adult that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter, and of the fact that they will be consulted regarding what happens to the information.

Note the main points carefully.

Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the vulnerable adult said, did, and your questions etc. It is advised you use the template at the end of this policy

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the safeguarding coordinator or any other member of the clergy, Board member or CP Team.

D Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff.

The procedures apply to all staff, whether trustees, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

1.1 In rare instances, staff of Christian organisations have been found responsible for abuse of vulnerable adults. Because of their frequent contact with vulnerable adults, staff may have allegations of abuse made against them. *The Village MCC* recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

1.2 *The Village MCC* recognises that they have a responsibility to deal appropriately in conjunction with statutory guidance with allegations of abuse against vulnerable adults. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

1.3 All allegations (even apparently less serious allegations) are to be followed up and referred to statutory services and/or the Safeguarding Coordinator

The person involved should be suspended from any duties that involve working with vulnerable people pending investigation.

Suspension is to be seen as a neutral act

Pastoral support should be offered to all parties, including the person who has been accused

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 Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator (see 1.5)

If someone tells you that they are involved in committing abuse then follow the procedures for disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult

Throughout any investigation any person involved with *The Village MCC* whether as clergy or lay volunteers will work openly and co-operatively with statutory safeguarding agencies.

1.4 If there is a conviction then procedures for managing the risk of harm will be followed (see 1.5)

1.5 If there is someone attending the church who may pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, or who has disclosed previous convictions for offences against children or vulnerable adults then a

confidential formal risk assessment will take place involving the appointed Safeguarding officer, the Senior Pastor and relevant others. It is important that the person presenting the concerns is aware of and wherever possible consulted and involved in this process. Details of this assessment will be written up along with an agreed contract of behaviour which will be signed by all parties, and the contract of behaviour will be submitted to the Board of Directors. This document will be monitored and reviewed in a time scale agreed at the risk assessment meeting.

E Recruitment and Selection Procedures

The Village MCC's recruitment and selection procedures will take account of the following:
They will apply to all people who may work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The post or role should be clearly defined.

The key selection criteria for the post or role should be identified.

Obtain professional and character references.

Criminal Records Bureau disclosure/List 99 checks (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure).

Appendix 1

Reporting Concerns

The following details must be included in a written complaint if there is any concern regarding a child, young person, or vulnerable adult:

Name/s of child/children/vulnerable adult :

Age/s: D.O.B.

Address:

Name/s of parents/carers:

Date/time/location:

Record here **exactly** what happened/was heard/observed/what was said:

People contacted/action taken:

Signature of author:

Print Name:

Date: Time:

Guidelines on Working Individually with Children /Young People/ Vulnerable Adults

An adult will not remain alone with one child, young person or vulnerable adult. If necessary groups will meet together to ensure that at least two adults are present.

When an activity is being organised, be it on church premises or in our homes or in the community, we will ensure that at least two adults are present.

If you ever find yourself in the situation of working one-to-one with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, perhaps because they want to share with you something private and personal, the level of risk increases significantly. It is your duty to do what you can to reduce this risk by following these guidelines.

- Public or private? First, ask yourself if you really need to go somewhere private. You can often have a fairly private chat by withdrawing to the corner of a busy hall, or just stepping outside the door. If you are able to go somewhere where you can be seen but the conversation cannot be heard, this is the ideal.
- Location. The above will not always suffice. If you need to go to a private room, select your location carefully. Do not choose a room that is at the other end of the building from everyone else, even if it is the most private. Stay as close to other people as possible.
- Transparency. Leave doors ajar and curtains open so that others can see in and you have not shut yourself off to the world.
- Physical distance. Be aware that it may be appropriate to think carefully about the physical distance between you and the child/young person/vulnerable adult.
- Comforting. Often in a one-to-one situation, the person you are dealing with will be upset or emotional. It is ill advised to physically comfort them (e.g. hugging, holding hand) unless they initiate it.
- Work as a team. Always tell another worker who you are working one-to-one with and where. Never just disappear. This is applicable to those times when you need to take an infant to the toilet. Other members of your team should help by periodically walking by, popping his/her head around the door just to check things are OK.
- Comfort zone. Do not do anything you are uncomfortable with. You are not obliged to put yourself in a

one-to-one situation and can choose to end the discussion at any point.

○ Know your limits. Sometimes problems and issues will be discussed with you that you do not have the competence to deal with. Do not be afraid to refer on to a specialist agency or to find out more information about the subject before you meet again.

Guidelines on Touch

Keep everything public.

Touch should be related to the need of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, not the worker.

Touch should be age appropriate - your approach to a five year old will be different to your approach to a fifteen year old or an eighty year old

Touch should generally be initiated by the child.

When needing to touch a vulnerable adult seek their consent first

Avoid physical activity that is, or thought to be, sexually stimulating.

Those in your care have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with you or others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.

All workers are encouraged to point out to one another any concerns they have regarding a worker's physical contact with a young person or vulnerable adult.