



6. PASTORAL CARE

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 donate to the church, put donation into 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.
- 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.



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- 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.

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.

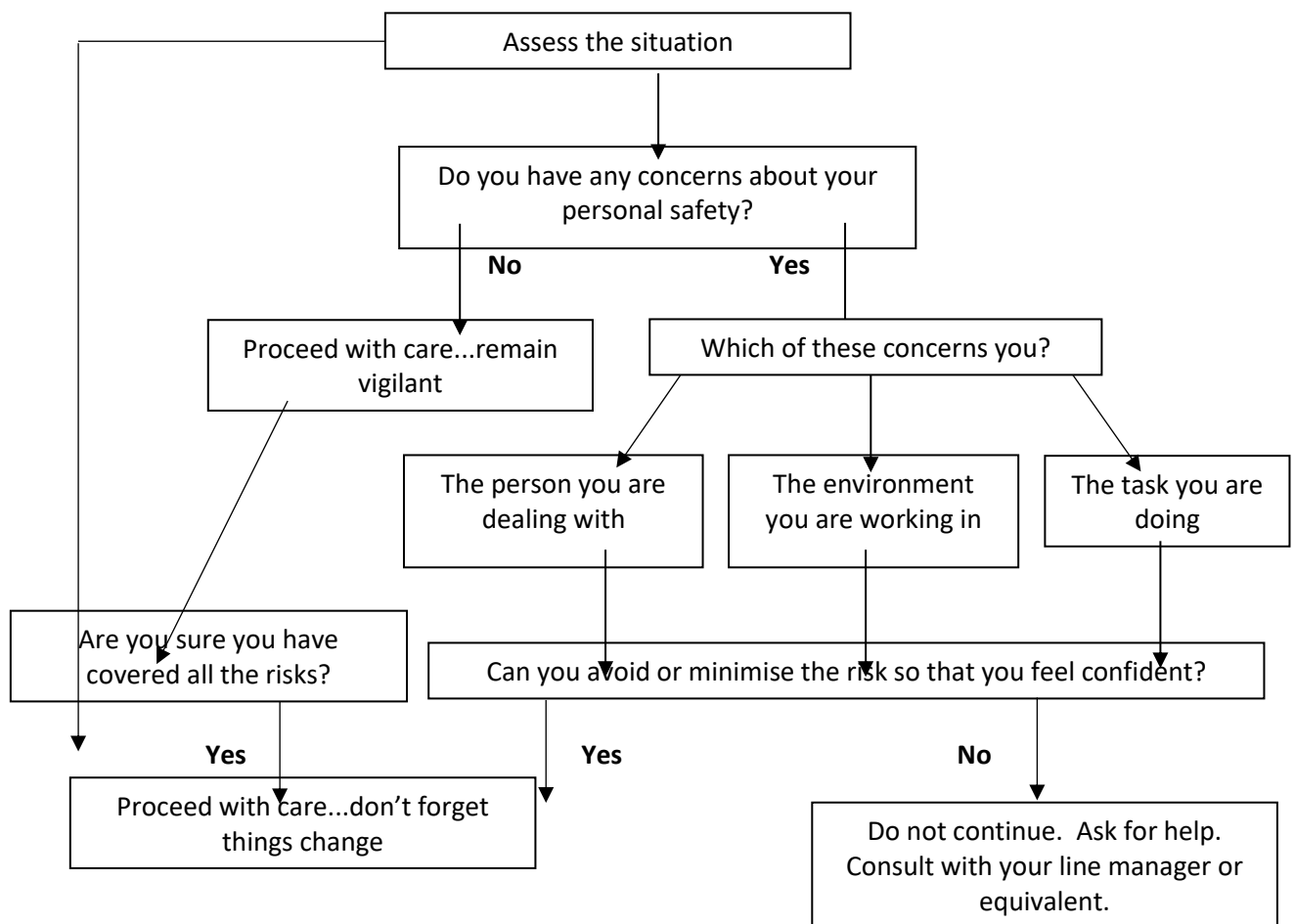
- Pastoral visits or meetings should be recorded noting **the date, time, location, subject and any actions** which are to be taken. The record of these meetings should **stick to facts and avoid opinion**. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be passed on to the Parish 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.



From Personal Safety at Work, Suzy Lamplugh Trust 2006, revised 2008

Reviewed by PCC on.....3 -5-23.....