
St Peter's Filton

Serving God by serving you, your family and the community

Safeguarding Policy

July 2025



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Signed, PCC Chairperson	

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Introduction and Terminology

What is Safeguarding?

“At one time or another we are all vulnerable and may struggle to protect ourselves from harm caused by others. Everyone in the church community has a responsibility to ensure there is a welcome for all people and a responsibility for the safety, well being and protection of others.

Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is the responsibility of everyone.

The Church works with statutory agencies to help safeguard children, young people and adults at risk. Since its first child protection policy, and before, the Church has taken the view that matters which are the subject of statutory provisions should be brought to the relevant agencies for determination. This is particularly important if there is a possible need for statutory action to protect a child or adult, or to bring an alleged offender to justice.

Safeguarding is about more than the child and adult protection systems. It is about preventing harm to children and adults wherever possible and acting to promote their wellbeing - sometimes this will require the use of the child and adult protection systems to address concerns, make someone safer and bring an offender to justice.”

[\(https://www.bristol.anglican.org/aboutus/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies-and-procedures/\)](https://www.bristol.anglican.org/aboutus/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies-and-procedures/)

Safeguarding is the responsibility of the entire church community, and as a church we will work with statutory agencies as is necessary to help safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Priest in Charge, PCC (Parochial Church Council) and Parish Safeguarding Officer will carry the responsibility of leadership in this area and ensure effective policies and procedures are in place, implemented correctly and reviewed regularly.

Safeguarding is more than putting in place policies and procedures to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is about preventing harm and the potential risk of harm, to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policies and procedures contained within this document simply provide the framework around which St Peter’s Church aims to implement sound and effective safeguarding culture.

Who do we safeguard?

St Peter's strives to be a safe and welcoming place for all. It is acknowledged that some people are, however, more vulnerable than others, namely:

- Children and young people
- Vulnerable adults

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK in 1991, states that a child "means every human being below the age of 18 years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

All adults have the potential to be vulnerable and this will change with time and circumstances. The Care Act 2014 states that an adult will be deemed vulnerable where:

- they have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs)
- they are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

What is mistreatment, abuse or harm?

Mistreatment is defined as: "*a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons*" (Promoting a Safe Church – House of Bishops). It covers abuse, bullying and harassment, exploitation and discrimination; categories which often merge into one another. Harm is the result of any type of mistreatment.

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or a group, and concerns the misuse of power where control and/or authority can manifest as a criminal offence. It can take place in church, in public spaces, in the individual's home, or in a community setting.

There is the potential for abuse particularly where there is regular face-to-face contact, or an individual has responsibilities for another. Church people will therefore need to be vigilant to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm whilst they are attending worship, church meetings or activities and being visited by someone belonging to the church.

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of “significant harm” (as distinguished from “harm”) as the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of children. Section 47 of the 1989 Act places a duty upon local authorities to make enquiries in order to decide whether significant action is needed to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Significant harm is defined in section 31 (9) and 31 (10) of the 1989 Act, and amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 through the following calculation:

• “Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant depends on the child’s health or development. The health or development shall be compared with that which could be reasonably expected of a similar child.”

The distinction between harm and significant harm will not have a substantive difference in the application of the Safeguarding Policies at St Peter’s Church Filton. Any harm or risk of potential harm, be that “significant”, as defined by the Act, or not, will be treated with the same seriousness in ensuring the safety of the individual involved.

Different forms of abuse

Many different forms of abuse exist. The list which follows is merely a guide of the more common types of abuse, and is in no way exhaustive:

- **Spiritual Abuse:** includes misuse of religious leadership or penitential discipline; oppressive teaching or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries; the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. This can result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.
- **Physical Abuse:** ill treatment of an adult which may or may not cause physical injury is regarded as abuse. A requirement for someone to work in an unsafe environment can be construed as physical abuse. More unusual indications of physical harm include poor skin condition, poor hygiene, dehydration, malnutrition or inappropriate use of medication.
- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** can include threats or fear to withdraw care and independent wishes, or any behaviour, or threat of behaviour, which can create very real emotional or psychological distress. Bullying, sexual or racial harassment would also be included, as well as lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation.

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- **Financial or Legal Abuse:** wilful exhortation or manipulation of an individual's legal or civil rights, including: misappropriation of monies or goods; misuse of finances; exploitation of a person's resources; and using friendship to persuade an individual to make gifts or leave legacies.
 - **Neglect:** any pattern of activity, or omission of activity, which seriously impairs an individual. This can include: failure to intervene where a danger exists; not giving personal care; deliberately withholding necessities; and denying appropriate religious contacts.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** a sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other individual.

Who is someone in a position of trust?

All those who, in the capacity of work, paid or volunteer, have significant contact with children, young people and adults, especially vulnerable adults and their families, on behalf of the church, and are deemed to be in positions of trust.

