

# **PEMBROKE HOUSE POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING ADULTS WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE**

## **Our commitment**

Pembroke House is committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for everyone – children, young people, volunteers, staff and visitors.

We believe that adults who may be vulnerable should be encouraged to lead as independent a life as possible, to choose how to lead their life and to be active contributors to the community. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives. All adults who may be vulnerable have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse, regardless of age or background.

We are committed to creating a caring environment in which people feel confident about sharing any concerns they might have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

All staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with our policy on safeguarding adults set out in this document, which explains:

- What makes an adult vulnerable
- How to identify abuse
- What to do if you suspect abuse
- How to run activities with vulnerable adults safely
- Recruitment, training and supervision of staff and volunteers

## **What makes an adult vulnerable**

This policy concerns any adult aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs (regardless of whether they are receiving any help with meeting those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- Is unable to protect themselves because of care and support needs.

Some of the factors which may make adults more vulnerable include:

- A physical disability, a learning disability or a sensory impairment
- Mental ill health (including dementia) or a personality disorder
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties in old age
- Being a victim of domestic abuse, sexual exploitation or modern slavery.

## **How to identify abuse**

You should be alert for the following signs of possible abuse. Don't forget, however, that there can also be perfectly normal explanations for many of these behaviours. You might be concerned, for example, if there was a marked change in behaviour or a number of unexplained signs.

- **Physical abuse**, for example: hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or suffocating.  
*Look out for:* unexplained injuries, reluctance to discuss injuries, arms and legs covered in hot weather, aggression towards others.
- **Emotional and psychological abuse**, for example: coercion, blackmail, or making someone feel worthless or inadequate.  
*Look out for:* over-reaction to mistakes, sudden speech disorders, neurotic behaviours, self-mutilation, unexplained fear.
- **Neglect**, for example: failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or medical care.  
*Look out for:* constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing, untreated medical problems.
- **Sexual abuse or exploitation**, for example: forcing someone to take part in sexual activities without consent, forcing someone to provide sexual services to others, taking or sharing intimate photographs of someone  
*Look out for:* unreasonable over familiarity or provocative behaviour, introversion, sleeplessness, nightmares, sudden behaviour changes.
- **Financial or material abuse**, for example: forcing someone to work, or take part in illegal activities for the financial benefit of others, taking someone's wages or benefits, forcing or coercing someone to pay for things or to buy gifts for someone.  
*Look out for:* unusual or unexpected cash or valuables being carried, unusual or unexpected lack of access to money, unusual interest in money, fear or anxiety about money.
- **Discriminatory abuse**, for example: insulting, threatening or excluding someone because of their race, religion or background.  
*Look out for:* being withdrawn and isolated, expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety, lack of respect shown to others of different backgrounds, signs of substandard service being offered to a vulnerable adult from minority backgrounds, repeated exclusion from rights afforded to others such as health or education.
- **Domestic abuse**, which could include any of the above forms of abuse when it takes place at home, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer  
*Look out for:* all the above signs as well as fear of returning home.

## What to do if you suspect abuse

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our priority must be the welfare of the vulnerable adult and it is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. If you have concerns, you must report them immediately. However, staff and volunteers are **not** responsible for investigating or attempting to resolve suspected abuse.

In some cases, incidents may arise in your presence or you may have concerns based on your own observations. In others, a vulnerable adult or a third party may disclose information to you about events or concerns outside of circumstances to which you have access. The process to follow is the

same, whether it is your concern, based on your observations, or a concern or disclosure reported to you by the vulnerable adult or a third party.

### ***How to report concerns***

- If the adult concerned is in immediate danger, **call emergency services on 999**.
- Most situations are not an emergency, so you should seek advice before action.
- Volunteers or parents can report to a member of staff such as their Project Lead or the Volunteer Coordinator, the Warden or directly to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Members of staff must report all safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Officer who will take appropriate action.
- If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, contact the Warden.
- If neither the Safeguarding Officer nor the Warden are available, you must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) for advice.
- In cases where none of the above can be contacted, and you require urgent advice, you should contact Adult Social Services.
- Remember that confidentiality is very important. Do not speak to the alleged abusers or the vulnerable adult's carers or relatives if they are the alleged abuser. This could put the vulnerable adult and others more at risk or cloud a statutory investigation; seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or, if they are not available, from Social Services on what can be shared.
- Make a record of your concerns and observations, including anything the adult concerned has said, the date, time and who was involved, as soon as possible, while ensuring that any necessary action has priority. You should make all effort to produce a written record on the same day. Making the record must not be delayed by more than 24 hours after the incident/concern. Be objective: record facts and observations, do not record your own views or conclusions.
- Send your record to the Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of the incident/concern and ensure that the Safeguarding Officer has received it, for example by checking with a telephone call. If you send your report on email and receive an out of office auto-reply, contact the Warden or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

