

# EASTLEIGH PARISH

## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy & Practice

This Version: July 2023 - prepared by Mike Sarson (Safeguarding Officer); Ian Fletcher (Vicar); Sue Fletcher (Deputy Safeguarding Officer)

Approved by PCC on: pending September 2024

Review Date: No later than July 2025

Signed:

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Revd Ian Fletcher, Vicar

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Phil Watson, Deputy Chair of PCC

## 1. Oversight and Legal Responsibilities

The PCC of Eastleigh Parish will ensure that a Safeguarding Officer is appointed to oversee safeguarding policy and practice.

The current Safeguarding Officer post appointed by PCC is Mike Sarson. Sue Fletcher is the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that the PCC are aware of and fulfilling all of their legal obligations in relation to Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- Seek to identify areas of Eastleigh Parish that need to be brought under the influence of this document or reviews in view of this document.
- Report directly to the Vicar - particularly during the Monthly Welfare Review meetings to report on whether or not this policy and the the procedures contained within it are being fully implemented.
- Monthly Welfare Review Meetings take place 10 times per year and are held during the first week of each month, except January and August.
- The Churchwarden with responsibility for Safeguarding, Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguard Officer, Vicar, and other persons at the discretion of these named people are invited to attend these meetings. The monthly review is an opportunity to raise and address any welfare/safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that Role Profiles have been created for all posts and explained to all post holders.
- Enable the PCC to fulfil their duty of care towards Vulnerable Adults and Children in regard to best safeguarding practice within the scope of the activities and operations of Eastleigh Parish Church.
- Ensure that new workers have satisfactorily fulfilled the induction process (including; DBS check, references, application forms, safeguarding training).
- Ensure that all workers receive refresher safeguarding training and renewal of DBS checks (current best practice is for parish safeguarding training to be undertaken once every 3 years).

## 2. Definitions of Terms Within this Policy

All references to: 'child', 'children', 'young person', 'young people': whether singular or plural are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to those under 18 years of age.

'Vulnerable adult(s)': refers to anyone who is over the age of 18, but who has a reduced capacity to protect herself/himself against significant harm, abuse or exploitation – whether due to homelessness, disability, learning difficulties, mental health problems, substance misuse, illness, old age, or other factors.

'Workers', 'staff', 'volunteers', 'helpers' are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to anyone interacting with children and/or vulnerable adults on behalf of Eastleigh Parish Church (EPC).

'Abuse' refers to any of the recognised forms of abuse –

- Physical
- Emotional

- Sexual
- Neglect
- Financial (or Material)

### 3. Nature and Purpose of Document

This document seeks to fulfil the following objectives:

**To help protect children and vulnerable adults.** A safeguarding policy helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults. Although no procedures or processes can offer complete protection, following these procedures and implementing this policy minimises the risk to children and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.

**To help protect workers.** A safeguarding policy clarifies what the PCC requires in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. It sets out standards of behaviour to protect staff and volunteers when they are working with children or vulnerable adults and what to do if they notice, or are told about, inappropriate behaviour in others.

**To help protect the organisation.** This safeguarding policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates the PCC's commitment to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm. This safeguarding policy, and future amendments, will help move the PCC towards best practice in this area and will help deter those who would wish to abuse children or vulnerable adults from seeking to do so under the auspices of Eastleigh PCC activities.

### 4. Statement of Intent

Eastleigh Parish is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and considers that their safety and wellbeing is of paramount importance.

Eastleigh Parish expects everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults to:

- Be attentive to the needs of children and vulnerable adults, doing whatever is needed to maintain their safety and wellbeing.
- Treat children and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity, defending their innocence and upholding their trust.
- Treat everyone in a way which demonstrates their high value as individuals, regardless of gender, background, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- Be aware of potential risks to children and vulnerable adults and do what we can to minimise these risks.
- Listen to children and vulnerable adults, taking their concerns seriously.
- Attend appropriate training to understand and be updated on safeguarding practice.
- Follow the procedures set down below to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- This policy aims to provide a realistic framework upon which Eastleigh Parish can build safe environments and offer appropriate support to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- This policy applies to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults under the auspices of Eastleigh Parish Church whether they are paid or voluntary (even if they themselves are not yet 18).