Where a position of trust exists, St Peter's is committed to fulfilling expectations regarding the behaviour of the individual in the position of trust.

Those in positions of trust are likely to be treated as role models at all times, including when off-duty and so will conduct themselves in accordance with the reasonable expectations of a representative of the church.

General Information

St Peter's Church is fully committed to providing and implementing a sound safeguarding policy which ensures, as far as is practically possible, the wellbeing of every individual who uses the church in any way, keeping them safe from physical, emotional, sexual, financial or spiritual harm.

We believe that every individual has an innate value, which comes from the creation of humanity made in God's own image, and should be accorded the proper dignity this infers.

A level of vulnerability can be found in all individuals which can vary and change over time. As such, at all times, a culture of respectful pastoral care is administered throughout all aspects of the life of St Peter's Church.

St Peter's Church Filton seeks to empower and enable individuals to live their lives free from coercion, intimidation and oppression. As such, we foster a culture of tolerance and respect in line with the scriptural commandment to "love one another".

Within St Peter's Church, safeguarding is the responsibility of all members of the church. We aim to establish safe caring communities which provide a culture of "informed vigilance".

Safe practice is promoted amongst all volunteers, employees and those in positions of trust, with information, training and supervision provided. The diocesan guidelines on "Safer Recruitment", in addition to the Church of England requirements of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service), are followed to ensure, as far as is practically possible, that due care and attention is given when selecting and appointing those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.

All volunteers within the church, and those who lead groups run on church premises (including the Church Hall) agree to adopt and work in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy, of which they are given a copy and advised where to look for further information.

To ensure the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are kept up to date and effective, safeguarding has a permanent place on the agenda of the PCC. In addition a general review is carried out annually by: the Rector; Church Wardens; Vulnerable Children and Young Persons Representative; and Vulnerable Adult Representative.

In adopting the guidelines and recommendations of both the Church of England and the Diocese of Bristol, and ensuring the Safeguarding Policy of St Peter's Church is implemented effectively, the procedures for doing so are given in the rest of this document.

Where concern of harm or risk of harm is raised, particularly in relation to children, young people or vulnerable adults, a response will be made immediately, without delay.

St Peter's is committed to providing informed and appropriate pastoral care, which will be offered to any child or adult who has suffered harm or abuse, as well as to those who have caused the harm or abuse.

Whenever possible, those who are known to have offended against a child or vulnerable adult will be welcomed and accepted as a member of the church community, subject to a risk management plan, developed in conjunction with statutory agencies (for further information, see section relating to offenders/ex-offenders).

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the confidentiality of an individual, if something is said or done which suggests that individual may present a risk to themselves or another, this must be reported to the relevant Safeguarding Officer and the Priest in Charge. This does not affect the rules of the confessional. (For further information, please see section relating to Confidentiality.)

All members of the clergy and safeguarding representatives receive appropriate diocesan safeguarding training. St Peter's is committed to developing a culture of responsibility within the church and puts on safeguarding training, of which all volunteers and PCC members are invited to attend.

St Peter's Church has in place the appropriate insurance for all activities in respect of all members of the community and church workers, be they lay or ordained, employed or volunteer, through Ecclesiastical Insurance.

Children and Young People

St Peter's Church Filton is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for children and young people to engage in the Christian faith. As part of this, we seek to minimise, as far as is practicably possible, the opportunity or occasions which may result in the physical, mental or spiritual harm of a child or young person.

For the purpose of this policy, "children and young people" refer to those individuals under the age of 18, including young volunteers up to that age.

All adults working with children or young people under 18 years of age shall be appointed in line with the "Safer Recruitment" policy of this church, as advised by the Diocese of Bristol. They shall be registered in the way required and a list of those registered is retained.

All activities with children and young people are the responsibility of the PCC. Where the church premises (including the Church Hall) are hired for private use, individual safeguarding forms will be signed by the person responsible.

All activities organised by the PCC, Priest in Charge, Youth Worker or any authorised youth volunteer, for children or young people, shall be done so in line with St Peter's "Youth and Family" policy.

Wherever possible, at least two adults shall be present in activities with children and young people.

All authorised leaders will receive written guidelines regarding their roles and responsibilities and will receive appropriate training and supervision.

The PCC shall appoint one or more adults, who have been appointed in line with the "Safer Recruitment" policy of St Peter's Church, to act as independent sources of advice, counsel and action for all those involved with children and young people, including children themselves. These independent adults will have clear guidelines as to their role and responsibility and will receive appropriate training and support.

No volunteer or employed person will plan to meet with a child or young person on their own. If this is to happen, it must be done so with the written permission of the parent or carer and be in a public space. Volunteers or employed persons should not give lifts in cars to a child or young person on their

own without the written permission of the parent or guardian. Even where permission is gained, there should be more than one adult individual in the car with the child or young person.

