

Parish of Holy Trinity and Christ Church, Richmond

Policy **Recording a Safeguarding Cause for Concern**

Document agreed by PCC, in November 2019

Document prepared by Keith Nurse

Date of this document November 2019

Introduction

We want our church to be a safe and secure environment for everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to establishing and maintaining an environment where children and young people are nurtured and protected, and where people of all ages - and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason - are encouraged in their journey of faith. To help us do this we work according to the national legal and procedural framework for safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable, and follow policy and practice guidance from the Church of England generally and the Diocese of Southwark specifically. We believe that everyone who takes part in the life of our church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all, but recognise that training, briefing and encouragement will be required in order to achieve this.

There will be occasions where church members see or hear something that they feel is, or has the potential to be, a safeguarding concern. Even where the incident itself does not seem to be significant, it will be important to record it because, when seen alongside other incidents, a pattern may emerge that gives rise to more significant concerns.

Who the policy is for

- Leaders of groups and activities that include children and vulnerable adults
- Staff Team members
- Church members serving through a wide range of groups and activities
- Church members in general.

Leaders of groups and activities and Staff Team members will be briefed on the policy and will, in turn, be expected to make their team members aware of it.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are

- To play a part, alongside other policies, in promoting a safe and nurturing environment, especially for children and vulnerable adults
- To ensure that safeguarding concerns are addressed correctly, and in a timely and appropriate way.

This document provides specific instructions designed to help people in fulfilling the aims of the policy. Given the seriousness of the matters the policy is designed to address, it is important that the instructions are adhered to.

The document partly draws on material from *A Safe Church*, a manual containing the Diocese of Southwark's policies, procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and responding to domestic abuse.

Instructions on completing a Cause for Concern Form

- If you have a concern about a child, vulnerable adult or persons connected to them as a result of something you observe or a conversation you have, or if anyone discloses information to you about a child, vulnerable adult or persons connected to them, complete a Cause for Concern Form. A template is attached here, and further copies are available in electronic or paper form from the Church Office
- Complete the Form as soon as practicable after the event or conversation, but in all cases within 24 hours, even if you made brief notes at the time. Timely recording helps to ensure the accuracy of the information
- Keep any original notes you made - they must not be destroyed - but ensure that they are stored securely and cannot be accessed by anyone else
- Ensure what you record includes the names of all key people, including any actual or potential witnesses and their contact details
- Try to use simple and unambiguous language

- Make sure what you record is a factual and accurate account of what you have observed and what has been disclosed
- When recording what potential victims, witnesses or alleged perpetrators have said to you or within your hearing, use exact quotes where possible, and make this clear using quotation marks
- When recording the circumstances of the concern or event, add the explanations offered by the people involved and make it clear who has given you that information
- Record any actions or decisions you take, eg. who you shared any information with, who you took advice from, any other action you took. If in any doubt, record it
- Include any views and perspectives expressed by the child, vulnerable adult or persons connected to them
- Include details of who knows about the information, eg. the subject, their parents or carers, and any other church leaders
- If the person about whom you have made a record is unaware of its existence, make it clear in your recording why you have not told them
- If you need to record professional judgements and opinions, make it clear that these are not fact and should be distinguished as such
- Ensure the dates and time of all events are recorded, and as accurately as possible, ie. when the concern arose and was made known to you, or when you observed the concern or allegation
- Ensure all records are respectful to the subjects and always bear in mind that they may be read by the subjects who have a right of access to their files
- Return the form immediately to our Parish Safeguarding Officers and attempt to make personal contact with at least one of them
- If you are unable to contact either of our Parish Safeguarding Officers, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- If you have immediate concerns about the safety of someone, contact the Police and the Local Authority Single Point of Access.

Why keep records?

Safeguarding records are needed in order to

- Ensure that what happened and when it happened is recorded
- Provide a history of events so that patterns can be identified
- Record and justify the action(s) of advisers and church workers
- Promote the exercise of accountability
- Provide a basis of evidence for future safeguarding activity
- Allow for continuity when there is a change of personnel.

