



St Helen's  
Bishopsgate

# Safeguarding Policy Part D

## Vulnerable Adults

ST HELEN BISHOPSGATE & ST PETER-UPON-CORNHILL

Revised: June 2024

Date for review: June 2025

# SECTION A

## Guidelines for recognising potential abuse

St Helen's is committed to preventing abuse and neglect taking place and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable adults within our community. We are committed to ensuring that St Helen's:

- provides a safe environment for vulnerable adults and actively seeks to prevent harm
- identifies vulnerable adults who are suffering
- takes appropriate action to see that such vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm.

All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

### Definitions

In the context of this policy, the following terms are used as defined below:

**Adult with care and support needs:** as defined in the Care Act (2014), an adult with care and support needs requires help or support with daily living task such as personal care (dressing, washing, toileting etc), cooking, shopping, cleaning, and managing their finances.

**Adult at risk of abuse:** as defined in the Care Act (2014) sometimes referred to by external agencies as 'adult in need of protection' refers to an adult with care and support needs (as defined above), who is also at risk and above, and as a result of their care and support need(s) is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect.

**Vulnerable adults:** as used in this policy refers to both of the above categories, but also to adults who do not meet the Care Act criteria for statutory support, but who, nonetheless have additional care and support needs in one or more areas of their life.

**Caregiver:** refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults. They are recruited according to the Safer Recruitment and People Management Policy (SRPM).

### Definitions of abuse and signs you may see

Abuse is categorised into the 10 areas listed below. Please see the appendix for definitions and signs of abuse.

1. Physical abuse
2. Domestic abuse
3. Neglect and acts of omission
4. Self-Neglect
5. Organisational Abuse
6. Sexual abuse
7. Financial abuse
8. Modern Slavery
9. Discriminatory Abuse
10. Psychological abuse

## SECTION B

### Next steps in responding to disclosures or concerns of abuse

Please refer to the guidance in Part A Overview of Safeguarding

### How to support vulnerable adults in making their own decisions about support

This guidance has been taken from the Church of England Safeguarding e-manual [Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse | The Church of England](#)

It is important that vulnerable adult's consent to the provision of support or before their personal information or details of their needs are shared with third-party providers of support. The section below, adapted from the Mental Capacity Act 2005: Code of Practice, explains how people can be assisted to make their own decisions about the support in this Guidance.

#### **Providing relevant information**

Does the vulnerable adult have all the relevant information they need to make the decision? For instance, have you given them information about who will provide the services, when and how? If they have a choice, have they been given information on all the alternatives?

#### **Communicating in an appropriate way**

Is the information about the support explained in a straightforward way, without using jargon? Could information about the support be explained or presented in a way that is easier for the survivor or victim to understand (for example, by using "everyday" language or visual aids)?

Could anyone else help support the person or help with communication? For example, a family member, support worker, interpreter, speech and language therapist or advocate. The victim or survivor would need to agree to the involvement of a third person in this way.

#### **Making the person feel at ease**

Are there particular times of day when the survivor or victim's understanding is better? This applies where people may be taking medication that affects their lucidity. Are there particular locations where the survivor or victim feels more at ease? Some places associated with the church, or the abuse may trigger re-traumatisation and therefore affect their ability to decide whether to accept support. Could the decision be put off in order to see whether the survivor or victim can make the decision at a later time when circumstances are right for them?

### 'Deliverance ministry'

Where applicable, St Helen's will ensure that those with concerns that they or others require 'deliverance ministry' would receive adequate pastoral support. Any meeting with such individuals will be held with at least two appropriately recruited members of staff (in line with safer recruitment practices outlined in this policy) and any meetings and/or actions taken will be clearly communicated to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

## SECTION C

### Guidance for visiting vulnerable adults

A situation may arise where home visits for some vulnerable adults in our church family will need to be arranged. Although these people may be well known to us, unexpected circumstances can be encountered during home visits, which may place the person visiting at risk.