The PCC will receive written notification of day trips or away days and full signed permission slips will be obtained by the parent or guardian.

All children and young people under the age of 18 will require written parental consent when joining a group or activity.

Vulnerable Adults

St Peter's Church recognises that all individuals have a certain level of vulnerability, which can change over time. As a result a culture of respectful pastoral care is administered throughout all aspects of the life of the church to all adults.

Increased safeguarding responsibilities will be used where an adult falls within the definition given of an adult for whom safeguarding duties apply, according to The Care Act 2014; namely an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of these needs) and,
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and,
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

In practice, those who fall within the remit of the Care Act 2014 include a person affected by physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health difficulties, dementia or long term illness. They will be deemed to be at risk if it is known or suspected that they are being harmed by another individual *and* they are, or may be, unable to protect themselves.

The PCC will appoint an individual in a way consistent with the "Safer Recruitment" policy of St Peter's to be responsible for the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable adults. This individual will be subject to a DBS check and selected for the specific skills required.

Any concern raised or complaint made regarding harm or abuse to a vulnerable adult for whom the PCC has responsibility will be investigated without delay and if necessary the relevant local authorities or police will be informed, with whom we will co-operate fully.

Enhanced pastoral care from the clergy will be offered to anyone who has suffered harm or abuse in the past.

Abuse of power by those in authority or in a position of trust will be challenged.

Any member of the church family known to have offended against a vulnerable person will be cared for and supervised as the diocesan process of investigation takes place.

The clergy will review members of the church family regularly in confidence to consider whether their levels of vulnerability have increased, and be ready to offer increased pastoral care.

St Peters acknowledges the wide-ranging harm that could be caused to a vulnerable adult in include: physical; sexual; psychological; financial; modern slavery; self-neglect; domestic abuse; discrimination; and acts of neglect and or omission. As an organisation we are committed to being vigilant and raising awareness with the Safeguarding Officer and Clergy.

All independent groups who meet on church premises (including the Church Hall) take responsibility for their own safeguarding. Each group leader will sign an individual safeguarding form.

Where a congregation member or church worker (volunteer, employed or sub-contracted) is identified as presenting a potential risk to other adults, advice will be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Where a concern is raised, the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Officer will assess the circumstances in conjunction with the Priest in Charge (where appropriate) and report through the proper channels so as not to compromise potential police and social services investigations.

St Peter's Church and any individuals concerned will co-operate fully with any investigations.

Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

St Peter's Church Filton has a duty of pastoral care to all people who live in the parish. As such, we should be mindful of the growing problem of modern slavery and human trafficking.

The Church's response to human trafficking is the recognition that this most wicked of practices is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human being.

What is Human Trafficking?

"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the receiving or giving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime

Figures released in early 2017 have shown that the number of suspected victims of slavery and human trafficking has more than doubled in three years. 3,805 people were reported as potential victims in 2016. This increase has prompted the government to take action to tackle modern slavery, including toughening up sentences and increasing support and protection for victims.

Traffickers are using the Internet to lure their victims with hollow promises of jobs, education and even love. Modern slaves in the UK, often said to be hiding in plain sight, are working in places such as nail bars, brothels, construction sites and in agriculture, though this is by no means an exhaustive list. Sexual exploitation is the most common form of modern slavery reported in the UK, followed by labour exploitation, forced criminal exploitation and domestic servitude. Many victims are from Albania, Vietnam, Nigeria, Romania and Poland, though some are from the UK itself. They can be men, women or children of all ages but the issue is normally more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, minorities or socially-excluded groups. You can find out more about modern slavery here:

www.polarisproject.org/typology

Many modern slaves believe they are escaping poverty, limited opportunities at home, a lack of education, unstable social and political conditions, or war. Slave masters, however, are usually just out to make financial gain. Many slaves do not even realise they are a victim of slavery.

The Modern Slavery Act was introduced into law in 2015. It states an offence is committed if someone holds another in slavery or servitude or requires them to perform forced or compulsory labour. The legislation also increased the maximum jail term for people traffickers from 14 years to life.

See it, say it

Trafficked persons are often victims of abuse such as rape, torture, debt bondage, unlawful confinement and threats against their family or other people close to them, as well as other forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence.

These are some of the signs to look out for if you suspect someone is a victim of modern slavery. The victim:

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed or nervous
- Does not make eye contact
- Lacks healthcare
- Appears malnourished
- Shows signs of physical abuse, constraint, confinement or torture
- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her money, identification documents or passport
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves

Further details can be found here:

www.polarisproject.org/recognize-signs

If you have concerns, and you suspect someone is the victim of trafficking, please contact the Rector or the Safeguarding Officers immediately. If necessary they will inform the police.

