



Behaviour Code for Adults Working with Vulnerable Adults

This Code outlines the expectations of the Parish of All Saints, Patcham for all those who work or volunteer with vulnerable adults. It reflects our desire to follow Jesus in all we do, reflecting his love to those we minister to. It follows from our determination to ensure that our church is a place where vulnerable adults can not only be safe but feel safe. And, it reflects our unwavering commitment to the highest possible standards of safeguarding practice.

Following this code will help to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will help them learn how safe adults behave around them - thus equipping them to better recognise if an adult is behaving unsafely around them, and to know that this behaviour is wrong. It will also help staff and volunteers maintain the standards of behaviour expected of them, and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

What do we mean by a Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is someone over the age of 18 whose ability to protect his or her self from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

Although everyone is vulnerable in some ways and at certain times, some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. Some of the factors which increase vulnerability are:

- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Mental ill health (including dementia) chronic or acute
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- The failing faculties in old age
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.

Upholding the Code

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report breaches of this code to the appropriate Safeguarding Officer under the parish whistle-blowing policy, or, if necessary, under the parish safeguarding policy.

Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or the local authority adults social care department.

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers

When working with vulnerable adults for the Parish of All Saints, Patcham, all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by vulnerable adults. They therefore must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

When working with vulnerable adults, it is important to provide a warm, nurturing environment, whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour

Respect

- Treat all vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Value the contribution of vulnerable adults, and take their views seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible.
- Respect a vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy.
- Don't assume or withhold physical contact – ask first.
- Obtain specialist knowledge when necessary, e.g. on harassment, disability, mental illness, domestic abuse.

Choices

- Respect the choices vulnerable adults make, even if they may appear risky.
- Offer assistance in such a way as to maximise a person's independence
- Consider whether the vulnerable adult has the capacity to make choices and whether safety might require intervention.
- Give vulnerable adults the highest level of privacy and confidentiality possible in their circumstances
- Ensure that vulnerable adults know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group leader. Sign and date the record.
- Always share concerns about vulnerable adults or the behaviour of another worker to your group leader and/or the church safeguarding coordinator.

Transport

- Lifts arranged by adults among themselves are a private matter and not the concern of the church unless there appears to be abuse or exploitation.
- All cars that carry vulnerable adults should be in a roadworthy condition.
- All passengers as well as the driver must wear seatbelts.
- Take care when assisting vulnerable adults to board or leave vehicles, taking account of their frailty and that of the helper.

When working with vulnerable adults, you should not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact should be initiated by the vulnerable adult.
- Act, speak, or conduct yourself in a sexually provocative or suggestive way, either directly towards vulnerable adults, or with other adults when you are with vulnerable adults, or engage in any sexual behaviour at all with vulnerable adults. It is your responsibility to do everything you can do to avoid any hint of sexually inappropriate behaviour, language, or styles of relating with vulnerable adults.
- Encourage vulnerable adults to behave in sexually provocative or suggestive ways with each other.
- Touch a vulnerable adult inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Invade a vulnerable adult's privacy while washing or going to the toilet.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.

- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a vulnerable adult.
- Show favouritism to any one vulnerable adult.
- Allow a vulnerable adult to involve you in excessive attention seeking, including that which is overtly physical or sexual in nature. It is always your responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries in your work with vulnerable adults.
- Allow unknown adults access to vulnerable adults. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Allow strangers to give vulnerable adults lifts.

Visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (including residential or nursing homes)

Parish visiting is very important to those who are housebound for many reasons: that of infirmity, acute or long-term illness, bereavement, mental illness including dementia or Alzheimer's disease, pastoral visiting and the provision of home communion. However, it is important that those visiting as well as those being visited are supported and protected from any risk or danger.

- Always undertake a risk assessment before visiting a vulnerable adult in their own home.
- Be aware of possible risk factors: male visiting female or vice versa, same sex attraction, false accusations over assault/taking money or possessions/damage to property.
- Consider possible risks to self: e.g. assault, verbal assault or accusations.
- Don't call unannounced: call by arrangement, and if appropriate telephone just prior to visiting.
- Where there are concerns or risks known before the visit, give careful consideration to whether the visit is absolutely necessary or whether you should be accompanied by another adult.
- Always carry a mobile phone when on a home visit and ensure someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return.
- If the person you are visiting is not known to you, ensure you have a means of identification or letter of introduction from your church.
- Always knock on the door before entering the room or home, ensuring you respect their home and possessions.
- Be realistic about your boundaries: keep to agreed limits on how much time you will spend with someone and how often you come. Don't take extra responsibilities on a bit by bit basis. Be realistic about the amount of time you have; don't say yes to every request for help.
- Avoid where at all possible handling money for vulnerable adults; if it is unavoidable ensure you provide receipts and discuss with your leader.
- Be clear about what behaviour is acceptable and what is not from the vulnerable adult.
- A record of pastoral and home communion visits should be kept while being mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality where necessary.