Record handling

- Completed paper forms should be stored in a locked cabinet in the Vicar's Office. They will be accessible only by the Parish Safeguarding Officers and Vicar
- When people move from these roles, access will be granted to new role holders and post holders, and removed from those no longer in post
- Any completed electronic forms should be password-protected or encrypted, with access restricted to those who have access to paper forms
- People completing electronic forms should be asked to remove any record they have retained once they have confirmed that at least one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers has received a copy
- Electronic files should be regularly backed up and systems virus protected. Data should not be stored on external drives or removable media unless encrypted or password protected
- Safeguarding records should only be seen by those who need to have proper access to them
- While sending information via e-mail is quick and easy, it is open to the risk that someone other than the intended recipient can intercept it. You should assume that it is open to the risk of being read by anyone, and ensure that you take appropriate care in the content of both the e-mail and any attachments
- Take care to check that you are sending information to the correct e-mail address
- Letters containing confidential information and identifying details should be sent by special delivery, using a double envelope safeguard - the relevant

information will be contained within an inner envelope marked confidential, with no classification details shown on the outer envelope

- It is essential that records in relation to safeguarding issues, including allegations and concerns, and how these are handled - how the information was followed up, actions taken, decisions reached and eventual outcomes - are kept, even if they have not been proven, as follows:
 - Records of child or adult protection incidents or concerns where our church either reports concerns or is involved in supporting and monitoring a child, adults or families - 70 years after the last contact with the individual concerned
 - Records relating to safeguarding concerns or allegations about Church Officers (paid or unpaid [excluding clergy]) - including details of how these were handled, followed up, actions taken, decisions reached and the eventual outcome - 75 years after employment ceases.

Important contacts

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) - Michelle Rutter
michelle.rutter@htrichmond.org.uk (020 8404 1112)

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) - Graham Bamping
graham.bamping@htrichmond.org.uk (020 8404 1112)

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA)
020 7939 9423 (office hours)
07982 279713 (out of hours)

Police
999

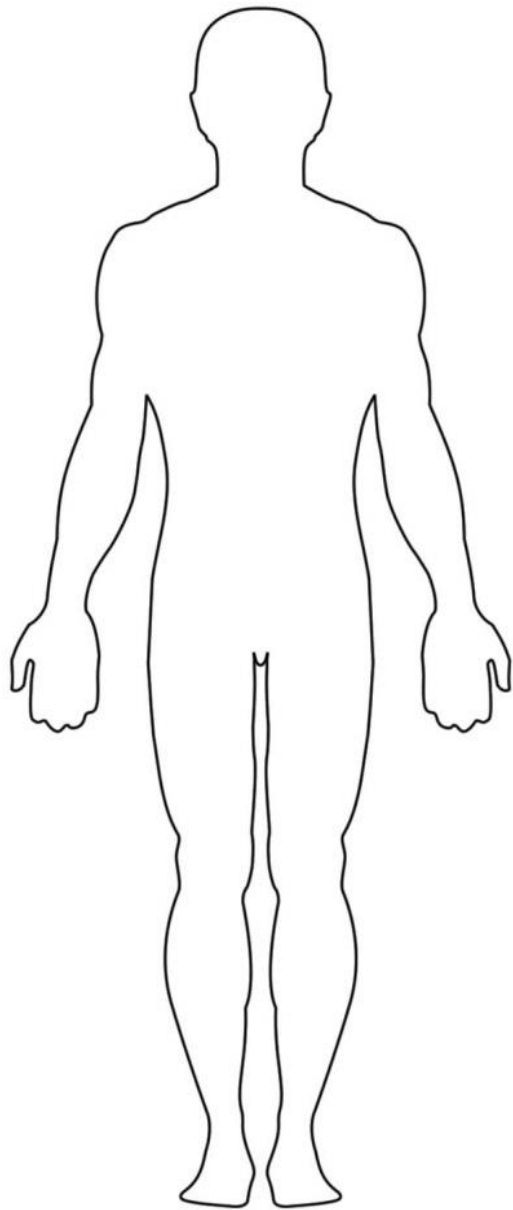
Local Authority Single Point of Access (SPA) Team
020 8547 5008 (0800-1715 Monday to Thursday, 0800-1700 Friday)
020 8770 5000 (out of hours)