For more information, please look at the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/reporting-abuse>

Procedure for Raising Concerns



Our Safeguarding Officer Anne-Louise Pam 07583 083029 or
almenta@hotmail.co.uk

If for any reason Anne-Louise is not available and you are happy and able to do so, contact the
Priest in Charge

If you are a young person reading this but feel unable to speak to one of the above people, seek the help of someone you trust or contact Childline on 0800 11 11

If a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, call 999

Procedure for raising a concern - children

If you are concerned that a child or young person is showing signs of abuse or harm (see below), immediately consult the Child Protection Officer, and the person who supervises your employed / volunteer work.

The following is a non-exhaustive list, which should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy Introduction and Terminology section.

KINDS OF ABUSE	SIGNS OF ABUSE
Physical (where a child or young person receives physical hurt or injury)	Unexplained injuries Injuries not having received medical attention Hidden injuries Signs of neglect
Sexual (where adults or older children or young people seek gratification by using children)	Allegations made by children Preoccupation with sexual matters Sexual activity through words, play or drawings Severe sleep disturbances with fear or phobias
Emotional (where children are harmed by consistent lack of love or attention, or threats or taunting)	Regression in behaviour Nervousness Sudden underachievement Inappropriate relationships with peers / adults Attention seeking Running away, stealing or lying Looking uncared for Being withdrawn

Please note: many symptoms of distress can point to abuse, but there can be many other explanations. It is important that the above signs are not taken as proof that abuse has taken place. Instead they should be viewed as a cause for concern and we should be careful not to jump to conclusions.

Where you have cause to raise concern, please be mindful to respect an individual's confidentiality. This, however, should not stop you raising a concern.

If a child or young person speaks to you about an allegation of abuse, neglect or harm, remember to follow three simple steps:

1. RECOGNISE

Listen to what they say and take it seriously

If appropriate, you can ask who, what, when and where questions to establish the basic facts

Do not ask 'why' questions

Do not investigate: that is the role of the police and social services

2. REPORT

Tell the person you will have to share this information with your Child Protection Officer, line manager or Rector.

3. RECORD

As soon as possible, write down and date everything the child has told you

Follow the procedure for keeping records

Keeping in mind these three steps, bear in mind the following:

- Accept what the child says
- Keep calm and look at the child or young person, but not intimidatingly
- Make it clear the child is not to blame
- Be aware the child may have been threatened
- Never 'push' for information
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- Tell them you will keep them informed

On receiving a concern, the Child Protection Officer will contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for advice.

Where a child is deemed to be at risk, a subsequent investigation will follow. This responsibility lies with Social Services. You may be asked to attend a Case Conference, either to give information or to support the family. If this takes place you will be provided with pastoral support from the Rector and ministry team throughout.

Procedure for raising a concern - vulnerable adult

If you are concerned that an adult, considered to be vulnerable under the Care Act 2014 (see Policy for Vulnerable Adults) is showing signs of abuse or harm, consult the Vulnerable Adults Officer and the person who supervises your employed/volunteer work. For guidance on “abuse and harm” see the Safeguarding Introduction and Terminology.

If you have cause to raise a concern, please be mindful to respect an individual’s confidentiality. This however, should not stop you raising a concern.

If an adult considered to be vulnerable speaks to you about an allegation of abuse or harm, remember to follow three simple steps.

1. RECOGNISE

Listen to what they say and take it seriously

If appropriate, you can ask who, what, when and where questions to establish the basic facts

Do not ask ‘why’ questions

Do not investigate: that is the role of the police and social services

2. REPORT

Tell the person you will have to share this information with your Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, line manager or Rector.

3. RECORD

As soon as possible, write down and date everything they have told you

Follow the procedure for keeping records

On receiving a concern, the Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for advice.

Offenders and ex-offenders

As with all individuals, St Peter's Church Filton is committed to assuring those who have engaged in criminal activity that they are precious to God and in Him and through Him are offered healing and wholeness. It will assist where possible in the rehabilitation of offenders and challenge appropriately the social issues raised by the presence of such individuals within the community, living out forgiveness, which lies at the heart of the Gospel.

St Peters recognises the research stating that a disproportionately large number of convicted offenders against children and vulnerable people attend churches. It is therefore possible that amongst the worshipping community there will be offenders, some of whom will be known and some unknown. This may include those who have committed sexual offences, but also those guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse.

Whilst St Peter's Church aims to fulfil its duty to minister to all people, including ex-offenders, the safety of children, young people and adults (including vulnerable adults) will not be compromised in carrying out this duty.

Where it is brought to the attention of the clergy that a member of the church is an ex-offender, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer may be alerted, together with offender and a safe course of action will be agreed upon. Where the offence is of a sexual nature, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will be notified immediately.

