



ACT Adult Safeguarding Policy

As one of its major activities ALDATES COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES (ACT) seeks to serve the needs of vulnerable adults, promoting holistic development.

In doing so, ACT takes seriously the welfare of all vulnerable adults who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

ACT aims to ensure that all are welcomed into a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

ACT recognises that it is the responsibility of each of its staff and volunteers to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

ACT recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to both be alert to such abuse and prevent it.

ACT is committed to supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with vulnerable adults and to providing supervision.

ACT is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory social services authorities.

Policy

This policy seeks to outline the principles adhered to by ACT for the protection of vulnerable adults, especially those within the ACT community. This policy is addressed to the staff and volunteers involved in the work of ACT, especially those who have direct responsibility for the pastoral care of vulnerable individuals.

As a close working partner of St Aldates Church, Oxford, ACT has also adopted the St Aldates safeguarding guidelines, works closely with the St Aldates Parish Safeguarding Officers, and refers to the Diocese of Oxford's safeguarding policy.

Note: As ACT works with adults, this policy mainly focuses on Adult Safeguarding. However, ACT operates within a multigenerational church context, and ACT is also committed to the safeguarding of children. ACT's ethos in this matter reflects that of safeguarding vulnerable adults, while acknowledging that all children and young people are always classed as vulnerable. ACT recognises that there are some different aspects of child safeguarding compared with adult safeguarding. ACT will promote the welfare of children and young people, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. The Process Chart for Concerns about a Person's Welfare on page 5 reflects ACT's dual commitment to both Child and Adult Safeguarding.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is part of the wider process of safeguarding and promoting welfare. 'Safeguarding vulnerable adults' refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Whether staff or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

The term “vulnerable adult” is in itself contentious. Labelling adults “vulnerable” can be stigmatising and result in assumptions that an individual is less able than others to make decisions and to determine the course of their lives. In this way, the term can lead to subtle forms of inappropriate discrimination. The judgement that an adult is vulnerable should not be confused with a decision about their capacity. They are distinct questions although a lack of capacity will, ordinarily, contribute to an adult’s vulnerability.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between departments, agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Some of the most vulnerable adults, and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including justice services and adult education services.

For those vulnerable adults who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote their welfare and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against them. All agencies and professionals should:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable adults;
- ✓ share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of each individual's needs and circumstances;
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote each individual's welfare;
- ✓ take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for each individual against specific plans;
- ✓ work co-operatively with other carers unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the individual's safety.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by one or more adults, including another vulnerable adult.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a person.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age- or developmentally-inappropriate expectations being imposed on vulnerable adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the person’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the person participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (*e.g.* rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a person from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a person's basic emotional needs.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a practice in which vulnerable adults are targeted and befriended, often by groups of people, in order to take over their house and use the property to facilitate exploitation.

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff on the topic of safeguarding. Adult Safeguarding training will be part of Induction and where necessary, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate additional training courses.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and following procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Procedures

What to do if you have concerns about a person

You may have concerns about a person because of something you have seen or heard, or a person may choose to disclose something to you. If a person discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Not promise confidentiality, as if someone is at risk of harm you will have a duty to share this information so that ACT can refer the matter to the Vulnerable Adult's Social Care Services and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the person, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep. Be specific to the presenting situation and avoid saying things that you cannot guarantee, such as *'Everything will be all right now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- ✓ Reassure and alleviate guilt, if the person refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- ✓ Not interrogate the person; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Not ask leading questions (e.g. Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Not ask the person to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the person (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the ACT Safeguarding Lead, who will involve the Parish Safeguarding Officer if appropriate.

ACT's designated Safeguarding Lead is Leah Leslie. Questions or concerns can be directed to leah.leslie@staldates.org.uk or 07467 838624. The St Aldates Adult Safeguarding team can be contacted at safeguarding@staldates.org.uk.

See the diagram on the next page for the process to follow.

What information will you need when making a referral?

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible, such as the person's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the person may have, details of the next of kin. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make contact.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