- A statement reaffirming our commitment to safeguarding will be reviewed every year and included in any annual report.
- This policy is approved and endorsed by the PCC of Eastleigh Parish. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures which outline more specifically our expectations within specific settings in order to deliver the highest possible quality of care.
- The fundamental principles and policies contained within this document must not be changed without further PCC approval.
- Areas for complementary policy includes Health & Safety.

## 5. Definitions of Abuse

Within this policy the following general definitions of abuse can be described and understood as:

**Physical Abuse** is when a child or vulnerable adult is deliberately hurt or harmed. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, suffocating, or inducing/fabricating an illness. This may also include female genital mutilation (FGM).

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact (such as penetration or sexual touching), non-contact activities (such as encouraging inappropriately sexual behaviour, or involving children in watching pornography or sexual activities), or grooming in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by men or women, or by other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the consistent maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult, causing adverse effects on their emotional development. This may include a child or vulnerable adult being made to feel unloved or inadequate, being shamed, taunted, humiliated or bullied, suffering from over-protection, or being given responsibility beyond their years or capability.

**Financial Abuse** (also known as Material Abuse) is the misuse of money and assets belonging to a child or vulnerable adult. This may include theft, fraud, exploitation, exerting pressure regarding inheritance, misappropriation of property or benefits, controlling how they use their money or assets, or using these in ways which are not in their best interests.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet the basic needs of a child or vulnerable adult. This may include not being given the care needed to maintain their health, safety, and wellbeing.

## 6. Signs of Abuse

All workers have a responsibility to be aware of signs of abuse and neglect, so that they are able to identify cases where children or vulnerable adults may be in need of help or protection. Signs of abuse or neglect may include:

- Physical injuries.
- Aggressive behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults (physical or verbal).
- Very young children being left unsupervised.
- Fighting or bullying behaviour.
- Unexpected change or oddness in behaviour.

- A child or vulnerable adults disclosing their experience (perhaps via writing, drawing, or speaking).
- An adult spending an inappropriate amount of time alone with children or vulnerable adults.

The above points are just a few of the more obvious indications of abuse. All staff and volunteers should be vigilant in looking out for these and other indications.

Further guidance about child sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, domestic violence, fabricated illness, faith abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, radicalisation, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) can be found at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) and via the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.

## 7. Understanding and Responding to Abuse

As relationships with children and vulnerable adults in the care of EPC develop some may choose to begin telling those supporting them about personal issues in their life. There is the possibility that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult may wish to tell someone about abuse they have experienced.

Any mention or allegation of abuse must be taken very seriously.

The alleged abuse may have happened a long time in the past, it might be a recent event, it may be an ongoing issue. The allegation may be against a person involved with EPC. The abuse may have been self-inflicted.

Don't panic. Follow the procedure outlined here.

### **Upon being alerted to possible abuse workers must:**

- Under no circumstances carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Discuss concerns with the Safeguarding Officers (SO) (Mike Sarson and Sue Fletcher) or Vicar (Ian Fletcher).
- Not discuss any suspicions with anyone other than those nominated above.
- Make a written record of the concerns. This written record must then be passed on to either the Vicar or SOs.

The PCC will support the SOs and Vicar in their safeguarding roles and will accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

### **The following is some helpful guidance on how to respond to disclosure of abuse by a child or vulnerable adult:**

- Never promise to keep anything a complete secret. You must instead explain that anything shared will be treated in the strictest of confidence, but that there are certain people who will need to be told.
- Show acceptance of what they say, however unlikely it seems.
- Keep calm and maintain an open mind.
- Look at the child or vulnerable adult directly.
- Be honest, let them know that you will need to tell someone else.

- Even if they have broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware they may have been threatened with reprisals should they tell anyone.
- Never push for information. If the child or vulnerable adult decides not to tell you after all, then you should accept their decision. Pushing for information at this point can later be construed as pressing the person and can hinder appropriate investigations.
- Let them know that you are always ready to listen again in the future.

**Helpful things you can say include:**

- *I take what you're saying very seriously.*
- *It isn't your fault, and you are not to blame at all.*
- *I am pleased that you have told me.*
- *I'm sorry that it happened to you.*
- *We'll help you (implies a wider network of support and reduces dependency).*

Eastleigh Parish Church operates with confidentiality and accountability – not privacy and secrecy. Receiving information about possible abuse should always treat that information as confidential in the sense that it must not be disclosed to anybody except those having a legal duty to receive it, for example the Safeguarding Officer, Ian, Sue, Police, a social work reporter, the Child and Adults at Risk Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager in the Diocese of Winchester. Communicating information obtained from a Disclosure Certificate under the Police Act 1997 is a criminal offence.

**Unhelpful things not to say include:**

- *Why didn't you say something before?*
- *I really can't believe it! Are you sure this happened?*
- *Why? Where? When? Who?...*
- *Make sure you don't tell a soul.*
- *You can trust me, I won't tell anyone...*

**Concluding the conversation:**

- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they were right to tell you.
- Inform them of what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens. (Your next steps are to write notes and report everything as outlined below).
- Let them know that these concerns and allegations will be taken seriously, and that referrals to relevant agencies and/or the police will be made when/where appropriate.

**Making Notes:**

As soon as possible - preferably within an hour - write down the following:

- Date/time of the disclosure and date/time of the record.
- How/where the conversation took place, who else was there? etc.
- Exactly what the child or vulnerable adult said, and what you said.
- You may find it helpful to use a "body map" to indicate areas of injury/abuse.
- Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. All records once given to the Vicar or SO will be kept in a secure place.
- You may send your written notes as an email to [Safeguarding@eastleighparish.com](mailto:Safeguarding@eastleighparish.com) - this provides a 'date stamped' written record of your notes.

### **Further Detail Upon Responding to Possible Signs of Abuse**

Disclosure can be given in one or more of several ways. It can be shown through physical symptoms, heard on 'the grapevine', as well as being openly expressed from one person to another. It is not always obvious, but whenever there is evidence to suggest a disclosure of abuse the procedure is as follows:

- If the person is in imminent danger, contact the Police immediately using the 999 telephone number.
- The person learning of the suspected abuse makes a written record and reports directly to the Vicar or the SO or Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- The Vicar or SO or DSO will make contact with either the Police, Winchester Diocese Safeguarding Team (led by Jackie Rowlands), Hampshire Children's Services or Adult Services.
- Jackie Rowlands contact details are:

**Post**

Diocesan Office  
Old Alresford Place  
Alresford  
SO24 9DH

**Landline**

01962 737317

**Mobile**

07921 865374

**Email**

[jackie.rowlands@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:jackie.rowlands@winchester.anglican.org)

- Where the Vicar or SO or an individual within the disclosure process may be in question they are bypassed, and the next person mentioned within the chain will be contacted.
- A template document will be provided to all individuals, which may be accessed in the case of a disclosure. This will include what the individual has said as well as the response given.
- Any observations including injuries or individual's demeanour at the time should be recorded.
- Please note that a flowchart of the referral procedure is included as an appendix to this policy.

### **Responding to Allegations of Historic Abuse**

All workers should bear in mind that, as well as children and vulnerable adults, disclosures might also be made by adults who suffered from abuse or neglect as a child. This still counts as child abuse, and the same above guidelines should be followed.

All information must be handled in accordance with good Data Protection principles; confidential information should only be shared as appropriate.

***Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record!***

## 8. Staff and Volunteers

- We will always verify the identity of and check references for all workers (paid and voluntary; clergy and lay).
- Records of application forms, references, identity verification information, DBS check reference numbers/applicant names and dates may be kept in secure long-term storage (for a minimum of 50 years).

## 9. First Aid and Treatment of Injuries

If, in your capacity as a worker / volunteer, a child or adult at risk requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Keep a written record of any injury that is presented or occurs, along with the details of any treatment given in the appropriate Accident Books provided. Except in emergencies, only those with current recognised First Aid training should respond to any injuries.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child/adults at risk, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The child's or adult's at risk's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's or adults at risk's interests and on professional advice not to do so.

## 10. Policy for Pastoral Home Visiting & Safeguarding Considerations

Pastoral visiting on behalf of the church is an outworking of our Lord's commandment to love one another. It is specifically mentioned in Matthew – the parable of the sheep and the goats: 'when I was sick or in prison you visited me'.

Informal friendly and neighbourly visiting and care goes on all the time in our parish. Within the church the nurturing, protection, and safekeeping of all is important. Inevitably, this sometimes means being alongside people who may be vulnerable or needy. At Eastleigh Parish Church we want to ensure that such relationships are appropriate and safe at all times. Therefore, when people are visiting **'on behalf of'** the church, they are expected to comply with EPC's safeguarding and good practice guidelines.

People involved in pastoral care on behalf of the church will:

- Undergo the necessary induction process mentioned in section 1.
- Understand and follow their agreed Role Profile.
- Abide by these Guidelines for Good Practice in Pastoral Care which are in line with the ACC (Association of Christian Counsellors) Guidelines for Good Practice in Pastoral Care ([www.pastoralcareuk.org](http://www.pastoralcareuk.org));
- Seek the advice and help of their supervisor (named in the Role Profile) or the Vicar when necessary.
- Not share confidential information inappropriately with other church members.

Pastoral care often involves one-to-one meetings, either in a home context, on church premises, or in other locations such as a coffee shop. It is essential in pastoral care to acknowledge appropriate



physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries. Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection are to be avoided. The following advice will help everyone to be safe:

- o Wear your EPC photo id badge in order to clearly identify yourself.
- o Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards. Always be aware of your exits and if possible, try to sit in a place where there is no one between you and the exit.
- o At a home visit, make sure the door is shut behind you and if you can, make sure you are familiar with the door lock. In church premises, make sure that at least one exit can be easily opened (e.g. a Yale lock, a push bar, etc.).
- o Set some boundaries at the outset, in particular how long you expect the meeting to take.
- o Trust your intuition. If you feel uneasy, act straight away and find a way of ending the meeting, or leaving.
- o Make sure someone knows where you are and what time you expect to be back; if you have any reason to be concerned, make specific arrangements to check in with someone; consider making arrangements for someone to contact you after a fixed period of time.
- o Ensure your mobile phone is charged and accessible; park your car in a lit area and make sure you know where you have left it.
- o If there are animals present and you are not comfortable, then ask the occupants to remove or secure them.
- o Keep a simple record of visits, including anything that causes concern. Concerns should be shared appropriately with a supervisor, parish clergy and/or the safeguarding officer.
- o If there is any safeguarding concern the set procedures must be followed.

### 11. Making the Safeguarding Policy Available

The Safeguarding Policy will be made available at [www.eastleighparish.com](http://www.eastleighparish.com)

A printed copy will be posted at each of our buildings, and a printed copy given to all of our workers.

### 12. Further Policy

#### The Wider Church

The PCC of Eastleigh Parish Church recognise that we are just one parish of a much larger body of churches that go to make the Church of England. With this in mind, we have:

1. Taken note of the House of Bishops Parish Safeguarding Handbook” (see <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>), and;
2. Approved the Winchester Diocese Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement” (see [https://www.winchester.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Parish\\_Safeguarding\\_Policy\\_Statement\\_Template\\_V2.1\\_17.5.19\\_JR.docx](https://www.winchester.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Parish_Safeguarding_Policy_Statement_Template_V2.1_17.5.19_JR.docx)).

#### The Safeguarding Golden Rule: Accountability and Line of Sight

- o Workers and Volunteers will maintain a line of sight between at least two trained and DBS checked workers (all of whom are issued with green EPC id badges) when working with under 16s.
- o When working alone with those aged 16 & 17 or with vulnerable adults (e.g. one-to-one meetings) all workers will ensure that the meeting is properly recorded

- o Lone working with those aged 16 & 17 or with vulnerable adults will be recorded by the process described in your Role Profile.
- o Notes must be made of the content of **regular** 1-2-1 meetings with those aged 16 & 17 or with vulnerable adults and must be sent to [safeguarding@eastleighparish.com](mailto:safeguarding@eastleighparish.com) for the purpose of accountability within 7 days of the meeting taking place. The notes can be very brief, so long as they convey the general purpose of the conversation/meeting. This process helps protect both the worker and those aged 16 & 17 or vulnerable adults.

### **Appropriate Touch**

The following guidelines describe the PCC's policy on physical contact between workers and children/vulnerable adults.

- o If a child or vulnerable adult approaches for a 'hug' don't refuse, rather attempt to ensure it's 'open' and in no way sexual in nature. A sideways-on hug or an arm around the shoulder allows them to feel comforted without full body contact.
- o Kisses are inappropriate within a ministry context within Eastleigh Parish Church.
- o Adults should refrain from developing exclusive relationships with under 18s or vulnerable adults.
- o Adults should not engage in 'horseplay' with children or vulnerable adults.

### **Driving**

Our work with children and vulnerable adults also includes the driving to-and-from activities when lifts are given under the banner of Eastleigh Parish Church. All Safeguarding Policy therefore applies to lifts in cars, etc. as much as it does in a church hall, for example.

The "Winchester Diocese Model Volunteer Driver Agreement" will be used when transporting children/vulnerable adults on behalf of EPC.

### **Electronic Communication and Social Media**

- o Workers must communicate with children and vulnerable adults online according to the same guidelines as we have 'in the real world'.
- o Workers must not engage in any private communication with under 16s. (This is the 'line of sight' rule).
- o Workers are encouraged to make the most of electronic communications; but to remain whenever possible in public forums (e.g. any of the EPC Facebook groups).
- All 'private' communications (e.g., email, texts, Facebook Messenger, etc.) between workers and those aged 16 & 17 or with vulnerable adults must be conducted under the same guidelines above, i.e. they must be shared with [Safeguarding@eastleighparish.com](mailto:Safeguarding@eastleighparish.com) if another worker is not part of the communication. Always. It is therefore best practice to CC another worker in your communications.
- Workers must avoid encouraging children or vulnerable adults developing the idea that there is a "special relationship" developing beyond that of staff and child/vulnerable adult.
- Workers must not share the contact details of any children or vulnerable adults without the express permission of their parent or carer.

- More information on safe internet use can be found on the CEOP website (<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>). The Safeguarding Officer can also direct workers to information which helps people understand how to keep safe online.

### **Video and Other Images**

Eastleigh Parish Church uses video and other images for numerous purposes, e.g. website, FaceBook, Outlook, etc.

The PCC will make it possible for any person to choose for their own image, or the image of their child/client, to not be used by Eastleigh Parish Church.

Details of how to 'opt out' will be made available alongside all other safeguarding information online and 'in the real world' as mentioned above.

### **13. Data Protection**

Individuals mentioned in any of the above-mentioned records (e.g. worker records of 1-2-1 meetings) should be notified that this information may be held for a long time. All such records should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the storage of such information is still appropriate in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

All paper records will be kept securely in lockable storage containers. Access is strictly limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

The PCC of EPC recognises the changes in law that came into effect with GDPR legislation.

### **14. Review**

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed every year, ideally during the first PCC meeting after the APCM.