An agreement/ action plan between the Rector, on behalf of the PCC, and St Peter's Church, may include:

- Attending designated meetings/ worship only
- Sitting apart from vulnerable adults and/ or children and young people
- Staying away from areas of the building where vulnerable adults or children and young people meet
- Only attending meetings held in the church/ public spaces rather than an individual's home
- Never being alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Declining hospitality where there are children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Never working with children, young people or vulnerable adults

The offender will be asked to sign an agreement, which will be enforced and reviewed at regular intervals. Where the agreement is broken, other churches may be notified and/ or the individual's key worker/ probation officer will be involved and the Diocesan Registrar will be consulted for advice.

To respect the confidentiality of the individual involved, it will be discussed with them who in the congregation will need to know, in order to create a safe place for him/her. Those likely to be involved will include: clergy; churchwardens; safeguarding officers; the individual's key worker (if they have one); the youth worker; and anyone else responsible for co-ordinating activities. It will be made clear that no-one else other than those agreed will be informed of the facts without the offender's knowledge, and the highest levels of confidence will be maintained.

The Rector (and/or other clergy/safeguarding officers) will endeavour to keep open lines of communication with the individual in question, appropriate boundaries will be established and standards of vigilance kept high, seeking to ensure the protection of both adults and children, and the individual themselves from, for example, false accusations of further abuse.

Where past offences come to light after a number of years, great sensitivity will be applied, but the above process will still be followed.

Where a person makes it known to someone in the church that they believe they may be tempted to cause, or are at risk of causing, harm to a child by committing a sexual offence, they will be encouraged to seek confidential advice from the Lucy Faithful Foundation "Stop It Now", freephone helpline 0808 1000 900 or by visiting www.stopitnow.org.uk

Pastoral Care from those in a position of trust

St Peter's Church is committed to providing a high standard of pastoral care to the worshipping community; those who are engaged in occasional offices; users of the Coffee Shop and visitors; church volunteers and workers; and the wider community in the Parish of Filton.

Any persons who exercise pastoral care in an official capacity on behalf of St Peter's Church will have received appropriate training and will be accountable for their conduct through ongoing supervision.

Consideration will be given, by such persons administering pastoral care, to how they relate to others, how they increase the well-being of others and how they ensure their own well-being and safety.

St Peter's Church recognises the ease with which pastoral care relationships can turn into friendships or interactions with "social acquaintances". Due to the inherent power of the individual in the position of trust, strict professional boundaries will be maintained.

Both key individuals and ministers administering pastoral care will be aware of the dangers of dependency and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.

All ministers/lay workers involved in the ministry of healing will be trained and have a sound understanding of the theology of healing and will adopt a non-intrusive practice.

Only ministers in ordained ministry for more than 3 years will administer the sacrament of reconciliation. It will always be done so in correspondence with the guidance of the Church of England and Canon law.

When an individual believes that their house is subject to an unwanted presence, Church of England regulations and Canon law will be followed. Where an ordained minister deems it appropriate to pray a blessing over the house, they will never do so alone, but will do so in the company of another ordained minister or trained lay worker.

All administering pastoral care (lay and ordained) will recognise their limits and not undertake any form of pastoral care or ministry that is beyond their competence. This will be decided in conjunction with the Rector. Where such ministry is required, a referral will be made to the correct agency, or individual with appropriate expertise.

Those offering pastoral care will take care to avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships. Particular attention will be paid to the amount of time spent with an individual through visits, one to one conversations, text messages and e-mails, both given to and received by the individual administering pastoral care.

Lay and ordained workers (employed or volunteer) will treat those to whom they minister or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.

Acts of personal care, such as helping with physical needs of an intimate nature (for example washing and toileting) are not to be permitted by anyone when working on behalf of St Peter's Church.

Where a romantic attachment develops as a result of a pastoral relationship, great care and sensitivity will be applied. Where this arises, the Rector shall be informed and advice will be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. Alternative arrangements will be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the individual concerned.

Lay or ordained volunteers/workers will not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.

All administering pastoral care will be aware of their own body language and that of the person receiving that care, including tone of voice and written word; ulterior motives; subtext; signs and symbols; and manipulative behaviour.

Where it appears that manipulative behaviour is being exhibited by an individual in need of pastoral care, an alternative minister will be appointed and care will be taken not to reinforce patterns of manipulative behaviour. Such methods may include: limiting the amount of time given to the individual; appointing one worker to deal with that individual; preventing co-workers being played off against one another; and only communicating through face-to-face contact whilst others are present.

Due care and consideration will be given by the one administering pastoral care regarding:

- the place of the meeting
- their appearance
- the balance of privacy for conversation and opportunity for supervision
- the physical distance kept between individuals
- whether circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction

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- the safety and comfort of all participants
 - establishing expectations regarding confidentiality (see Policy)
 - appropriateness of giving/receiving physical contact

St Peters encourages all who minister pastoral care in the name or capacity of the church to adopt a direct, honest, open and transparent approach.

