

Safeguarding Policy 2021

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Section 1 Context

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: **The Benefice of Witney**

Address: **The Parish Office, St Mary's Church, Church Green, Witney, OX28 4AW**

Tel No: **01993 779492** Email address: office@witneyparish.org.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation **Church of England**

Charity Number: **1129784**

Insurance Company **EIG - including Public Liability**

Section 2 Policy statement

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse and that they have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.

This policy and practice guidelines are written using information from the Diocese of Oxford and Safe and Secure (published by Churches' Child protection Advisory Service- CCPAS)

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Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

The PCC's of the Benefice of Witney recognises the importance of its ministry and work with children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by Witney PCC on 25th January 2021

Minster Lovell PCC on 31st May 2018

This Organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children, young people (those under 18 years of age) and vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of children and adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that the PCC and all working, in either a paid or voluntary capacity, with children and vulnerable adults adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local guidance relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.

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We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- That where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.

Section 3 Who are we Safeguarding?

All children and young people under the age of 18;

Adults who may be vulnerable, the Care Act 2014 defines those adults who fall under statutory safeguarding duties as an adult who:

- Has needs for care or support (whether or not the Local Authority is providing this)
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Adults are classed as anyone over the age of 18.

Section 4 Role of the Parish safeguarding officer (PSO)

PSO and their deputy will:

- Implement the Diocesan safeguarding policy in the parish
- Possess a copy of Diocesan Safeguarding handbook
- Oversee the process for new appointments, sending out Confidential Declaration forms and reference letters, and ensure safer recruitment is carried out.
- Be the link person between the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the parish
- Receive any concerns about children or adults in the parish and make sure that proper advice is sought and referrals made; concerns about the incumbent should be raised with the Bishop
- Ensure that any ex-offenders against children or vulnerable adults known to be in the church community are notified to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The ministry team will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

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- Ensure that any allegations against church workers of misconduct against children are notified to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and as necessary to the Local Authority Designated Officer
- Report to the PCC at least annually on the implementation of the policy within the parish
- The Safeguarding Officer may also be responsible for:
 - Being the Children's Advocate
 - Being the Recruiter
 - Supporting the workers with children or vulnerable adults through regular meetings and in other ways
 - Providing or arranging training in safeguarding for all workers (both volunteers and paid staff) and keeping records.

Section 5 Safeguarding Awareness

a) Recognising abuse

Children:

'Child maltreatment, sometimes referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished – physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation'. (from WHO 2017)

Adults:

- **Physical abuse** may involve physical violence, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint or sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse.**
- **Psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse.
- **Financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care, or educational services, withholding medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist or abuse based on a person's disability.
- **Domestic abuse** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, so-called 'honour'-based violence.

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- **Modern slavery** - includes slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Organisational abuse** - including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home.
- **Self-neglect** - includes a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

(Authored by Dr Colin Tidy, 24 Aug 2016 for Patient Platform / Care Act 2014)

NB A child or an adult may be abused by ANYONE: a stranger, someone who is related to them, a friend, or anyone else they know or come into contact with. Statistically children are more likely to be abused by a person known to them than by a stranger.

(b) Training

We are committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone

All those who work with/supervise children, including junior church leaders, servers, ringers, choir leaders, etc. will be expected to attend training. Some workers (eg clergy, ministry team) will require more advanced training.

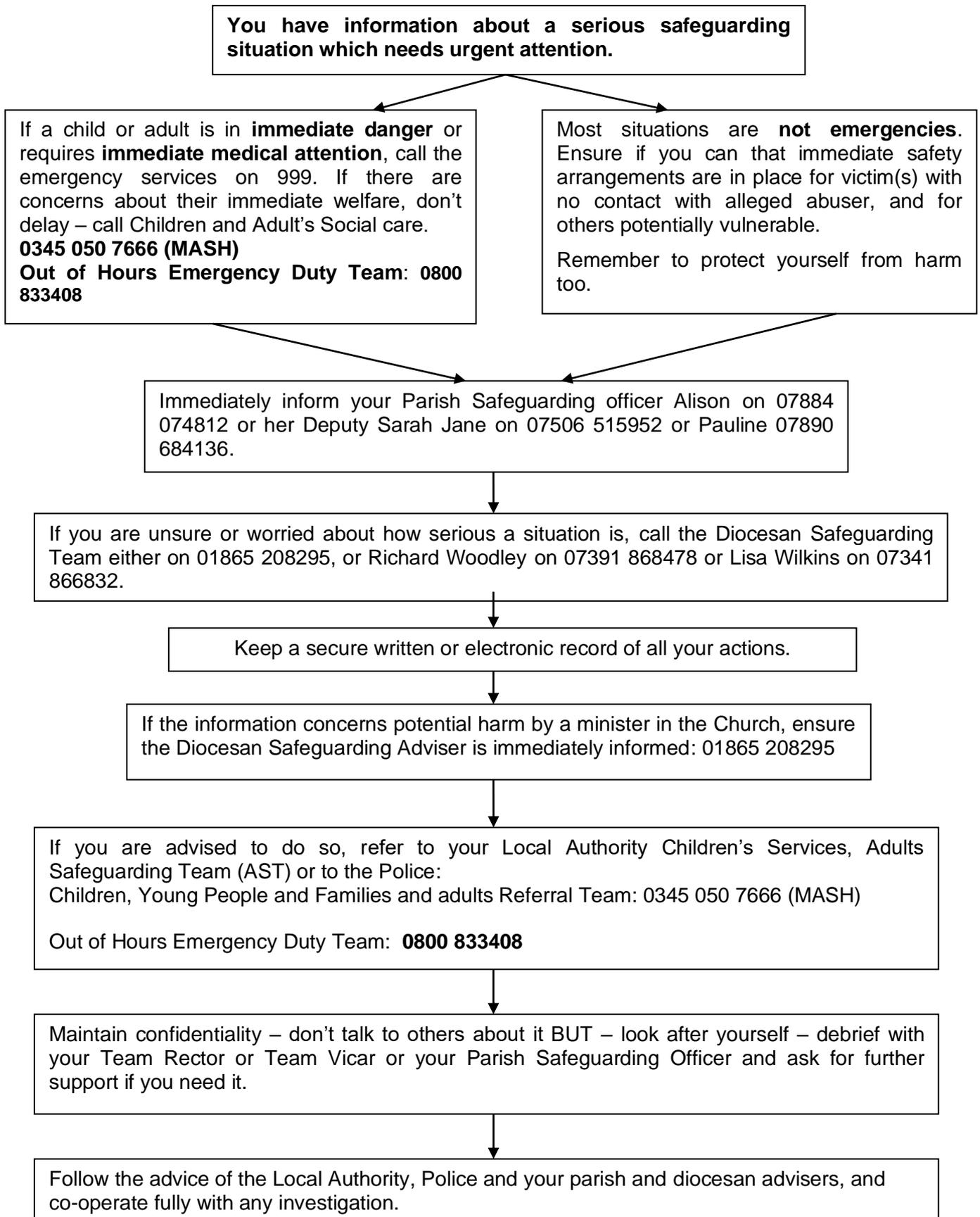
Training sessions will be held regularly, led by volunteers from Oxford Diocese, to ensure that Diocesan safeguarding guidelines are met.

Other training sessions are organised by the Diocese and will be available as needed to those whose roles require it.

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(c) Responding to alleged abuse

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING SITUATIONS FLOW CHART



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Supporting those affected by abuse

We are committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and supporting all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship. There are pastoral care teams in some of our churches and these are co-ordinated separately. If there are any issues regarding abuse, appropriate advice and support will be sought. It may be appropriate for some people to be referred to external Counselling Agencies and we will do everything we can to assist in this matter: The church pastoral teams are not trained counsellors.

Section 6 Confidentiality

The Benefice of Witney accepts the principle that only those who need to know should be made aware of safeguarding concerns. All staff and volunteers are expected to share confidential information appropriately.

If making a Disclosure, children sometimes expect the person they are telling to keep it a secret. THIS IS NOT APPROPRIATE and the young person must be told that the information will be passed on. Usually it is hoped that parents or carers of the young person will be communicated with unless the disclosure is concerning the parent or carer and there is a possibility that in so doing the risks of further immediate harm may increase. Whilst the rights of the child must be respected, sensitivity to this complexity is paramount. Statutory agencies will deal with this issue if it arises.

Adults have a right to make their own decisions. Consent to share any concerning information should be sought, however, if others are at risk, or you think that the adult making a disclosure may not have 'mental capacity' to safeguard themselves, SEEK ADVICE, without naming the adult, from your PSO. We cannot assess 'mental capacity' but may have a sense that this is an issue; health professionals will deal with this if necessary.

Section 7 Record Keeping

Records of all documents pertaining to Safeguarding concerns will be kept by the PSO and stored in the Office Safe. Anyone with a concern should document that concern. If a disclosure is made, document the conversation Verbatim if possible, and do not express opinion: factual information is what is required, sign and date/time. At no time communicate concerns via email unless absolutely vital, and in those cases all documentation must be anonymized.

Section 8 Safe Recruitment

Safe Recruitment is undertaken in line with the Church of England's policy 'Safer Recruitment 2015' (amended July 2016). It is the responsibility of the Team Rector to ensure implementation;

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this includes recruitment of Offenders. If a person discloses a previous offence then each case will be looked at individually in accordance with guidelines published by Diocese and dbs.

Section 9 Use of internet – mobile phones, Cameras, filming, publicity

There are two Policy documents published by the Diocese of Oxford which explain safe use of Internet and Social Media and reference should be made to those to ensure compliance with safe practice, namely:

‘Use of Social Media Policy & Private Messaging’ ‘Making and Publishing Images of Children’

The Benefice has Consent forms to be used, e.g. for Photographic permissions and visits off-site.

Church representatives:

Holy Trinity Witney - Charlotte Tremain

St John the Evangelist Hailey – Pauline Plumbe

St John the Baptist Curbridge – Alison Spicer

St Mary’s Witney- Alison Spicer and Sarah Jane Ebanja

St Kenelm’s Minster Lovell - Kirsty Strange

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs then speak to one of the following who have been approved as Safeguarding Co-ordinators for the Benefice:

Alison Spicer

Sarah Jane Ebanja

Pauline Plumbe

A copy of this Policy is available in each Church in the Benefice and has been lodged with the Safeguarding Officers in The Diocese of Oxford.

Adopted by Witney PCC 25th January 2021

Adopted by Minster Lovell PCC 25th January 2021

Signed *Ness Whiffin*

Counter-signed *Kate Banks* Witney PCC

Counter-signed *Hugh White* Minster Lovell PCC

Review date: one year from date of adoption (reviewed annually)