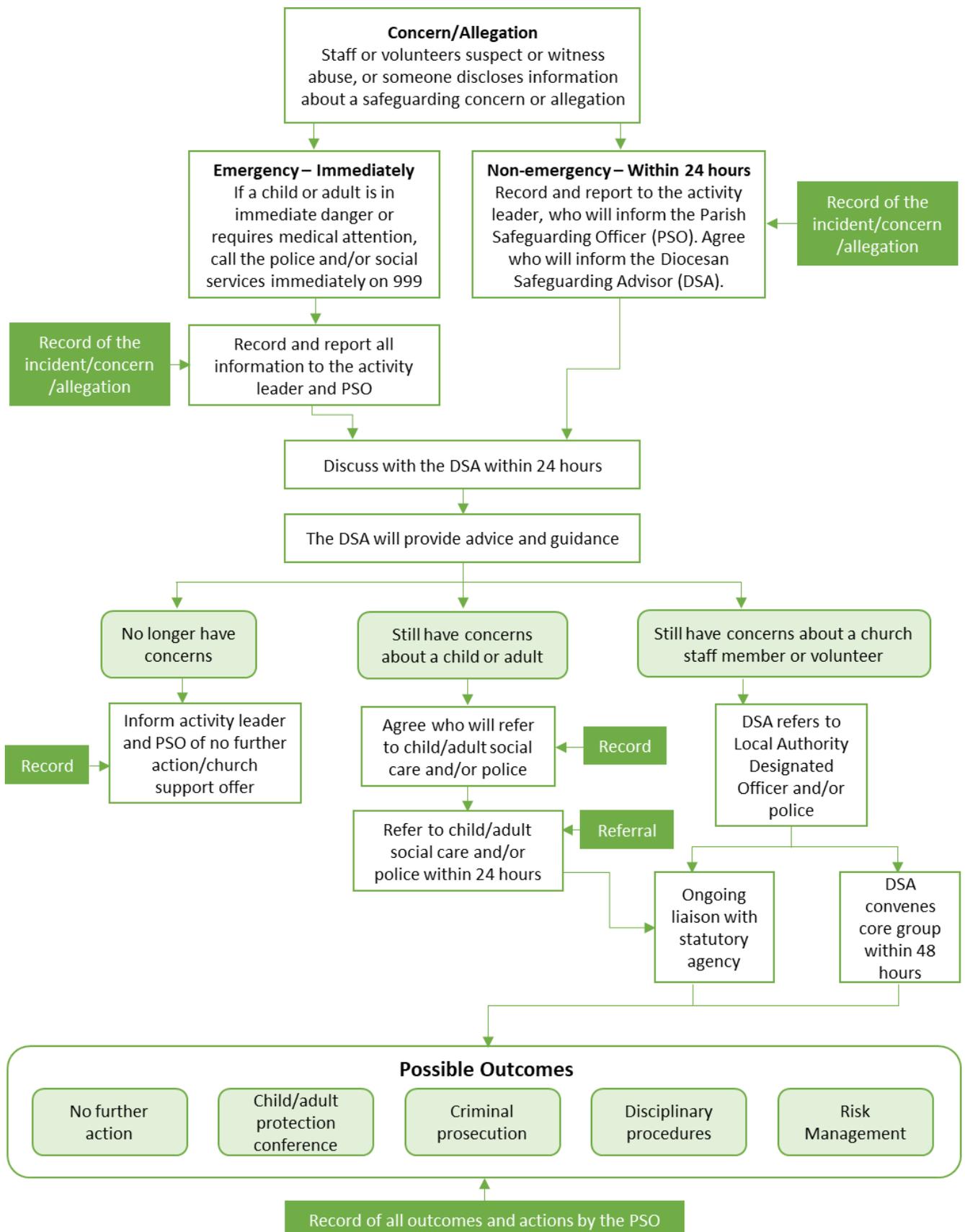
Data Protection and Confidentiality

All information gathered and stored as part of a safeguarding concern will be kept according to the ACT Policy on Data Protection, as can be found in the ACT shared drive.

Ideally the adult would give explicit consent to this information being gathered, stored and potentially shared between services. However, where an adult has refused to consent to information being disclosed for these purposes, then ACT will consider whether there is an overriding public interest that would justify information sharing (e.g. because others are at risk of serious harm).

Process Chart: Concerns about a Person's Welfare

Note: although ACT works with adults, it is situated within a multigenerational church context, so the process chart below addresses both Child and Adult Safeguarding



Allegations Involving Members of Staff/Volunteers

ACT is committed to effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with vulnerable adults and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, can cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of vulnerable adults against those who work with vulnerable adults or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with vulnerable adults has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a person, or may have harmed a person;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a person;
- ✓ Behaved towards a person/vulnerable adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home, or in another setting.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes whether the allegation is justified, false or unfounded, whether a referral to a policing agency is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to policing agencies but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will immediately refer the matter to the appropriate policing agency and ask for a Strategy & Discussion Meeting to be convened as soon as reasonably possible.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by another policing agency. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the attention of anyone and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he/she can consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and policing agencies as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by (if any) the Vulnerable Adult's Social Care Lead external to ACT, as to whether the person is need of protection or in need of other services;
- 3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

I confirm that this is ACT's current safeguarding policy, which is next due for review by the Board of Trustees in October 2022.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Gillies', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Position: Chair of Trustees

Name: Christopher Gillies

Date: 14th July 2022