Social Media, emails, instant messages and texts

St Peter's Church recognises the high level of digital connectivity which exists in society. We recognise the value it brings but are also committed to ensuring the safety of those who engage with the church or its ministers through social media, e-mails, instant messaging and text messages.

St Peter's Church has a Facebook account, a Twitter account and a website. The far reaching audience (in terms of demographic, social and age) of each of these necessitates a duty of care from those administering the sites to publish material which is suitable in terms of the content, wording and intended audience.

There is potential within social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, for public and private boundaries to become blurred. Care will be taken by representatives of the church to maintain professional boundaries at all times, considering the different ways in which a message or a post may be read, and its tone may be received.

The intimate nature of text messages, in terms of how they can be read at any time of the day or night, entering an individual's personal space, necessitates a high standard of care and consideration to be taken when sending such messages. Texts of a pastoral nature should be kept to a minimum to prevent blurred boundaries, misunderstandings and being seen as a 'friend'.

Text messages and instant messages give the impression that ministers and lay or ordained church workers (employed or volunteer) are always available. To prevent a false sense of normal barriers being lowered, messages received during an individual's time off should not be answered and messages should only ever be replied to or sent during reasonable hours, i.e. not late at night or early in the morning. Where a response is needed immediately, the Rector of the Parish should be notified.

Due to the informal nature of text messages, any messages sent via this form of media should be informal and brief. They should not be used for pastoral conversations to ensure as far as possible that normal social barriers are not lowered.

All church workers (lay or ordained, employed or volunteer) are required to use the internet, mobile phones and social networking in appropriate ways, mindful that:

- posts, through association, may be deemed to represent the church, and
- messages are often insensitive to social context, and
- questions such as "what does this post say about me?" and "what does it say about my values or beliefs?" may be useful to consider.

St Peters strongly discourages the practice of church workers in positions of responsibility (for example Ministers and Youth Workers, lay or ordained, employed or volunteer) from having Facebook friends, under the age of 18 on their personal account. Where such 'friendships' do exist, and the child is not a relative of the individual, permission must be sought from the parents/ carers of that child or young person.

In order to keep appropriate professional boundaries, great care should be given by church workers in a position of responsibility (as define above) being 'friends' on social media with adults and vulnerable adults. Where such friendships do exist, the way in which the church worker express themselves should be considered and every effort made to maintain professional boundaries.

Where e-mails, text messages or instant messages are sent to children or young people, parents/ carers should be copied in, and messages should be kept informative and brief. Where Facebook / TikTok / Instagram (cited as examples but not exclusively) are used to communicate with children or young people, parents will be invited also to access that page. Please note that the minimum age for Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter is 13.

Whilst e-mails are a legitimate and useful form of communication, care will be taken where these are sent in the capacity of representing the church, that their content and manner both reflect the church in a positive light and maintain the appropriate boundaries.

Photos

St Peter's Church is committed to giving due care and attention to the use of photographs. Permission will always be sought from a child's parents or carers before being used by the church for any purpose.

Permission will be sought where a parent registers their child for any church group. If the child is not yet registered and photos are being taken at which they are present, the parent's consent will be obtained verbally.

Photographs will only be taken of children where permission from the parents/carers has been given. Anyone taking photos without organisation will be challenged by the Church Wardens or a member of the clergy.

Where two parents/carers disagree regarding consent for photos to be taken and used by St Peters, it will be treated as though consent has not been obtained.

St Peters agrees with the notion that it is good practice, where the child is mature enough to express a succinct opinion, to seek their own permission, in addition to the parent/carer, to take and use photos for church purposes, namely: on the website; social media; church notice boards; or church publications.

Where photos are being taken and used of individual church members, verbal consent will be obtained beforehand for their publication and use.

Where photos are used on the website, where possible they will be 'locked' so that they cannot be copied or stored by another person visiting the website.

As a matter of course, names will not be given of individuals in photos, unless there is a legitimate reason for doing so, and the consent of the person in question (or in the case of a child or young person, the consent of the parent/carer) is gained.

All digital images are stored securely via electronic devices and only kept by those authorised to use them, and all hard copies are kept in a locked filing cabinet at the Rectory.

Record keeping, Data Protection and Confidentiality

St Peter's Church is committed to ensuring that due care and attention is paid to the process of keeping personal information and the confidentiality of such information.

High levels of confidentiality will be observed. Where an individual shows signs or expresses that they are a risk either to themselves or someone else, the Rector and Safeguarding Officers should be informed so that the necessary safeguarding measures may be initiated.

