



6. PASTORAL CARE

Our Help Hub

We may all feel or become vulnerable at some point in our lives and need help or support of some kind. Our Help Hub acts as a local safety net for anyone in need. It can organise practical help such lifts, emergency food packages, food bank vouchers and can signpost local care and support services. All hub helpers are expected to complete the C of E on-line Safeguarding Basic Awareness course.

Pastoral Visiting

Visiting vulnerable adults in their own homes, including for Communion visits to the sick and house bound is an important part of pastoral ministry. Many parishioners will be well known to members of the pastoral team and where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk to the visitor or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a pastoral visitor at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour. Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a pastoral visitor. For these reasons, it is very important for parishes to ensure their pastoral visitors and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the way pastoral visitors engage in lone working or visiting parishioners in their homes.

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own safety as a pastoral visitor you should:

- Undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit. (Risk Assessment form is attached)
- Consider whether you should be accompanied by another church officer. Visiting in pairs is advisable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment. If appropriate telephone the person just before visiting and inform another church officer of your plans
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/ support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission. Ideally encourage them to set up the contact.
- Never offer "over the counter" remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Avoid dealing with finances. Keep receipts etc if you do.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the Pastoral Team Leaders and say what is going well or is of concern.



6. Pastoral Care

- They will report any safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the Diocesan Safety Advisor (DSA) if they are not available.

Financial Integrity

- Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.
- Pastoral workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- They should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the PCC, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Pastoral workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the PCC.
- Pastoral workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and advocacy to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

Safeguarding Contracts

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children or adults at risk, or a serious allegation has been made of sexual or financial abuse, it is important that their behaviour within the church community is reported to the DSA and properly managed. The Church has an important role in contributing to the prevention of future abuse and in these circumstances behaviour management is not only about monitoring an individual's, behaviour, but also offering support to lead a fulfilled life.

The Church Safeguarding Team will take guidance from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer in order to supervise the individual concerned and to offer pastoral care. To fulfil our commitment to protect vulnerable groups, a **Safeguarding Contract** will be developed to set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. While it is not possible to prevent a parishioner from attending divine service, unless this is a condition included in a court order or in his/her licence conditions upon release from prison, if they wish to attend



6. Pastoral Care

any service, as part of the safeguarding arrangement, church wardens may direct them where to sit, put measures in place to closely supervise them (e.g. accompany the individual) and remove them if they cause a disturbance. It is also possible to refuse them access to any other church activities.

In determining the details of a Safeguarding Contract:

- The Parish Safeguarding Officer and Incumbent will work with Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to create a Safeguarding Contract.
- There will be a discussion to decide 'who needs to know' about the nature of the offence and the details of the contract. Members of the Church Safeguarding Team will always be informed.
- The rights of the offender to re-build their life without people knowing the details of their past offence will be balanced against the need to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
- It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register. If so, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will contact the offender's Specialist Probation Officer who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that they should be aware of.
- An open discussion will be held with the person concerned, in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract will be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour. The person will be required to sign the contract and will be made aware of sanctions should they not abide by the agreement. It will be monitored and enforced by the Church Safeguarding Team, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and statutory authorities, if they are involved in the case.

Care of alleged or known offenders who are themselves vulnerable or at risk

A formal, written contract may be impractical for someone with learning difficulties or lacking basic skills yet having safeguards in place is still necessary. Our alternative is to arrange a meeting between the Safeguarding Team, the DSO and the individual in question, where they can be taken through the main elements of their contract in a way that is easy to understand. Notes would be taken and the individual would need to verbally agree to the requirements laid out in the meeting. Rather than signing a formal 'contract', the individual would instead sign to say that they agree with the minutes or meeting notes, and that they will stick to what has been agreed during the meeting. A sound recording or video clip, of this, kept securely may be appropriate. This procedure would result in the same outcome as a contract, but is a more informal and appropriate approach for an adult at risk. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure that the individual is complying, exactly as a formal contract would be.



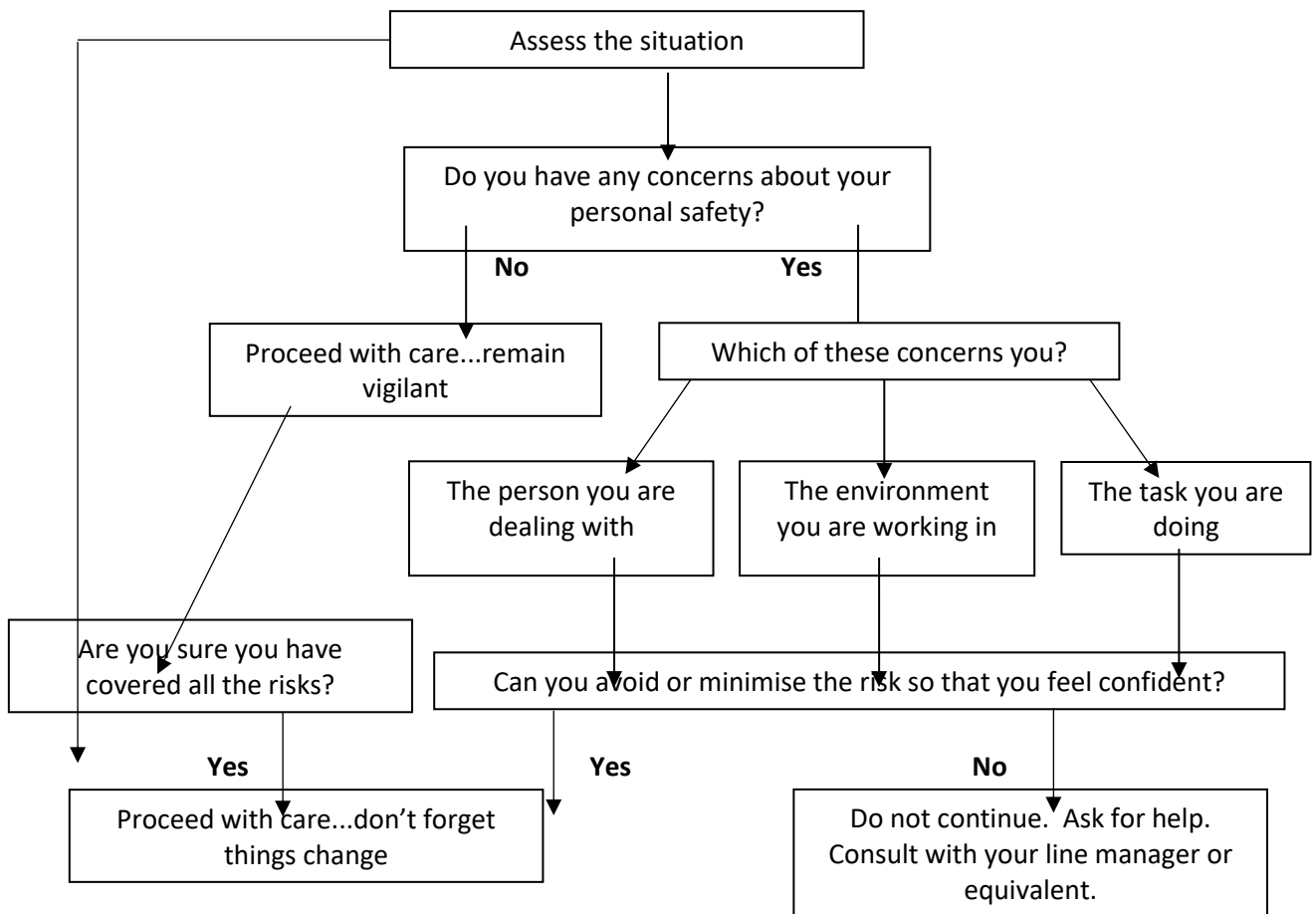
Recording Pastoral Encounters

Pastoral encounters may take the form of face-to-face conversations or written or telephone communication. **It is not necessary to record every such encounter.** Our Pastoral Team meets on a monthly basis to discuss concerns about the sick / frail/ needy.

- Pastoral visits or meetings should be recorded noting **the date, time, location, subject and any actions** which are to be taken. The record of these meetings should **stick to facts** and **avoid opinion**. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be passed on to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- **Home Communion visits** should be recorded in a log, in the vestry or online, according to the preference of the incumbent. This record should include the names of individuals visited and the date. Visits to people living alone should be made in pairs whenever possible.
- **A home or hospital visit** should be recorded, except when the visit is made to someone as a friend, as distinct from a visit in the name of the church. It is for the person making the visit to decide on the nature of the visit in such cases.
- **Telephone calls** would not normally be the subject of a record, but it may be judged wise in certain situations.
- **E-mails** vary considerably in content. Discretion will be needed when deciding whether to make a record or not; significant emails may need to be printed out and hard copies retained.
- **Letters** are usually written to ensure that 'something is in writing' and so it is likely that a record would be appropriate.
- Records containing information of a sensitive nature should be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which the PSO, Pastoral Leaders and Incumbent will hold a key.

Personal Risk Assessment

Safeguarding policies, procedures and training are for the benefit of pastoral workers as well as those they are ministering to. Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



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