Cause for Concern Form

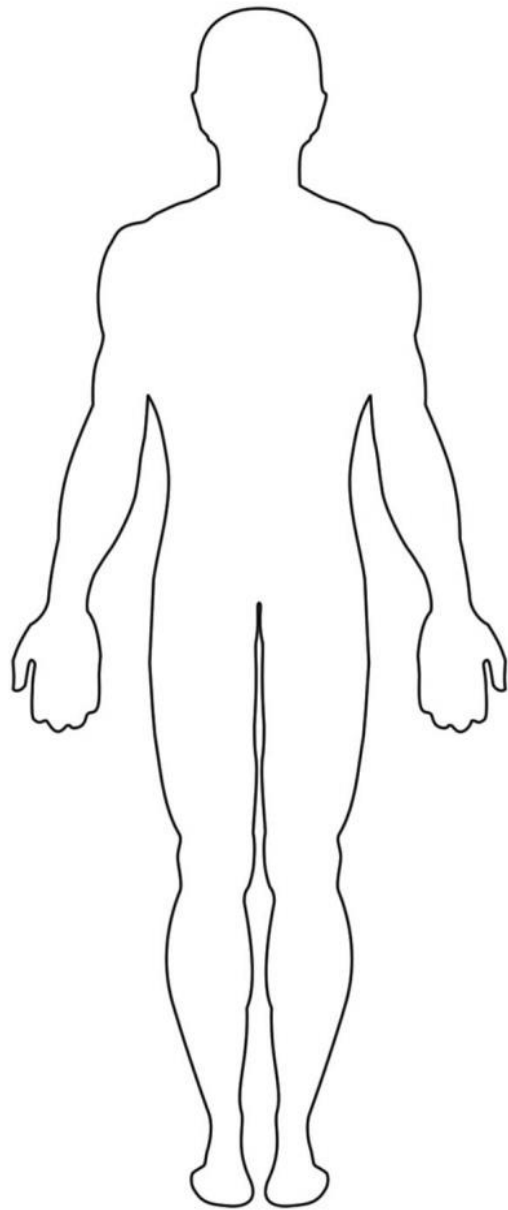
Please record any concerns you notice or are disclosed about a child, vulnerable adult or family and return this form immediately to **Michelle Rutter** (michelle.rutter@htrichmond.org.uk) and **Graham Bamping** (graham.bamping@htrichmond.org.uk), our Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs). In their absence, please contact the **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** (DSA) on 020 7939 9423 (office hours) or 07982 279713 (out of hours). If you have immediate concerns about the safety of someone, contact the **Police** on 999 and the Local Authority **Single Point of Access** (SPA) Team on 020 8547 5008 (0800-1715 Monday to Thursday and 0800-1700 Friday) or 020 8770 5000 (out of hours)

Please be specific and record facts only. Make a note of your observations as soon as possible after the event. Do not investigate yourself or make promises that you cannot keep. All details are to be kept confidential.

Name of child/vulnerable adult/family:
Date of concern:
Date concern recorded:
Nature of Concern (what did you hear, see, notice, observe etc? If you see any signs of visible harm or physical injury, indicate them on the body map overleaf):
Name of Person Reporting:
Has this form been submitted to the PSO/DSA?
Has this form been escalated to any other team or statutory agency? If so, which?
Action Taken by PSO/DSA:



FRONT



BACK

If you feel it will be helpful to explain further anything you have recorded on the body map above, then please record it here: