

Horsted Keynes Parochial Church Council

St. Giles Church

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults  
Policy

**(v 1.0)**

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0.2	26-10-2013	Insert omission in Section 6; minor change to Sections 1 & 3.4	David Colville

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# 1 Introduction

**Horsted Keynes Parochial Church Council** (also referred to as '**HKPCC**') are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults engaged in the breadth of its activities.

For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over, and a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday. The term 'children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

For the purpose of this document the terms 'child' and 'vulnerable adult' reflects the criteria for applying for a criminal record check.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of all volunteers working on behalf of **HKPCC** in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities **HKPCC** and its volunteers have in respect of child and vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide volunteers with an overview of child and vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where child and vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

All those who work or volunteer with **HKPCC** will be made aware of this policy and advised what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with, including sharing information about concerns with agencies<sup>1</sup> that need to know and involve children and vulnerable adults appropriately.

The core principles of equal opportunities<sup>2</sup> and equality must apply to all persons with whom we come into contact regardless of ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexuality, marital status, disability, culture, religious beliefs or except where it is strictly relevant, their possession of a criminal record.

This policy, supported by the policies, procedures and guidelines set out in Annex A comply with current legislation relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults as enacted in England and Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> The agencies involved in protecting children can include the Police, Education, Health, Probation, the voluntary sector and other organisations who work with children as well as Social Services who have the lead responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Equal Opportunities Policy' document.

## 2 Abuse & Poor Practice

Abuse of a child or vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a child or vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the individual.

Children and vulnerable adults can be abused either through someone inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to the person or (more rarely) by a complete stranger, and by men, women or other young people. It is not always easy to recognise abuse, especially as many of the indicators may have other reasonable explanations.

**Abuse** in all of its forms can affect a person at any age and its impact can be so damaging that, if not treated, it may follow the individual for many years. It is important that everyone understands what constitutes abuse, indicators of abuse, what to do, and where to seek advice if abuse is suspected or alleged.

### **Abuse: emotional**

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional and behavioural development.

### **Abuse: neglect**

The persistent or severe neglect of a person, or the failure to protect a person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

### **Abuse: physical**

This includes 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 member of the family or carer fabricates or induces illness in a person who they are looking after.

### **Abuse: sexual**

Forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening, including:

- Physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.
- Non-contact activities, such as involving persons in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities.
- Encouraging persons to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Abuse: psychological**

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

**Abuse: financial or material**

Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Abuse: neglect and acts of omission**

Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services; the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Neglect might also occur during organised activities if children or vulnerable adults are exposed to risk of injury or there is a failure to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Sometimes extreme examples of neglect can amount to a criminal offence.

**Abuse: discriminatory**

Includes race, sex, culture, religion or politics that is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment; slurs or similar treatment; hate crime.

**Abuse: institutional**

Institutional abuse although not a separate category of abuse in itself, requires specific mention simply to highlight that children or adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

**Abuse: multiple forms**

Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of children or vulnerable adults, negligence or ignorance.

**Abuse: domestic**

Any incident of threatening behavior, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

**Abuse: racially motivated**

Whilst not classified as an individual category of abuse, racially motivated abuse can take any of these forms and this needs to be noted additionally in situations when the victim perceives abuse to have been racist in its intent.

### 3 How to identify abuse & what action to take

This applies to all volunteers taking part in HKPCC activities with children or vulnerable adults.

#### 3.1 How to identify abuse

The abuse of children or vulnerable adults can manifest itself in several ways. The following are some common signs of which to be aware:

- Unexplained or untreated bruising or injuries.
- Suffering continual stomach pains or other physical ailments without any medical explanation.
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour and refusal to talk about the problem.
- Unexpected fear of people and flinching when touched.
- Sexually explicit behaviour and language.
- Fear of returning to parents or carers or of them being contacted.
- Changes over time in manner and appearance, such as losing weight, becoming dirty and dishevelled, being constantly tired and always hungry.
- Telling you about being asked to "keep a secret" or dropping other hints or clues about the abuse.

It is important to be alert for signs of abuse. However, even where a child or vulnerable adult is displaying some of these signs it does not necessarily mean he/she is being abused - there may be other causes. Also none of these signs may be present, but you may suspect that something is wrong.

#### 3.2 Procedure in the event of a complaint, allegation or suspicion

It is important that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused.

You should try to avoid asking the victim direct questions about any alleged abuse and **do not engage in any formal interview with them**, this should not however preclude you from asking questions that are designed to clarify what is being said so long as this does not become intrusive.

Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record must be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened; your name and the names of others present; the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the child or adult who has allegedly been abused; the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### **3.3 Responding to an allegation**

If you discover that the child or vulnerable adult is physically injured and in need of immediate medical assistance, you must summon help by calling an Ambulance or the person's doctor. If the abuse amounts to a criminal assault, you must also contact the Police.

Contact the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator for advice on next steps as soon as is possible.

### **3.4 Confidentiality**

Child or vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a child or vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If a child or vulnerable adult confides in a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the volunteer tells the individual sensitively that the volunteer has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate people.

Within that context, the child or vulnerable adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent must be obtained from the child or vulnerable adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a confidential disclosure has been made, the volunteer must let the child or vulnerable adult know what action the volunteer will take.



## 4 Protecting Yourself & Your Church

It is a sad fact of life that, from time to time, organisations unwittingly recruit staff or volunteers who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults. Abusers are usually people known to their victims, and these people can include parents, carers, relatives or family friends. They can also include professionals and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults.

