



## Catholic Diocese of Leeds

### Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Thank you for volunteering to help in our parish.

Safeguarding involves having responsibility for keeping our children, young people or vulnerable adults safe from harm. When all our parishioners, especially you as volunteers, are aware of safeguarding issues and report any concerns, we can make a real difference to the safety and well-being of the vulnerable members of our community.

The aim of this leaflet is to help raise your awareness of Safeguarding, and to provide clear guidance as to your responsibilities as you undertake your role in the parish.

Together we can make the world a safer place.

For further information please see:

- the Parish Safeguarding Resource Pack, available in your parish or online at [www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/safeguarding)
- the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS), available online at [www.csas.uk.net](http://www.csas.uk.net) or tel: 0121 237 3740.

**Safeguarding** involves protecting vulnerable groups from the sorts of harm described here and on page 3.

If any concerns or allegations arise, we should respond to them as described on page 4.

How to prevent harm - by creating a Safe Environment, and giving appropriate advice to vulnerable groups - is the subject of the rest of this leaflet.

#### What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse involves acts of commission or omission, which result in harm to the child. Abuse may occur in the family, community or institutions e.g. school, or hospital, or in the street.

#### Definitions of Abuse

**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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child they are looking after.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional mal-treatment 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 not valued. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of mal-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic psychological and/or physical needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- References:
- 1974 - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
  - 1989 - Children Act
  - 2004 - *Every Child Matters*, Department of Health
  - 2006 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act

## Who is a vulnerable adult?

A Vulnerable Adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or being exploited. This may be because of their circumstances eg: chronic illness, disability, age, mental health issues or their lifestyle causes them to be at risk in some situations<sup>1</sup>.

### Definitions of Abuse

**Physical abuse** includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual abuse** includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent to or was pressured into consenting to.

**Psychological abuse** includes emotional abuse, threats of abandonment or harm, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse** includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Neglect and acts of omission** 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.

**Discriminatory abuse** includes racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

References: 2000 - *No Secrets*, Department of Health  
2005 - *Safeguarding Adults - A National Framework for Good Practice*  
ADSS (Association of Directors of Social Services)

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is from Leeds City Council's Multi-Agency Protection Unit

## How do we respond to allegations?

If you receive any information about a Safeguarding concern or an allegation, you must do all that you can to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are not put at continued risk and that a proper investigation may be made.

### Key Principles

- ✓ If you suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being, has been or is likely to be abused, you must take action.

#### To do nothing is not an option.

- ✓ The key principles to follow are:

#### Listen - Record - Refer

- ✓ If there is an immediate danger to a child or vulnerable adult, please call the police or Social Services - their local number is on the back page.
- ✓ If there is no immediate danger, collect the fullest possible information at the time the concern or allegation reaches you. That information may include details of what you see, as well as what you are told.
- ✓ At the first possible opportunity, report the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office or to the Parish Safeguarding Representative.
- ✓ Do not under any circumstances alert the alleged abuser, either directly or indirectly, to what has happened. **This is very important.**
- ✓ All information connected with a child, young person or vulnerable adult enquiry is strictly confidential. Do not share any information with any person who does not need to know for the purposes of protecting children, young people or vulnerable adults and carrying out an effective investigation.
- ✓ Keep a record of any information that you provide, and to whom, with reasons.
- ✓ If any investigation is needed, it will be done by the police, Social Services or the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator. To protect vulnerable people they need to make a careful assessment of risk, based on fact and professional judgement, and they - not you - must be the ones to carry out the investigation.

## How do we create a Safe Environment?

Before you have reached the stage of starting your role with children and young people within your parish you will have undergone a recruitment process. You will have seen and agreed to a role description, completed an application form, had your references taken up, attended a brief interview and had a Criminal Records Disclosure (CRB) for the Diocese of Leeds.

The rules to be applied by the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Vetting and Barring Scheme will affect everyone who undertakes a role with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Full details are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

You can read more about Vetting and Barring and the Independent Safeguarding Authority on their website at [www.isa.gov.uk](http://www.isa.gov.uk)

The following checklist aims to help your parish to organise activities and events in such a way as to create a safe environment for all concerned, and to prevent harm to children and young people. Many of the points on the list are quite straightforward, but following them will help you to develop sound safeguarding practices.

- ✓ Ensure that any premises used for parish groups and events are safe and well maintained.
- ✓ Know where the emergency exits, fire extinguishers and alarms are and be fully aware of the evacuation plan in the event of any emergency.
- ✓ Ensure that a first aid kit is available and check it frequently.
- ✓ Keep an up-to-date register of groups - it is important to know the names of all children and young people attending an activity.
- ✓ Ensure that **a minimum of two** leaders is always present, maintaining the gender balance of the group. In larger groups/clubs follow these supervision ratios:
  - 1 adult to every 3 children under 5
  - 1 adult to every 6 children aged 5-8
  
  - 1 adult to every 10-15 children aged 8-11
  - 1 adult to every 15-20 children aged over 11

## How do we create a Safe Environment? Continued...

- ✓ Do not permit any photographs or videos to be taken or displayed of parish events without parental consent. Never show a photograph of a child or young person with personal details (including their name) accompanying it.
- ✓ Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times, set an example you would wish others to follow and always behave appropriately, in accordance with the Code of Conduct (see separate card/sheet).
- ✓ Always think and act carefully to avoid situations which could lead to difficulties or embarrassment, accusations or temptations. An example of 'danger' is one leader/worker and one young person being together 'in private' - perhaps on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car, or in counselling. Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned. Do not just rely on your good name to protect you.

### Activities away from the normal parish meeting place

- ✓ During any activities away from the normal meeting place, a risk assessment should be undertaken and the supervision ratios should be increased accordingly.
- ✓ For any such activities always ensure that parents/guardians have signed a consent form. Ensure that someone knows where the group is working away from the normal meeting place.
- ✓ For day trips involving transport, and for residential trips, there is much more detailed guidance in the Parish Pack. Please see pages 47 - 53 and the various appendices.

## What advice are we giving to children, young people and vulnerable adults?

Every child, young person and vulnerable adult who comes to a Church or Parish Activity is important.

All the adults must make sure:

- ✓ You are treated well and with respect
- ✓ You are listened to
- ✓ All reasonable action is taken to ensure you are safe.

If you are unhappy, muddled, confused, worried, hurt or frightened about anything that happens at a Church or Parish Activity, where you live or anywhere else you go, we want to help.

The people you can tell are:

- ✓ Somebody in your family or where you live
- ✓ A leader who you feel listens to you in the Church/Parish Activity
- ✓ Somebody at school
- ✓ Your Parish Safeguarding Representative
- ✓ The Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser
- ✓ Child Line, NSPCC or other organisation.

Contact details for these last three are on the back page.

You will not get into trouble at Church (in the Youth Group etc.) for telling about something that is making you unhappy, muddled, confused, worried, hurt or frightened. It sometimes takes a lot of courage to tell.

## Contacts

There are many other people who are here to help.

They include:

Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator - Suzanne Mitchell	0113 2618 059 (or 0113 2618 046) <a href="mailto:suzanne.mitchell@dioceseofleeds.org.uk">suzanne.mitchell@dioceseofleeds.org.uk</a>
NSPCC	0800 800 500 <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
Child Line	0800 11 11 <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>
Stop It Now Helpline	0808 1000 900
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141 <a href="http://www.elderabuse.org.uk">www.elderabuse.org.uk</a>
Age UK - formerly Help the Aged & Age Concern	0800 169 6565 <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk">www.ageuk.org.uk</a>
Local Social Services	
Local Police	

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is: