



Safe Church Policy 2018

Safeguarding Named Persons:
Rev Nick Dawson
Mrs Katie Kerr

- **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - 01709 309149**

Introduction

A Safe Church Policy gives a commitment to all adults in our Church community through a respectful pastoral ministry, safeguarding and protection for Vulnerable Adults (VA), training for those with pastoral responsibilities, respond without delay to any complaint made that an adult in our care has been harmed, offer pastoral care to anyone suffering abuse, challenge any abuse of power and care for any church member offending against a VA.

Doing nothing is not an option and we should be willing to take the responsibility of doing something.

A safe church policy is the responsibility of us all and the love and care we share is our responsibility whether it is with a church member or visitor(s) in our church or encountered beyond the church whilst doing your Christian work for our church (e.g. parish visitor, Befriender etc).

The included summary included within this document is a close, condensed version of the weighty document circulated by the Diocese of Sheffield based on the national Guidelines drawn up and approved by the General Synod. It is recommended that this policy be agreed by our PCC in July 2017 (can be seen on the PCC notice board) and signed by the Wardens and Incumbent will be supported by the church as a whole. This will be identified by the support shown through every congregation's awareness of the policy and indicating a willingness to support the recommendations. It is hoped that the whole church will accept a responsibility in creating a safe environment and in assuring Leaders are aware of the procedures to follow if any of our adults are thought to be in an unsafe situation.

The following policy is directed towards all adults over 18 years of age.

St John the Baptist Church, Owlerton in the Diocese of Sheffield

Safe Church Policy

Statement of commitment

We are committed to respectful pastoral ministry to all adults within our church community.

We are committed, within our church community, to the safeguarding, and protecting of, vulnerable people.

We will carefully select and train those with any pastoral responsibility within the Church, including the use of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and the Independent Safeguarding Board where legal or appropriate.

We will respond without delay to any complaint made that an adult for whom we were responsible has been harmed, co-operating with the police and the local authority in any investigation.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate healing ministry.

We will challenge any abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a vulnerable adult.

Why does safeguarding matter in a Christian community?

Jesus talked of the Kingdom of God belonging to children; he gave them status, time and respect. Jesus also showed himself to be compassionate on the side of those without power, reaching across social barriers with the inclusive love of God.

A Christian approach to safeguarding children, adults who may be vulnerable and those in abusive relationships therefore asks both individuals and communities to create a safe environment for them, to act promptly on any complaints made, to care for those who have been abused in the past, and to minister appropriately to those who have been abused.

Section 1 – St John’s Policy

For as much as you have done it to one of my children you have done it unto me.

Every member of the church has a responsibility to ensure a warm welcome for everyone.

This policy is to guide those who help in study / small groups, pastoral visiting and care home visits, etc but, in order to implement the policy, a general understanding of the procedures is needed. Our church should endeavour to provide a caring and safe environment. The PCC and Incumbent carry a duty of care and should appoint a key person to speak on behalf of VA’s.

St John’s Church will annually agree to adopt and display a Parish Policy statement.

Section 2 – Understanding the Vocabulary

Church worker - Anyone, clergy or laity, paid or voluntary, doing a task on behalf of church

Vulnerability - Circumstances can change vulnerability (e.g. bereavement, illness) and can result from varying factors - aging, physical, mental or social, educational circumstances or addiction to drugs or alcohol.

Vulnerable Adult (VA) - Any adult aged 18 + who, by reason of the above, is permanently or temporarily, unable to take care or protect self from harm or exploitation.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) - A formal check required by some helpers.

Mistreatment, abuse and harm – A misuse of relationships, by bullying, harassment etc., resulting in some form of harm.

Spiritual abuse - In pastoral care churches do not ‘force’ religious values or ideas nor deny of VA the right to grow in knowledge and love of God.

Sexual abuse - A sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other.

Physical abuse -Instances may include hitting, slapping or inappropriate restraint.

Emotional/Psychological abuse - Use of threats, denial of dignity criticisms.

Financial / legal abuse - Extortion or misappropriation of monies.

Neglect - A pattern of activity which seriously impairs an individual.