It is also the case that people who pose no risk are sometimes vulnerable to accusations of abuse. This is because they regularly come into contact with children and vulnerable adults who may be confused or frantic enough to resort to desperate ways to stop the abuse. For example, a child being sexually abused by a relative might accuse another person in the hope that the truth will be discovered, or simply that the ensuing fuss will scare the real abuser and make him/her stop.

Although this can and does occasionally happen, it is important to remember that it is an unusual occurrence and that by taking the steps outlined below you will do much to minimise any chances of becoming inappropriately accused.

### 4.1 Recognise Good Practice

To ensure that you protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and protect yourself from false allegations, you must adopt a personal code of conduct. A code of conduct, at its simplest, is a list of key principles of good practice. The following list could form the basis of your code. Learn these principles and add to them as appropriate:

- Respect all individuals, whatever their age, developmental stage, ability, sex, sexual orientation or ethnicity.
- Place the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults first. It must be placed before any personal or organisational goals and before loyalty to friends or colleagues.
- Form appropriate relationships with children and vulnerable adults. These should be based on mutual trust and respect.
- Be aware of the relative powerlessness of children and vulnerable adults, especially persons who have a physical or mental impairment.
- Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of children and vulnerable adults.
- Always work in an open environment - avoid private locations (e.g. taking children or vulnerable adults to your home).
- Always try to ensure that you are never alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and vulnerable adults (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or vulnerable adult or share a room with them).
- Involve carers, parents and/or guardians wherever possible.

- Be aware of the HKPCC Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and your responsibilities.
- Avoid any horseplay, sexually suggestive comments or language.
- Always seek the carers', parents', child and vulnerable adult's consent if he/she is very young or disabled and needs help to go to the toilet – never take them on your own.
- Remember that it is okay to touch a child or vulnerable adult in a way that isn't intrusive or disturbing to him/her or to observers.
- Make sure that any allegations or suspicions are recorded and acted upon.

**Do not:**

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay.
- Touch a child or vulnerable adult in an intrusive or sexual manner.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even as a joke.
- Do things of a personal nature that children and vulnerable adults can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes.

**Do I drive him/her home?**

There may be occasions when volunteers have to provide a lift to children or vulnerable adults because no alternative means of transport is available. In such circumstances, if there is no other viable option, it is appropriate to provide a lift because arguably by not providing a lift the child or vulnerable adult may be placed at greater risk. However it is extremely important to let the carers and/or parents know what you are doing and seek their consent. Providing a lift in these circumstances may be acceptable as a one-off.

**4.2 Risk Assessment**

All volunteers organising activities or events should undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment prior to any activity or event, which should include the question 'does this activity/event involve children or vulnerable adults'. If 'Yes', then the organizer(s) should identify what actions they need to take to comply with the relevant legislation. If 'No' then an appropriate statement should be recorded to demonstrate that 'due diligence' has been carried out.

The risk assessment should be recorded and filed for future use. If this is an annual activity or event, the assessment should be reviewed each year prior to the event to ensure that it remains robust and fit for purpose.

## 5 Role of Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator

A Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator must be appointed who will be the person with overall key responsibilities for the implementation of this policy.

That officer will also be the 'ID Verifier' for the purpose of the Disclosure and Barring Service vetting process in England and Wales.

- Choose respected and committed people for the role of Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator. That person then becomes the point of contact for volunteers, carers, parents, children and vulnerable adults, and for other organisations such as Social Services, the Police, the Local Authority or the Diocese Safeguarding Officer if a problem relating to abuse should arise.
- The Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator will liaise with the appropriate authorities if a complaint about possible abuse is made.
- The Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator's name and contact details should be displayed in Church and the Martindale Centre as well as given to parents and carers of those children and vulnerable adults temporarily in our care.
- It is important to note that the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator is not an expert and is not there to sit in judgement on anybody - their principle task is to advise HKPCC to ensure that children and vulnerable adults get the support and protection they need and deserve, and to act as a link to the professional agencies and the Diocese Safeguarding Officer.
- The agencies involved in protecting children can include the Police, Education, Health, Probation, the voluntary sector and other organisations who work with children as well as Social Services who have the lead responsibility.
- Once a Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator has been appointed and familiarised him/herself with the main issues, the next step is to let other members know what is going on. Ensure that the Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy is made available to all existing and new volunteers.

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## 6 Vetting & Criminal Records Check










It is the policy of **HKPCC** that all volunteers who are involved in 'regulated activities' with children and vulnerable adults must undertake a criminal record check.

Volunteers who are involved in 'regulated activities' with children and vulnerable adults (as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act) must apply for an Enhanced Level Disclosure with checks on the Child and Adult barring lists.

All volunteers should register with the DBS 'Update Service' to keep their Disclosure up-to-date and their registration current. A 'status check' will be undertaken annually by the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator to see if any relevant information has been identified about the individual since their Certificate was last issued. In the event that the 'status check' returns the fact that the Disclosure Certificate is 'no longer valid', the individual's Disclosure Certificate should not be relied upon as new information is now available and the volunteer must request a new criminal record check.

Where a volunteer does not register for the DBS 'Update Service' or keep their registration current, the Disclosure must be renewed every 3 years.

## **Annex A Linked Policies**

-  Equal Opportunities Policy
-  Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
-  Secure Handling of Disclosure Information
-  Job Description – Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator
-  DBS Code of Practice
-  CCPAS E-Bulk Guide for Applicants
-  CCPAS E-Bulk Recruiter Agreement Form
-  CCPAS Self Declaration Form for a Position Requiring a Disclosure
-  CCPAS Disclosure Service Diocese of Chichester Scheme