To assure the person being visited of their safety, and for the visitor's own safety, the following should be adhered to:

- Where possible, a risk assessment should be undertaken before an initial visit, especially if the person being visited is not well known or if there are known risks. Consider whether the visit is necessary or whether the visitor should be accompanied by another person
- It is preferable to call by appointment rather than to arrive unannounced
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care and/or support that is available
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission and encourage them to set up the contact themselves, unless there are safeguarding concerns
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the ministry at St Helen's Bishopsgate, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the church office
- Keep appropriate records of visits to vulnerable people particularly if there are any risks of misunderstandings.

## SECTION D

### Guidance on communicating electronically with vulnerable adults

#### Do:

- Have your eyes open and be vigilant
- Maintain the upmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with vulnerable adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the PSO
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post
- Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church accounts & profiles separate from your personal social media accounts eg only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, and a separate Facebook profile for private life
- Where possible, only use an approved ministry account to communicate with vulnerable adults. The named persons should be able to access this and review conversations where applicable. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named persons of your exchange when required
- Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted
- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the named persons
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

#### Do not:

- Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with vulnerable adults.
- Add vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts
- Facebook stalk (ie dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them)
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your role.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements
- Breaches of copyright and data protection

- Material of an illegal nature
- Offensive sexual or abusive references
- Inappropriate language
- Anything which may be harmful to a vulnerable adult, or which may bring the ministry at St Helen's Bishopsgate into disrepute or compromises its reputation.

Except for in exceptional circumstances, no communication should occur between 10pm and 8am.

## SECTION E

### External organisations

St Helen's has connections with various external organisations that work with vulnerable groups. This includes Tamar, prison ministry and City Pastors. Such activities operate **separately to** St Helen's and St Peter's and have their own safeguarding policies. St Helen's members who volunteer with them are subject to the safeguarding policies and procedures of those external organisations. However, volunteers may still report disclosures, incidents and concerns to their ministry area leader or the St Helen's Church Safeguarding Officer if they have concerns which relate to the involvement of St Helen's or a member of St Helen's.

## APPENDIX

### Definitions Of Abuse

Taken from Church of England Safeguarding e-manual <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-emanual/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-vulnerable-adults/2>

#### 1. Physical abuse

##### What it is

Physical abuse is the act of physical ill treatment. It may include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate physical sanctions.

Bumps and bruises don't always mean someone is being physically abused. Although there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for, it's important to be aware of the signs.

If someone regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

##### Signs you may see

- bruises
- flinching away from others
- wearing clothes that cover up, even in warm weather
- burns or scalds
- broken or fractured bones
- bite marks.

#### 2. Domestic abuse

##### What it is

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It's important to remember domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- both men and women can be abused or abusers
- and that both men and women can be abused or abusers.

At time of writing, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has been passed, but much is not yet in force. The Act can be found at Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk). This will create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. See Section 3 for more information.

#### **Signs you may see Productivity signs**

- Change in the person's working patterns: for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early
- Reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards
- Change in the use of the phone/email: for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails
- Spending an increased amount of hours at work for no reason.

#### **Changes in behaviour or demeanour**

- Conduct out of character with previous employment history or social engagement
- Changes in behaviour: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed
- Isolating themselves from colleagues or friends
- Obsession with timekeeping
- Secretive regarding home life
- Worried about leaving children at home.

#### **Physical signs**

- Visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations
- Change in the pattern or amount of make-up used
- Change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries
- Substance use/misuse
- Fatigue/sleep disorders.

#### **Other signs**

- Partner or ex-partner following employee in or around the workplace or Church setting or repeatedly turning up at the workplace or Church setting
- Partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule or social activities.
- Flowers/gifts sent to employee for no apparent reason
- Isolation from family/friends.

Stalking and cyber-stalking are also forms of control and abuse. Church workers should remain alert to the use of words, physical or sexual practices to demean and control a vulnerable adult.

## **3. Neglect and acts of omission**

### **What it is**

Carers ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs of the vulnerable adult

Failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services.

The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

### Signs you may see

- An out of character failure to engage in social interaction and activities
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with support, such as medical and social care organisations
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- Poor state of home environment
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Accumulation of untaken medication.