Section 3 – Code of Conduct: Guidelines - Good Working Practices

Promoting a safe church is not so much 'rules' but working together to provide the right environment for all to grow in Christian faith. Premises should meet Health and Safety Standards and each parish should ensure it conforms to its duties in the 1995 & 2005 Disability Discrimination Acts; and appropriate insurance cover is maintained. Prevention of abuse in church is best achieved by careful training, an awareness and application of informed vigilance. Care is needed that the desire to provide a safe environment does not inhibit development of friendships. Group work is recommended in preference to one to one situation. Worship in church should encompass the range of requirements in any congregation. Care needs to be taken that indicators of abuse are not mis-interpreted. If concerns are raised the helper should first share the situation with the Ministry or group leader / Church named officer (**CNO**) who may then liaise with Incumbent / Safeguarding Advisor or Archdeacon. Do not act hastily. Further help /advice documented in Policy Document.

All formal and informal conversations are pastoral encounters.

Care is needed when considering an appropriate meeting place, time, balance of privacy, seating arrangements and nature of discussion. Care is needed when engaged in pastoral meeting with personal friends. Church workers should recognise own limits and keep within limit of own experience. Workers should not be ministering under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs.

Factual record of daily encounters may be considered.

This is documented fully in Diocese of Sheffield Policy document.

What to do if abuse is suspected.

If someone is suspected of being mistreated in some way you should always take responsibility for doing something. **Doing nothing is not an option.**

Listen carefully without leading or questioning. Receive information without judgement or comment. Clarify issue with **CNO IN CONFIDENCE**.

Under no circumstances should anything be done that might be constructed as an investigation of the allegation: action of this nature may contaminate evidence should a formal investigation be instigated by police or LA.

If an allegation is made against a church worker/clergy the Incumbent or relevant Archdeacon must be informed.

Support of all concerned is needed throughout the incident.

After experiencing abuse or a disclosure, there may be the need for personal support of help in healing as this is important and sensitive. See Responding to Disclosures – Policy Document - Section 4 p12 of 14.

Working with those who present a risk

It is possible that there will be worshipper/s with a conviction of offences to children / VA. If a person becomes aware of this the highest level of confidentiality, sensitivity and discretion is essential.

Before any action is taken, contact the **CNO** so that a safe action can be agreed.

Section 4 – Care of Adult Survivors of Abuse in Church.

The church has a responsibility to support those experiencing the consequences of abuse (even after passage of time). Some survivors cope well, others may show a range of symptoms including depression, anger, hostility, fears, phobias, lack of trust.

Why survivors do not disclose

Many say nothing and bury it deep within themselves. Everyday situations may trigger memories.

Pastoral care of survivors

Someone disclosing is in a vulnerable state, they need someone to listen, believe and listen again and again. There is no quick fix! The journey of support may be lengthy.

Survivors and church

Sufferers/survivors may keep to the fringes of church life. The following may be aspects of worship which are difficult: - The Lord's Prayer (forgiveness); let Jesus come into you; the Peace; sin; anointing and touching; Holy Communion (body and blood); queuing to receive; physical closeness to people; kneel before a 'man' at crotch level; some ritual symbols. It is important to be aware of vulnerability of the abused. Whilst these incidents may be rare they could explain certain behavior patterns.

Inappropriate responses to survivors

It is inappropriate to apportion fault.

Survivors need time to accept and we must remember that God loves them unconditionally.

Section 5 – Recruitment Procedures for Paid Employees and / Volunteers

PCC to agree procedure for recruiting helpers (paid and volunteers) and procedure to follow when new recruit identified following recommended period of involvement in life of church. Young people (up to 18 years) should never be left unsupervised in any activity as helpers.

Guidelines for recruitment

All positions involving pastoral work require a job/role description.

References given by applicant should be taken up and, if necessary, followed up by Incumbent.

All references, Confidential Declarations and DBS must be stored securely with access restricted.

All interviewees should sign a statement agreeing to Safeguarding Policy.

This is based on the Safe Church policy created by the Diocese of Sheffield and includes a fair selection of examples given.

The Church Wardens and Ministry leaders have a full copy of the document for your reference. Copies are also displayed in the church building.

Diocese of Sheffield
Safe Church Policy
Parish Policy Statement on Safeguarding Adults in the Church

This statement was adopted by **St John the Baptist, Owlerton** (Parish) at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on **17th September 2018** (Date) .

This policy will be reviewed each year to monitor progress achieved.

1. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
2. As members of this parish we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
3. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
4. We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
5. The parish commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
6. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
7. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
8. The parish is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
9. The parish adopts the guidelines of the Church of England and the Diocese.
10. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints **Mrs Katie Kerr** to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies.

Incumbent(Reverend Nick Dawson)

Churchwarden(Mr Mike Taylor)

Churchwarden(Mrs Catherine Jenkins)

Date: 17th September 2018