

St Mary's Bramshott and Liphook Church Centre

Safeguarding Children

Summary

This paper aims to equip all those working with children and young people in the parish of St Mary's Bramshott and Liphook Church Centre; with the knowledge and skills needed to recognise and respond to reported child abuse, as well as to minimise risk to themselves of allegations made against them.

This paper is in four parts:

- 1 Child abuse & Neglect defined
- 2 Minimising risks
- 3 What to do if a child reports abuse to you
- 4 What to do if there is an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer working with children and young people.

1 Child Abuse & Neglect Defined:

(definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006)

4.2.7. Child Abuse & Neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. These terms include serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.

4.2.9. Abuse can occur within the family, or in a institution or community setting. Abuse occurs within all social groups regardless of religion, culture, social or financial position.

4.2.10 children can be abused by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. They can be abused by an adult/s or another child/ren.

The four categories of child abuse:

These are documented under section 31(9) in The Children Act 1989 and amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Diocese of Portsmouth Guide to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, 'In Safe Hands' outlines the following categories.

Physical Abuse:

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

Emotional Abuse:

Is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects of the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to a child s/he is worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person.

- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations e.g. interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, preventing the child from participation in normal social interaction.
- Causing a child to feel frightened or in danger e.g. witnessing domestic violence, seeing or hearing maltreatment of another.
- Exploitation or corruption of children.

Some levels of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

Sexual abuse:

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of this happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Penetrative acts include 'rape' (the forced penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth with the penis) and 'assault by penetration' (sexual penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth with a part of the body or an object).
- Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities e.g. involving children in looking at/ in production of abusive images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. It may include use of photographs, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings e.g. internet, books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CD's.
- Children under 16 cannot **lawfully** consent to any sexual activity occurring, although in practice young people may be involved in sexual contact to which they may have agreed.

Neglect:

Neglect involves persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and development.

Neglect may involve failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Meet or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.
- Ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate caretakers.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

2 Minimising Risks:

This section covers

- the appointment of leaders and helpers to youth work;
- good working practices with young people.

The Appointment of Voluntary Leaders and Helpers:

1. Anyone wishing to work with children and young people should discuss this with the youth or children's worker. Previous experience of working or contact with children will be explored.
2. The applicant shall complete a **DBS form**, and take it together with proofs of identity to the Parish Safeguarding Representative.

3. All applicants willing to work with children and young people will be asked to complete a **Confidential Declaration** in accordance with the House of Bishops' Policy on Child Abuse. This declaration requires applicants to state any convictions. All declarations are kept by the PCC nominated representative; these are treated as confidential documents.
4. In addition all applicants will be required to give at least **two references** from people who can answer the questions:
 - In what capacity have you known the applicant, and for how long?
 - How willing/able is he/she to work with others?
 - How suitable would you consider him/her to be for youth work?Any previous work with children they have undertaken should be commented upon wherever possible.

For the Crèche, the leaders/helpers who are involved in taking children to the toilet must also be appointed through this procedure. Other helpers in the Crèche do not need to be appointed.

A volunteer can help with children while this procedure takes its course, but **must not** be alone with the children.

Good Working Practices with Children and Young People:

- Recommended leader-to-child ratios:

0-2 years	1 leader to every 3 children
2-3 years	1 leader to every 4 children
4-8 years	1 leader to every 8 children
Over 8 yrs	1 leader for every 10 children

It is always advisable to have more than one leader per group. Where groups are mixed, leaders should be also.

- Time spent alone with a child:

Ensure that another leader knows where you are and why and if possible remain in view of another leader. Never be behind a closed door in a one-to-one situation.

Avoid the situation where you are at home alone with a young person and try to avoid driving a young person home on their own.
- Conflict:

In a conflict situation, e.g. a telling off, it is preferable to have another leader with you. Angry youngsters are more likely to make false accusations. If a young person is being violent then reasonable restraint is allowed.
- Physical contact:

Children sometimes need physical contact to reassure them, e.g. when they have fallen and grazed their knee. Such contact must be public, appropriate and not prolonged.

- Online

- If a social networking group is set up for youth work an adult leader must be responsible for it and at least one other adult should be part of the group, with full access to any posts.
- Privacy settings should be maintained so that young people can't 'friend' a leader and vice versa.
- When using email, texts or online media to communicate with young people, avoid using 'love' or 'xx' or similar terms to end the message.
- Always copy another adult into the emails.
- Make sure young people's parents know this form of communication is taking place.
- Youth workers should have a separate phone for communicating with young people to ensure all calls are accounted for by an itemised phone bill.

3 What to do if a child reports abuse to you:

- 1 Let the child know that you need to tell someone else. **Never promise confidentiality.**
- 2 Give the child the opportunity to talk freely without interruption or fear of being overheard.
- 3 Listen carefully to the detail and try not to question the child unless very important facts are missed. Do not ask leading questions.
- 4 Be aware that the child may have been threatened to keep quiet.
- 5 Do not show signs of shock or revulsion. Stay calm.
- 6 Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they were right to tell you.
- 7 Let the child know what you are going to do next; who you are going to tell and why. Give them some indication of what might happen.
- 8 Ensure you have their full name and address, if possible also their date of birth.
- 9 Finish on a positive note; you still care for them!
- 10 As soon as possible make thorough notes of what the child told you. Write this long-hand, not on a PC. Include date, time, and any non-verbal communication, e.g. body language. At the end of your written account sign and print your name, put a line through any lines that are not written on.

11 Then:

- Do not delay
- Do not investigate
- Contact the PCC nominated 'Responsible Person' :

Claire Paye

Mobile: 07972 727544

Email: clairepaye@yahoo.co.uk

If Claire is unavailable or the allegation concerns her, contact the Vicar

- Do not discuss the case with **anyone** else. No-one else has a right to know. The Vicar will be available for pastoral care for anyone concerned, including the person who received the information.

12 On receiving information Claire will then make the decision as to whether Social Services and/or the Police should be informed.

Why should you do anything?

- To protect the child from further abuse.
- To protect other children the abuser may have contact with.
- To get help for the abuser (they rarely stop voluntarily).
- To involve agencies who have experience you do not have.
- For your own protection: if you fail to act when a child discloses any information of abuse and this is found out to be so in a later investigation, both you and the Church will be greatly criticised. A civil court action against you could also be a possibility.

4 What to do if there is an allegation of abuse against a youth leader:

Note that an allegation of child abuse is not the same as a complaint against a leader. It only becomes an allegation of child abuse if it falls into one of the four categories mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a leader, a different leader should talk with the child. This must then proceed in the same way as in the previous section. The important difference is that the leader the allegation has been made against must not be informed or involved at any stage.

Any Questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact Claire Paye (contact details on p.4) to discuss anything you have read and are unsure about in these procedures. Please only use mobile or work phone details in the case of abuse allegations.