## 4. Self-Neglect

### What it is

Self-neglect covers a range of behaviour related to neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding

### Signs you may see

- Very poor personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes every day
- Unkempt appearance
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter/heating
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- Neglecting household maintenance
- Hoarding
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- Non-compliance with health or care services, accumulation of untaken medication
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

## 5. Organisational Abuse

### What it is

Poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home, for example. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

### Signs you may see

- An unsafe, unhygienic or overcrowded environment
- A strict or inflexible routine
- Lack of privacy, dignity, and respect for people as individuals
- Withdrawing people from community or family contacts
- No choice offered with food, drink, dress or activities
- No respect or provisions for religion, belief, or cultural backgrounds
- Treating adults like children, including arbitrary decision-making.

## 6. Sexual abuse

### What it is

- rape
- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo

- sexual photography or filming, “revenge porn”
- subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts
- sexual assault
- sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

#### Signs you may see

- excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- fear of receiving help with personal care
- reluctance to be alone with a particular person
- self-harming
- poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- the uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- pregnancy in someone who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.

## 7. Financial abuse

#### What it is

- theft
- fraud
- internet scamming
- coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

#### Signs you may see

- Missing personal possessions
- An unexplained lack of money
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity, or being obtained by someone you would not expect
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents
- Appearance of previously uninvolved relatives or ‘close friends’
- Failing to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of someone else.

## 8. Modern Slavery

#### What it is

- slavery
- human trafficking
- forced labour and domestic servitude.
- traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

#### Signs you may see

- Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse and untreated injuries
- Looks malnourished or unkempt, or appears withdrawn and neglected
- Seems under the control or influence of others
- Wears the same clothes every day
- Wears no safety equipment even if their work requires it
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation
- Living and working at the same address
- Appears unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work
- Rarely allowed to travel on their own
- Collected and dropped off on a regular basis early in the morning or late at night



- In a crowded minibus with other workers
- Has no control of their identification documents such as their passport
- Reluctant to seek help and avoids eye contact
- Appears frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- Fear of police, don't know who to trust or where to get help
- Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

## 9. Psychological abuse

### What it is

In adults this may include:

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation
- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

### Signs you may see

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment.

## 10. Discriminatory Abuse

### What it is

- harassment
- slurs or similar treatment because of:
  - race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
  - gender and gender identity, including gender reassignment
  - age
  - disability
  - sexual orientation
  - religion
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - marriage and civil partnership.

### Signs you may see

- Overhearing harassment or abuse
- A person appearing to be excluded from activities or groups for discriminatory reasons.
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic

- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety.

## Other types of abuse

In addition to the categories of abuse, there are a range of identified risks, which for the sake of this policy will be referred to as types of abuse. These all fit within one or more of the categories of abuse. These are sometimes referred to as 'current themes' or 'hot topics' and include, but are not limited to:

## Extremism and radicalisation

### What it is

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. This can include harmful minority religions ("cults")

### Signs you may see

- isolating themselves from family and friends
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

## Bullying, cyber bullying and online abuse

### What it is

Bullying can include many different forms of abuse, including physical and emotional abuse, and typically (but not exclusively) takes place between peers.

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home, online, at work or in church. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying can include:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- shaming someone online
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- revenge porn
- trolling.

### Signs you may see

- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- bullying others.

## Relevance to other countries

Please note that whilst there might be different perceptions of what constitutes abuse in different countries, abuse cannot be understood as a relative concept only applicable in certain contexts. Abuse is abuse. Domestic abuse and the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, for example, are still forms of abuse whichever country they take place in and must be responded to.

## Refugees and asylum seekers

“Refugees and asylum seekers have the same fundamental rights to safety and protection\* as any other person and the fact that their citizenship status may not have been resolved does not alter this..... From a safeguarding point of view refugees and asylum seekers are not necessarily vulnerable and their autonomy should be respected. They are, after all they have gone through, survivors and shouldn't be treated as victims.....However, refugees and asylum seekers may face certain risks associated with their particular circumstances and experiences.....Asylum-seeking children who are unaccompanied are in a highly vulnerable situation”

## Who abuses adults

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer
- Neighbours
- Paid carers and carers within institutions
- Workers in places of worship
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.