Where a penitent's own behaviour is at issue, the priest should urge the individual to report it to the police and if deemed absolutely necessary, may choose to withhold absolution until evidence of repentance is demonstrated.

Absolute confidentiality is only given within the rules of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Where someone is under investigation for a potential breach of a safeguarding matter, St Peters will comply with the investigations of the police and/or outside agencies as is deemed necessary.

Those administering pastoral care on behalf of the church keep records of whom they have seen with brief notes and dates, which are collated by the Rector and stored in a locked filing cabinet. Any further information should only be recorded with the individual's consent, unless it is a matter of child protection or might be a record of suspicion of abuse or mistreatment.

Records are kept factual and objective.

Records relating to abuse will be kept in a locked filing cabinet indefinitely.

Any publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images by St Peter's Church will follow the relevant and up-to-date legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Personal data will not be sent by e-mail, to minimise associated risks of unauthorised access.

St Peters as a church body is not a public authority, for the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, although this Act does not have a direct impact upon the church's activities, St Peters recognises that where sharing the information with public authorities, these bodies *will* be subject to the Act.

Formal records are kept of children and young people where registered for a regular church group. These include:

- Child's name
- Child's Date of Birth
- Child's address
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information (including allergies and any special information)
- Whether any named person is to have restricted access
- Consent for emergency treatment

These records are reviewed yearly for accuracy and kept by the Parish Office. Where the children meet, a register is taken for safety purposes.

Forms, references and data obtained throughout the Safer Recruitment process are kept in a locked filing cabinet at the Rectory. Volunteers retain their own DBS certificates. A copy of the number and date of the certificate issued is kept by the DBS administrator at St Peters, in order to facilitate renewal as and when needed. Where the certificate is retained by the church, it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, separate from any other information retained on the individual (for example, paperwork from the Safer Recruitment process).

Any information retained through the process of disclosure will *only* be passed to those authorised to receive it in the course of their duties (section 124 Police Act 1997). A record will be kept where disclosed information has been revealed.

Information obtained through the process of disclosure will be used for the specific purpose for which it was obtained, and for which consent was given.

Disclosure certificates will only be kept for as long as is absolutely necessary following the recruitment (paid or volunteer) decision, in any case no longer than 6 months, to allow for consideration and resolution of any disputes. Where exceptional circumstances deem it necessary to keep the certificate for longer than 6 months, advice will be obtained from CCPAS (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service). Following the retention period the certificate will destroyed by a secure means (i.e. shredding).

Financial Integrity

St Peter's Church recognises that financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community, and it can be a type of harm, to which an adult, particularly a vulnerable adult, may be subjected.

St Peters is committed to ensuring that those with authority for such matters should maintain proper systems. This includes not delegating that responsibility to anyone else and challenging improper practices, when and where they arise.

Workers within St Peters, lay or ordained, employed or volunteer, will not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.

Any individual with authority for financial matters will not be influenced by offers of money, or seek to influence others by such methods.

Gifts received through church work (lay or ordained, employed or volunteer) will be made known to the Rector or Church Wardens for reasons of accountability.

Personal finances of church workers (lay or ordained, employed or volunteer) will be kept separate from the finances of the church and any conflicts of interest will be reports and measures will be taken to eradicate/avoid these.

Great care is taken not to canvass for monetary donations for church or charitable finances from those who may be deemed to be vulnerable. Special care and attention will be made here to the recently bereaved.

Complaints against Church Workers

St Peter's Church takes complaints against its workers (lay or ordained, employed or volunteer) very seriously and seeks to deal with them in a prompt and transparent manner, keeping accurate and appropriate records.

Each concern will be considered and dealt with initially in an informal and local way, with the aim of resolving them at this level.

This informal route, first adopted, will include discussions between the person making the allegation and the Rector (or the Church Warden if it concerns the Rector).

When a complaint comes to light, the Rector (or Church Warden) will seek an understanding of how the individual wishes to proceed and will consider whether a criminal offence has been committed. Where an offence is suspected, the complainant will be given the opportunity to make a statement to the police and no further action will be taken without police agreement.

Complaints against clergy and lay ministers holding the Bishop's Licence will be dealt with initially by the Rector (or Church Warden where it concerns the Rector). If appropriate this will be referred to the Bishop directly, or through the Archdeacon. Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint against a member of the clergy under the 'Clergy Discipline Measure 2003' they will be guided to the details of the procedure in the Code of Practice to the Measure.

Where St Peters employs individuals, statutory procedures, namely the Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004, will be followed and legal advice will be sought as necessary and appropriate.

Where a complaint is raised against a volunteer, resolution will be sought from an informal process, if the matter is of a non-serious nature. Where the concern regards a matter of substance, every effort will be made to follow a process similar to that set down by law.

St Peters is committed to exhibiting the love and forgiveness at the heart of the Gospel in word and deed. Where the complaint / concern is of a non-serious nature and is dealt with informally and locally, every effort will be made to put in place provisions which reduce the likelihood of the behaviour in question being repeated. The individual will be made aware that if further complaints are made or similar accusations come to light, then the process of investigation may be more thorough and substantive consequences may be incurred.

A complaint referred to the police or local authority will necessitate due consideration being given by the Rector and Safeguarding Officers as to whether or not the volunteer should be suspended from duty until the outcome of the investigations are known.

Where the outcome of an investigation is inconclusive, or the concern remains, the Rector and PCC, in line with the “Safer Recruitment” process, will consider whether the supervision can be lifted and if so, with what conditions. If deemed appropriate, professional advice will be sought from the diocesan registrar.

The individual who made the complaint will be kept informed throughout the process, be offered pastoral care, and informed of the outcome.

Where the complaint is made of a worker (lay or ordained, employed or volunteer), every effort will be made to help them remain in their position, if appropriate. If the behaviour in question continues in the same manner after having dealt with it informally /locally, it may be necessary to revoke the individual from that line of work. This will however be a last resort, and if this does occur, the individual will be reminded of their value and worth as a child of God, and that they are still a welcome member of the church family.

At all times, the confidentiality of both the complainant and the one whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint will be ensured in line with St Peter’s Policy on confidentiality.

Safeguarding Contact List

POSITION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
In an emergency	Police	999
Police non-emergency		101
Interim Priest in Charge	Revd Rod Cosh	rodcosh@icloud.com
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Anne-Louise Pam	07583 083 029 almenta@hotmail.co.uk
Church Wardens	Thomas Moller Janet Moller	wardens.stpeterschurchfilton@gmail.com
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	Adam Bond	0117 906 0100 safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org
Diocesan Disability Advisor	Revd Canon Alice Kemp	alice.kemp@bristoldiocese.org

Further information information on Diocesan Policy & Guidelines on Safer Recruitment can be found at www.bristol.anglican.org

NOTE: Please consider the method of communication used, ensuring as far as possible it is done so securely and in line with best practice including the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. For example:

- Classified information not left in a Voicemail
- Use initials rather than full names in emails
- Mark letters 'Confidential'

Sources of Useful Information

Call 999 if a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm

- Safe Spaces – 0300 303 1056 [Home - Safe Spaces England and Wales](#)
- NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 [NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#)
- Childline – 0800 1111 [Childline | Childline](#)
- Stop it Now – 0808 1000 900 <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>
- NAPAC – 0808 801 0331 [NAPAC - Supporting Recovery From Childhood Abuse](#)
- Samaritans – 116 123 [Samaritans](#)
- Family Lives – 0808 800 2222 [Parenting and Family Support | Family Lives](#)
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#)

Safeguarding Checklist

St Peter's Church Filton is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which children and vulnerable adults feel safe. To this end, we have included the following checklist in our Safeguarding Policy, which is based on information given by the Church of England.

This is reviewed at four PCC meetings each year.

	Yes	No
Safeguarding is a high priority, and we publicise our commitment to it in all of our key documents		
Safeguarding policy and procedures are accessible to everyone, are updated regularly, and relate to our arrangements		
There are designated officers for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in place, and everyone knows who they are		
All our workers and volunteers are recruited following the Safer Recruitment practice guidance		
All our workers and volunteers have a basic awareness of safeguarding and abuse in the church context, and know what to do if they have a concern		
All our workers and volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults are provided with written guidance that makes clear what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour		
All of our workers and volunteers receive regular supervision, training and support in their roles		
We carry out regular safeguarding health and safety checks / risk assessments to remove or reduce any risk posed by activities and events that we run		
We ensure that appropriate insurance covers all activities taken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults		
There are accurate registration and record keeping processes in place for all activities and events that involve children, young people and vulnerable adults		
We comply with all data protection legislation in regard to storing information about individuals		
Safeguarding and abuse is discussed openly. There is an acknowledgement that it could happen here.		
There is information available for children, young people and vulnerable adults about where to go for help both in and outside of the church		

We talk to children, young people and vulnerable adults about how to stay safe and how they can take responsibility for their own and other's safety		
There is an ongoing culture of vigilance, and any causes for concern are raised immediately		
We ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and / or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor		
The PSO's regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting.		
At the APCM the PCC provides an annual report in relation to safeguarding. In the PCC's annual report we include a statement that reports on progress and a statement that the PCC has complied with the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.		
Any hire agreement with any person or body wishing to hire church premises contains a provision whereby the person / body hiring the premises agrees to comply with our safeguarding policy and procedures		
We provide access to a formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops' 'Promoting a safe church: safeguarding policy statement'.		
Essentially all children and adults feel safe and supported		