

(1) Keeping records:-Children and Youth Work

It is important that accurate records in safeguarding are maintained. Records are produced to record what happened, what was said, what actions were taken and why, and to provide an account for those who were not there but who may need to make decisions based upon the records of others. The Diocese of Derby has produced a detailed policy on Record Keeping to supplement the national joint Anglican/Methodist **Recording Practice Guidance document 2015**. In addition to those two helpful documents the advice below must be followed:-

(2) Club and Activity Register

- A register should be kept of children, young people or adult members attending, including arrival and departure times. This can be used as a fire register.
- A similar register should be kept of which Leaders and Helpers attended each session.
- A note should be kept of other people or other events taking place in the building at the same time.

Club and Activity Logbook or Recording Sheet

A logbook must be kept and stored in a secure place for recording:-

- A brief record of the programme activity for every session.
- Any unusual events or conversations witnessed by the Leaders or Helpers.
- Observations or signs of harm or abuse, e.g. bruising, inappropriate comments, overtly sexualised behaviour.
- Aggressive behaviour, fighting or bullying.

This may protect both the Leaders or Helpers as well as the children, young people or adults from accusations of assault or abuse, by providing a context for the incident/s or by showing patterns of similar behaviour.

(3) Personal Logs

Personal logs should be kept to record worrying incidents such as:

- Repeated bruising on a child, young person or adult which is unexplained or beyond what might be reasonable to expect.
- Continuing complaints about another person.
- A marked change in a child, young person or adult's behaviour.

This log should be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Link (PSL) and the procedures in section 4 of this document should be followed.

(4) General Information and Consent Forms:–

Permission from parents (those who hold parental responsibility) should always be sought when working with anyone under the age of 18 years.

It is recommended that parents should be sent an information form with the annual consent form. This annual consent form should be returned to the group leader for information and safe-keeping.

Additional consent forms are required for outings or residential events, including sleepovers for anyone under the age of 18 years.

Generally, there will be fewer occasions where written consent is needed in respect of working with adults. The taking and using of photographs is one such area as is the agreement to engage in a program of 1:1 work where you wish to be clear about the arrangements and the boundaries that will be required.

(5) Record retention

Activity registers and general consent forms should not be kept indefinitely. It can be very helpful to look back at what activities were undertaken as part of any review or planning for future programs. Therefore, it is recommended that these records are retained for a period of 2 years.

Club and Activity Logbooks or Recording Sheet and Personal Logs contain safeguarding information and as such need to be kept indefinitely. Where a referral is made to the statutory agencies parish records can be destroyed only where there is a detailed record retained with the DST. The DST will retain all safeguarding files for a period of 75 years, thereafter they will be destroyed securely.

(6) Adult to Child Ratios

Below are the recommended minimum ratios of adult workers to children for all specific indoor/outdoor activity or holiday events. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8's. In calculating the ratios, you should include helpers who are below the age of 18 within the numbers of children or young people. You should also increase the number of adults if you have young people with additional needs, are taking children away from their usual venue, participating in an activity which requires increased supervision or if you have a number of new children whom you are still getting to know.

Adult to Child Ratios

2 years & under 1 :3

3 years 1 :4

4 to 8 years 1 :8

Over 8 years See below

For children over 8, there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio is two adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children. Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with additional needs.

In some circumstances a worker might be alone with a child. Examples include a small group situation, listening to a child, acting as a mentor or in transport arrangements. Be specific in your written guidance and expectations and make sure that the parents have given consent and the PSL is aware of when 1:1 working is necessary (See Lone Working below).

For adult groups there are no official guidance. The Diocese recommends that the ratio for over 8 years is used as a guide. There should be a minimum of two Leaders (with Enhanced DBS) for any group activity. For home visiting and pastoral visits to those in residential care homes, prisons and hospitals, there should always be a DBS checked worker in attendance and the adult should never be left alone with someone who has not been approved through the Diocese. Many of these institutions will have their own regulations that will need to be complied with, so it is advisable to check before any worker visits. Please note that many education establishments regard the DBS certificate as being out of date after three years. If you are a regular visitor to such a place, please make sure you have an Enhanced DBS that is within the three year period and contact the DST if you need further advice.

(7) Parents/carers staying with children's groups

It is possible that parents/carers of younger children may wish to stay with them in their activity on occasion. Some of these may want to respond to children for whom they are not responsible. However, while this natural relationship should not be discouraged, the demarcation between validated leaders and other adults must be maintained.

Toileting and other personal care are examples of activities that should remain the responsibility of parents/carers for the child, unless specific authorisation has been given by the child's parent or carer for the group leaders to undertake those duties.

If you have concerns that a particular adult is getting overly involved with other people's children, discussion should take place with the PSL as how best to address this.

Some vulnerable adults have full time carers or mentors who will accompany them to activities run by the church. In this situation the worker does not count in the group ratios and they should not be encouraged to assist in the care of others, for whom they are not responsible.

(8) Liaison with Parents/Home

Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents/carers may or may not attend church and it is important therefore that they have been given information about the group including contact telephone numbers. It may also be useful for the church/organisation to issue formal identification.

Guidelines for visiting a child's home:

- Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent/carer is absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:-

Purpose

Time you arrived and left

Who was present

What was discussed

- If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them if the child is "home alone" or with other children.
- The invitation of a child to a worker's home must be done with the knowledge of the team/leadership and the PSL. The permission of the parent/carer must also be obtained in writing and where this is to be a 1:1 meeting, there should always be another validated adult present throughout the visit.

(9) Children or Adults coming in from the street

Sometimes children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision will want to join in with church activities (e.g. children's club, Sunday school) without the knowledge of their parents. The following guidance is recommended as best practice:-

On arrival, welcome the children and try to establish their names, ages, addresses and telephone numbers. Record their visit in the register.

- Ask the children if their parents/carers are aware of where they are, and what time they are expected home. If this is before the session ends, the children should be encouraged to return home, unless permission to stay can be obtained from the parents/carers via a telephone call. In any event suggest the child obtains the parent's/carer's permission to return the following week.

- Link the visiting children with regular attendees who can introduce them to the group and „show them the ropes“.
- On leaving, give the children a leaflet about the group with contact telephone numbers, a letter to the parents/carers inviting them to make contact and a consent form if they wish their children to become regular attenders.
- Without interrogating the children, you will need to find out as soon as possible whether they have any special needs (e.g. medication), so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.

When working with homeless adults you need to balance welcoming them into the church activity with your need to protect those whom already attend and might be vulnerable. It is good practice to try to establish the person's name and where they are staying in case this is needed at a later stage. All new comers to the church will need to feel welcomed and this is particularly true of those who are homeless. If you are concerned about their safety or the safety of another adult or a child, you should contact the DST. It is important that you consider safer working practices and do not place yourself or anyone else in a vulnerable situation.

(10) Detached Youth Work

Detached Youth Work is a form of street-based youth work provision, which operates without the use of a Centre and takes place where children "are at" both geographically and developmentally. This work should be planned and team members should be trained for this role.

It is important that a detached programme has aims and objectives. Questions to be asked are: what are you aiming to achieve and what will be the benefits of the work for the children and the church? The following advice is:

- Detached workers should always work at least in pairs.
- A child may wish to have a one-to-one conversation with a youth worker; this may be acceptable so long as the worker stays in sight of other members of the team.
- Team members should carry a mobile phone and should be aware of other members of the team, their whereabouts, and actions.
- Team members should carry an ID card.
- Allow sufficient time at the end of a session for evaluation and recording.

(11) Drop-in Centre

Drop-in Centres operate in a similar way to detached youth work. Apart from the impracticality of keeping a register of the children or adults attending or obtaining consent from parents/carers, the advice contained in this section is relevant and applicable for this type of activity.

It is difficult to keep track of who is actually in the building, therefore it is important that churches and organisations:-

- Conduct regular fire drills to ensure that the building is evacuated completely and within a set time scale.
- Ensure all users of the drop-in centre only have access to specific areas of the building.
- Work with the group members to negotiate ground rules for acceptable behaviour in and around the premises and decide what age range you will work with.
- Monitor and, if necessary, supervise any grounds around the building and the immediate vicinity.
- Get to know the names of the children or adults and, if possible, learn and note any special needs or health issues.
- A record sheet should be completed at the end of the session.
- Consider how to call for help, should an incident occur or if parents or others need to be contacted.
- Ensure that staff are trained and supported.
- Outings and visits will require a completed consent form and risk assessment.

(12) The use of restraint

No Child, young person or adult should be physically restrained except as an absolute last resort to prevent injury to themselves or another person.

Make every effort to move the adult or child away from the immediate area at an early stage.

- Talking calmly to them will reassure them that you remain in control of the situation.
- Do not shout or lose your temper.
- Make sure that only one person takes the lead in resolving the situation with assistance from other adults.
- Warn the child or adult about their unacceptable behaviour and be clear that they may be asked to leave or be collected by a parent / carer, or even the Police.

- Parents must be informed if a child needs to be excluded from any particular activity.
- Keep a record of what decisions you make, and why, and pass them onto the DST.
- If you have cause to exclude the same person from activities repeatedly, you should discuss it with your PSL as disruptive behaviour could indicate other issues in a person's life.
- Where a person regularly presents with challenging or concerning behaviour, efforts should be made to learn what other support services are involved and try to link in with them. Discussions with the child's parents, or other professionals working with the person, in this instance is crucial.

(13) Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Substances

It is a criminal offence to allow any child in the care of a church group or organisation to produce, possess, use or supply illegal drugs. It is also inappropriate to provide any child or young person under the age of 18 with alcohol. Appropriate licenses are required for the selling of alcohol at church functions and you should ensure that your PCC has the relevant permissions.

In group settings role modelling can be a powerful influence upon the behaviours of others. Inappropriate behaviours might be copied by those who are more vulnerable or likely to be susceptible to peer influence. Such behaviours need to be challenged by the group leaders and helpers at the time.

It is important that workers role model good conduct. It is never appropriate for a worker to be working while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, neither is it appropriate for a worker to offer a child or young person under the age of 18 cigarettes. The national guidance states that:-

Now the minimum age is 18 in order to buy cigarettes, rolling tobacco, cigarette papers and other smoking products. Also, if you are under 16 and a police officer catches you smoking in a public place, be aware that they have a duty to confiscate your cigarettes.

When working with children, young people or adults misusing alcohol, tobacco or other harmful products the following guidance should be used:-

- Asking the child or adult to stop the behaviour that is causing concern.
- If the child is under 16 years you must inform parents/carers
- If the child is over 16 years inform the parents/carers with their permission.

- Discuss with the child or adult the proposed course of action, particularly if they re-offend, including informing the police and suspending them from the group if the behaviour is illegal.
- Write down the content of any discussion including the action taken, sign and keep this in a secure place and send a copy to the DST.
- Liaise with either the DST or the Diocesan Youth Adviser and the police to devise a strategy for dealing with the use of illegal substances.
- If it is thought that the child is suffering significant harm then, consult the PSL and follow the flowchart.

(14) Helping others to help themselves

Children and adults may have a confused understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour in adults. Abusers may present themselves as having authority in order to convince or silence their victims. This may be the authority of a parent/carer, a church leader or another trusted adult.

The child or adult needs to be able to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable behaviour and be empowered to take appropriate action when threatened with harm.

To help them help themselves you should:-

- Always act with integrity, consistency and honesty so that you may be seen as trustworthy and potentially helpful.
- Be sensitive and aware so that you do not miss tentative requests for help.
- Consider the wider picture, for example, can parents, carers or other trusted adults be enlisted to help.

(15) Those with a Disability or Additional needs

The available UK evidence on the extent of abuse to those with additional needs suggests that they are amongst the most vulnerable in our society and they are at increased risk of harm. Also the presence of multiple needs increases the risk of both abuse and neglect.

There are a number of reasons why those with additional needs are likely to be more vulnerable to abuse e.g.:-

- Communication difficulties may make it difficult for them to tell others what is happening.
- Those with complex needs tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, health or care workers) and may require higher levels of intimate personal care.

- They often have fewer outside contacts than their peers (Socially isolated).
- They may have impaired capacity to resist abuse.
- Attitudes can play a part, for example, the belief that a child or young person with a disability cannot be sexually abused because they are seen as “a-sexual”.
- Not understanding or being aware of what is or is not appropriate behaviour.

Leaders must gain an understanding of the individual’s additional needs in a culture of openness, in order to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made to any activities planned.

Those with additional needs have the same rights as anyone else and it is important to respond appropriately when they are seen to have bruises or other marks, signs or indicators of abuse and not to assume that these are due to the disability.

Sex offenders may target those with Additional needs in the belief that they are less likely to be detected. There may be more opportunity to groom a person with additional needs.

Additional areas where you might see signs of abuse to those with additional needs may include:

- Force feeding
- Excessive physical restraint or rough handling
- Misuse of medication
- Failure to follow medical recommendations
- Invasive procedures against the person’s will

When a person has communication impairments or learning difficulties, special attention should be paid to their communication needs and to ascertaining their perception of events, and their wishes and feelings allowing enough time for them to express themselves freely. You may need to access specialist help from those using specific communication aids/language (e.g. Bliss boards, Makaton or British Sign Language). If you need additional advice remember to contact the DST.

REMEMBER: safeguarding those with additional needs is essentially the same as for anyone else and you should follow the flowchart in the same way.

(16) Transport

By private car: These guidelines apply to all drivers transporting children, young people or adults considered to be vulnerable, which is organised by or on behalf of a church/organisation. They do not apply to private arrangements made by those with

parental responsibility or a vulnerable adult who is deemed to have capacity. In very exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to transport a child, young person or vulnerable adult without having time to cover all the issues below. If this is the case the minimum requirement is that the person offering the transport must agree that there is no alternative with the Group Leader, Incumbent or the DST. If in doubt advice from the DST should be sought before the journey takes place.

(17) General:

- Only adults approved by the group leader and holding an enhanced DBS should transport children, young people and adults considered as vulnerable on behalf of the parish.
- Those transporting others should sign an undertaking to abide by these guidelines.
- Parental consent is required for all transport of children including to and from a meeting or as part of an activity.
- Except in emergency, all journeys should be with the knowledge and consent of the leader in charge.
- The back seats should be used first when transporting children.
- Under normal circumstances, no adult should be alone in a vehicle with a child.
- Consideration should be given to suitable additional adults to support a child with additional needs or challenging behaviour.
- When dropping children off, make sure they are met by their parent/carer or someone designated by the parent /carer and that they have access to their home.
- If child restraints are needed they should be fitted in accordance to the Highway Code.

(18) Driver Issues:

- It is good practice to limit transport to drivers over 25 who have held a full licence for two years.
- Drivers with unspent convictions for Drink Driving, Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children. Those with spent convictions for these offences should be assessed by the DST as to their suitability to convey people on behalf of the parish.
- Any driver transporting others on behalf of the parish must have appropriate insurance cover and appropriate license to cover the vehicle used.

(19) Vehicle issues:

- All cars must comply with the law in respect of MOT and roadworthiness.
- All drivers must hold comprehensive insurance and the leader must check that it covers the transportation that is proposed.
- All drivers must comply with the seatbelt and child restraint law and must only use seats that are designed for the vehicle.

(20) By minibus:

- Minibus law has changed over the years and may continue to do so. However, currently, a small bus permit is required in all cases to carry between 6 and 16 passengers. Up to date regulations and a permit application form can be found by an internet search on "small bus permit".
- The Board of Education at Church House has two Small Bus Permits available for group use; contact the Youth Adviser for more information.
- Speed limits for minibuses are currently 50mph on single carriageway roads, 60 on dual carriageways and 70 on motorways.
- Everyone must have a proper seat and a seatbelt.
- Except in emergency, an additional validated adult should be present. Further information from www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

(21) First Aid

All premises used by members of the public should have a properly equipped First Aid kit. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container and the designated worker should regularly check the contents. Workers should be encouraged to attend training run by the Diocese or by the Red Cross etc. and to keep their training up to date. First Aid training is advertised in the Christians Learning Together Programme and on the Diocesan Website. It is good practice for there to be a nominated First Aider at each group session.

First Aid Kit - Suggested minimum contents:

- 2 x small wound dressing
- 2 x large wound dressing
- 1x eye pad
- 2 x triangular bandages
- 2 x non-stick dressing 5cm x 5 cm
- 2 x non-stick dressing 10cm x 10cm
- 1 reel of low allergy adhesive tape
- 1 pair of scissors
- 4 x safety pins
- 5 x pairs of disposable latex gloves

2 x conforming bandages 6cm
1 x resuscitation shield
2 x crepe bandages 5cm
20 x wrapped adhesive dressings (plasters)
1 x disposable apron
1 x sealed eye wash
1 x emergency aid card
4 x individually wrapped cleaning wipes (non alcoholic)
An accident report book with forms (available from any good stationers)

(22) Children or Adults Placed with Host Families

Exchange visits may be arranged locally, nationally or may be foreign exchanges. The children or adults on exchange visits typically stay with a family selected by the local Church or an approved organisation.

With regard to children (anyone under the age of 18 years), unless the visit is for more than 28 days, the local authority (Children's Social Care) need not be involved.

It is for the Church or organisation to make arrangements to select host families locally and to negotiate the provision of families with the church or organisation in the area of the visit. All adults within the host family **must** have an enhanced DBS check in place throughout the duration of the stay.

If there is any reason to believe that a child within the host household is subject to a child protection plan or is the subject of child protection enquiries, the household should be considered to be unsuitable as a host family.

The Church organisation remains responsible for taking reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children or adults when they are on an exchange visit. The Church organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure that the relevant other Church or organisation on the exchange visit takes a comparable approach. It is good practice for the parish to obtain 2 written references for the host families before they are put forward as a suitable host household. You should do as much appropriate matching as is possible as this will increase the likelihood of a successful stay; there are no easy shortcuts. You should consider as a minimum the following:-

- Age
- Gender
- Social Interests
- Sibling Mix or grouping
- Capacity in the home
- Any additional needs
- Any extra equipment needed
- Any transport issues
- Language issues

The above list is not exhaustive or in any priority order. If you need further advice, please discuss with the Diocesan Youth Adviser or the DST.

(23) Sleepovers

Where you organise sleepovers in churches, church halls or other public buildings which are not designed for that purpose, the following good practice **must** be followed:-

- Males and females should be allocated separate sleeping areas.
- Consideration should be given as to where staff should sleep so as to ensure the safety, security and supervision of children.
- Ensure parents understand and agree to the planned sleeping arrangements.
- There must be two clear unobstructed marked exits from the sleeping area to the outside.
- All exit doors must be easy to open from the inside.
- To prevent the spread of fire and smoke, all internal doors should be closed at night.
- Portable heaters should not be placed in such a way that they would block an exit if they caught fire.
- Portable heaters should be turned off at night.
- If there is no emergency lighting system that turns on when the power fails, leaders must have torches.
- There must be no smoking inside the building at any time.
- A list of all those staying should be kept by the main exit door and a duplicate copy with the group leader.
- Practice evacuating the building to the agreed assembly point before anyone goes to bed.
- Do not park vehicles where they would obstruct an exit, a fire appliance or Emergency vehicles accessing the building.

(24) Baby Sitting Circles/Respite sitting

Many churches and some Christian organisations try to help their members who have young children or who care full time for adult relatives, by organising a pool of babysitters/ respite sitters. Care should be taken when offering such services as it has the potential for providing access to young children or vulnerable adults who could be exploited.

If you run, or wish to run, such a service please ensure that:-

- It is co-ordinated by a validated leader.
- For children, the helpers must be over 16 and for adults the helpers must be over 18 years. In all situations the helpers must have an Enhanced DBS.

Any concerns about the sitting arrangements or adverse comments from children, parents, carers or adults must be discussed with the PSL and the flowchart will be used to decide on any further action that may be required. If in doubt, the PSL should consult the DSA for advice.

(25) Photography

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches and organisations must be careful if they use clearly identifiable photographic, video or web cam images.

- Permission (verbal or written) must be obtained from all the individuals (children and adults) before the image is made. If anyone declines permission their wishes must be respected. In seeking permissions you will need to be very clear about:-
 - What the image will be used for
 - How it will be stored securely, and
 - How and when the image will be destroyed.
- Some children may be the subject of disputed legal proceedings, a result of which is that information about their whereabouts has to be restricted (sometimes with a court order).
- It must be made clear why the image is being used and who might want to look at the pictures.
- Details of the identity of any children must not be attached to the photograph or image.
- Written and specific consent must be obtained from parents or carers before using photographs on a website and ensure any images appropriately represent your activity/event. This can be included in the annual consent form.
- Care must be taken about using children who are scantily dressed, eg on the beach or swimming. Focus on the activity, not the child/adult and try to avoid full face and body shots.
- Separate permission may need to be obtained if any of the images are passed to the press or media.

(26) Public displays

Care should be taken in constructing public displays of the work completed by children which is accessed by all. While you will want to celebrate their achievements and

efforts, displays that clearly identify the work of specific children should only be displayed with the specific permission of the child and their parent/carer. Some abusers will use information like this to engage the child in conversation and gain the child's trust.

(27) Mobile phones, camera phones and text messages

The use of mobile phones can be a valuable tool to aid communication. However, they can also be misused. The following guidance must be followed:-

- Care should be taken when giving out or requesting private numbers, ensuring that they are only used as part of the function of the church or organisation's activities.
- The use of camera phones should follow the Photography guidelines above.
- If you allow young people to use their phones during a church activity, it is good practice to make it clear that the responsibility for that use remains with the child.
- Mobile phones are often the reason for children and young people being victims of crime and have been used to record crimes (e.g. so called "happy slapping"). Leaders and helpers should be mindful of these risks when working with children and young people.
- Care should be taken when using text messaging and other instant messaging services. The language used in quick messaging is often open to misunderstanding and interpretation. It is not unusual for people to imagine "feelings" towards people in roles of responsibility and the nature of texting can contribute to this confusion.
- If a child shows you any inappropriate text messages, photos or videos that they have received or made, try to make sure they do not delete them as they may be evidence of an offence. Consult your PSL to see if further action is needed and follow the flowchart.
- If you receive a text from a child, parent/carer or adult, that causes you concern, it should not be deleted. The PSL should be informed and a record kept. If deemed appropriate by the PSL, action should be taken in line with these procedures.

(27) Social Network Sites, Web Accounts, etc.

Many churches are using social network sites to build an online community or to keep the wider community aware of things that are happening within the church. This is a good way to share information and engage in an on-going conversation. It is also a way of sharing concerns (such as lobbying on social issues or and photographs). Young people often initiate these groups and promote them with their friends. There is a recognised difficulty that some people set different levels of safer practice in the virtual world of the internet than they would in the real world. This is not exclusive to

young people and many users from an older generation (who have not grown up with technology) struggle to see the dangers of the internet.

If the “Facebook” or similar accounts or groups are set up in the name of the church or youth group, it is essential that a leader becomes a member of it and oversees the content and activity.

There are other considerations that people need to be aware of:

- Leaders should always maintain a professional and clear boundary between their personal and professional lives by customising their privacy settings and avoiding uploading inappropriate personal information that might present a reputational risk to their role, the parish or even the wider church.
- Events or parties at a private address should be reserved for the group’s private area.
- The guidelines on photographs should be followed when uploading images.
- Leaders should monitor conversations, the fun wall, images and the behaviour of members of the group and challenge, educate or intervene as necessary.
- Leaders should discuss any concerns with the PSL and the Diocesan Communications Team are available to offer specialist advice if needed.
- If any child, parent/carer or adult raises concern about the content of any social network site connected to the church, the PSL should be advised and the flowchart followed.

(29) Computers and Laptops

Care should be taken when allowing the use of computers (including laptops) to ensure that users are not given access to information that is either private, personal, of adult nature in content or confidential. Users must not be left to use computers unattended even if programmes are password protected, if there is material held on the computer to which they would not have permission to access.

If the computer belongs to a church or organisation:

- Adequate protection measures must be installed to prevent access to inappropriate adult sites including on-line purchasing, gambling and/or pornography.
- Retail sites that may be useful to your church or organisation should be protected by a password if the machine is to be used by non-church officers (paid and volunteers).
- If the laptop is lent out, it is essential that there is a robust system for recording who has used it, when and for what reason.

- It is good practice to have a sheet accompanying loaned equipment specifying the responsibilities of the borrower.
- Equipment should only be lent out for activities related to the church or organisation.

(30) Whistle-blowing

All suspicions and allegations have to be taken seriously and appropriately reported. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where any form of abuse is suspected or where there is loyalty, sometimes misplaced, to a colleague or to someone known to you. In addition, individuals may not express their concerns because they fear harassment or victimisation.

In these circumstances it may be thought easier to ignore the concern rather than report what might be regarded as just a suspicion of malpractice. It is important to understand these feelings but not to allow them to interfere with any action we feel is necessary. The Diocese is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment you are encouraged to come forward and voice any concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

The Bishop expects all individuals in the church to discuss concerns they have about the safety and welfare of a child or adults in the church setting with the PSL and through them, their Archdeacon and the DST. Not acting is not an option.

It is essential that these concerns are reported and an individual who raises them in good faith, will be supported. For additional advice see the Diocesan Whistle-blowing policy and/or contact the DST.

Safer Working Practices

(31) Lone Working

There will be occasions when lone working is not only inevitable but is desirable. However when you are working on a 1:1 basis there are some steps that you can take which will help reduce the risk of harm and protect workers from inappropriate alleged misconduct:-

- Each request for 1:1 working should be risk assessed before any agreement is undertaken to embark on lone working. Factors that might make risk increase could include known history of violence, Mental Health, illegal drug misuse, alcohol misuse, a request to meet in an isolated place etc.
- Consider whether 1:1 working is the most appropriate and if not, consider working alongside a colleague.
- If you decide to offer 1:1 meetings, are there steps that you can take to minimise the risk? These can include arranging to meet in a public

place, ensuring that someone knows what time you are visiting, where and for how long, arranging a phone call shortly after the meeting has started to check that you are OK, letting a colleague know that the session is ended, have an exit strategy just in case you suddenly feel ill at ease, debrief after the session and make notes of what was discussed. If in doubt, please seek advice from the DST.

- Any concerns arising from lone working should be shared with the PSL and follow the flowchart for any further action needed.

(32) Safe Boundaries

Many of the people we serve will not see the demarcations that we see in the different roles within the parish. You are undertaking a role within the church and are often seen as someone with authority and trust. This can be misused and care needs to be taken to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained. There are four main boundaries that are often crossed in which problems usually arise. They are:-

- Physical Boundaries
- Relational Boundaries
- Power and Role
- Confidentiality

Physical touch can be important to create connectivity but remember any physical contact should be undertaken with the other person's consent and to meet their needs not your own. It is worth reminding that if an action can be misinterpreted or misunderstood by someone it is probably best avoided and think of an alternative. E.g. placing a hand on someone's arm can be as comforting as giving them a hug if they are upset.

The role you undertake comes with assumed authority and a set of values associated with the church. Therefore it is important that you agree clearly what the expectations are and that duties correspond with the role description. In the past problems have arisen where, for example, pastoral visiting expands to doing errands or odd jobs and over time an inappropriate dependency is created. It is not that the help is not needed, rather that it needs to be agreed whose role it will be to complete the task.

Similarly, some roles attract those who enjoy the kudos that accompanies the role and may on occasion exert power inappropriately. Remember that all abuse is effectively a misuse of power within an interpersonal relationship. Those who have already experienced abusive relationships may be sensitive to those who misuse the power attached to a particular role. Research also shows that individuals are more likely to be abused if they have already experienced abuse in the past.

In many of the roles within the parish, workers will have access to confidential information or will receive information that needs to be kept confidential. This has to be balanced with knowing what information should be shared in order to keep children or adults safe from harm (see the guidance on information sharing and record keeping)

(33) Confession

It is in everyone's interest to recognize the distinction between what is heard in formal confession, however this might take place, which is made for the quieting of conscience and intended to lead to absolution, and disclosures made in pastoral situations. For this reason, it is helpful if confessions are normally heard at advertised times or by other arrangement or in some way differentiated from a general pastoral conversation or a meeting for spiritual direction. A stole might be worn and a liturgy should be used.

Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of Clergy also advise that:-

The ministry of absolution may only be exercised by the minister who has the cure of souls of the place in question or by another priest with that minister's permission, or by a priest who is authorized by law to exercise ministry in that place without being subject to the control of the minister who has the cure of souls (e.g. a priest who is licensed to exercise ministry under the Extra-Parochial Ministry Measure 1967).

This rule is subject to an exception that permits a priest to exercise the ministry of absolution anywhere in respect of a person who is in danger of death or if there is "some urgent or weighty cause" (See Canon B 29.4). Before undertaking the ministry of absolution a priest should receive appropriate training and be familiar with any guidelines published by the House of Bishops that relate to the exercise of this ministry.

A clear distinction must be made between pastoral conversations and a confession that is made in the context of the ministry of absolution. Where such a confession is to be made both the priest and the penitent should be clear that that is the case. If a penitent makes a confession with the intention of receiving absolution the priest is forbidden (by the un-repealed Proviso to Canon 113 of the Code of 1603) to reveal or make known to any person what has been confessed. This requirement of absolute confidentiality applies even after the death of the penitent.

If, in the context of such a confession, the penitent discloses that he or she has committed a serious crime, such as the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, the priest must require the penitent to report his or her conduct to the police or other statutory authority. If the penitent refuses to do so the priest should withhold absolution.

Clergy and may seek further advice from their Bishop and the DST prior to embarking on the provision of formal confession.

(34) Deliverance Ministry

It is sometimes suggested that a child or adult is possessed by evil spirits and that this may account for behavioural issues in that person or be considered to justify harsh treatment by the parents or carers. Parish priests and others should consult the bishop and should note that most parish insurance policies do not cover deliverance ministry.

This is an area of ministry where particular caution needs to be exercised, especially when ministering to someone who is in a disturbed state. The House of Bishops' guidelines on both healing and deliverance ministry should be followed and cases referred to the diocesan advisers for deliverance ministry and safeguarding when necessary; the advisers' special expertise should be used in order to help as effectively as possible those who think they need this ministry.

The ministry of exorcism and deliverance should only be exercised by priests authorized by the bishop, who normally requires that permission be obtained from him for each specific exercise of such a ministry. If this ministry is sought in connection with a child, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be involved before any action is taken. The DSA may need to consult with the statutory authorities in line with local safeguarding arrangements.

(35) Spiritual Abuse

Within faith communities, harm can also be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries. Any of these could result in children or vulnerable adults experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful, it should be referred for investigation in co-operation with the appropriate statutory agencies.

Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children and vulnerable adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. If anyone in the Church is uncertain whether or not abuse has taken place, he or she can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or the local authority children's social care team.

(36) Examples of when a child or vulnerable adult might be at increased risk of, abuse:-

- Disability increases the risk of abuse and those with multiple disabilities are at even more significant risk of abuse and neglect.
- Bullying, whether physical, verbal or emotional is damaging.
- Self-harm or suicidal behaviour may be indicative of serious abuse occurring and should always be taken seriously.
- Female Genital Mutilation is abuse and is also a criminal offence.
- Sexual Exploitation is someone taking advantage of you sexually, for their own benefit. Through threats, bribes, violence, humiliation, or by telling you that they love you, they will have the power to get you to do sexual things for their own, or other people's benefit or enjoyment (including: touching or kissing private parts, sex, taking sexual photos).
- Forced marriages – i.e. where duress is a major factor and where the union is conducted without the informed consent of both parties.
- Within families where there is domestic violence, defined by the Home Office as, "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults

who are, or who have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”.

- Family separation and its consequences can be traumatic, especially if threats or violence are part of the history or custody and care arrangements are acrimonious.
- There is clear evidence of a link between the abuse of animals and the abuse of children and adults.
- Human Trafficking for enforced labour, domestic servitude, or the sex trade happens in the UK and is illegal. Many people are under the misapprehension that it only occurs when national or international borders are crossed but individuals can be trafficked in local communities without leaving their town or county.
- Other factors where tensions and pressures are increased include social exclusion, racism, parental mental health problems, or illness.

For further information on these specific issues please consult the Local Safeguarding Boards procedures for adults or children, or seek additional advice from the DST.