### ***How to react if a vulnerable adult spontaneously talks about experiences which give cause for concern***

- Don't panic – respond calmly.
- Have a conversation with the vulnerable adult in a setting that respects their privacy, for example, not in front of others in the group/project concerned, while safeguarding you and them.
- Explain that you may not be able to maintain confidentiality (even if requested) and may have to share with others what the adult concerned has said.
- Listen carefully and with your full attention.
- Don't ask leading questions, put words in the vulnerable adult's mouth, rephrase what has been said or probe for more information than is offered.
- Don't stop the vulnerable adult recalling events.
- Take the vulnerable adult's worries seriously without judging.
- Accept what you have been told without expressing disbelief or shock or challenging it.
- Reassure the adult concerned and tell them they were right to tell you.
- Explain what you will do next without making promises you can't keep.

- Take notes as soon as possible after the conversation (not during) and use the vulnerable adult's own words where possible.

### ***What happens next?***

When a safeguarding concern is reported, the Safeguarding Officer will involve the appropriate authorities, make sure that all the details of the incident and action needed are recorded securely in the Safeguarding Incident Form and that staff and volunteers involved are given appropriate support and guidance.

A member of the Senior Management Team will review the report of the incident and check that it has been handled sensitively and appropriately. The Senior Management Team member will also review whether risks could be reduced to prevent a similar incident arising if the incident relates to any Pembroke House activities.

Three months after the incident, the Safeguarding Officer will check that any action points have been carried out.

### **How to run activities with vulnerable adults safely**

- A minimum of two members of staff who have been safely recruited according to guidelines set out in A Safer Church, and who have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks of a level appropriate to the activity concerned, must be present in all activities that are mainly designed for and include as their main participants, adults who may be vulnerable.
- Carry out a risk assessment before any new activities and discuss any safeguarding risks with the Safeguarding Officer. Any off-site visits will also need a separate risk assessment.
- Make sure you keep a register of names, addresses and emergency contacts.
- Keep physical and verbal interactions relevant to the activity in question. It is fine to engage in normal greetings and social conversation, for example before the activity when participants are arriving, but do not engage in conversations of a personal nature, for example about intimate relationships.
- Respond warmly if a vulnerable adult needs comforting, but make sure that physical contact in this case is kept to an appropriate level, is in response to their need, with their permission, and happens only when other adults are around.
- Do not spend time alone with vulnerable adults away from others. Always arrange space in such a way that you have a line of sight to a colleague.
- Never become involved in an intimate relationship with a vulnerable person while you have a position of trust over them as a volunteer or member of staff.
- Never disclose personal details of vulnerable adults and their families without their express permission obtained in advance.
- Never make or accept gifts of money from vulnerable adults.
- If you are offered a gift other than money, follow the procedure as laid out in our gift policy.

### **Recruitment, training and supervision**

Appropriate safeguarding will be put in place around individuals to protect all members of the community.

A recruitment process is outlined for all staff, contractors and volunteers in our recruitment policy where clear guidelines are given on safeguarding considerations, such as on the appropriate number and content of references to be obtained.

Where there is a need for further safeguarding considerations in a specific project where staff, contractors or volunteers work with vulnerable adults, the Project Lead concerned will make necessary provisions with the Safeguarding Officer.

Staff, contractors and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults must have a DBS check at an appropriate level unless they are supervised at all times by another member of staff who has undergone such a check. The DBS check process involves a Confidential Declaration which they have to read, complete, and sign. They may also be asked to provide additional references, relevant to the work.

Any concerns resulting from a DBS check will be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in the first instance, and a risk assessment will be carried out under their guidance.

All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this policy as part of their induction process and before they are in a position to deliver services to members of the community, so that they are able to identify the signs of abuse and confident about the steps to take and to whom to report any concerns.

All new staff and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults will also attend safeguarding training and regular refresher courses.

We have two designated Safeguarding Officers in Pembroke House who are responsible for making sure that staff and volunteers are trained and supported on safeguarding issues. Contact details for the Safeguarding Officers are displayed in the foyer and website.

Additional safeguarding cover is provided by the Warden of Pembroke House, who is the Priest-in-Charge of St. Christopher's Church and leads on safeguarding in the church.

In addition, we have a designated member of the Board of Directors (Trustees) with oversight of safeguarding, who holds the senior management team and the Warden to account on all matters relating to safeguarding: for example ensuring timely reviews, checking the quality of staff training and the relevance of policies and procedures, and who gives advice on occasional safeguarding cases or represents the organisation in case reviews at a senior level where needed.

## **Possible abuse by a member of staff or volunteer**

Where a member of staff, volunteer, or a trustee is suspected of abuse, the Safeguarding Officer should seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately (on the out of hours number if necessary). Depending on the advice given, the Safeguarding Officer may then interview the alleged victim. Another member of Pembroke House Senior Management Team, the Warden, a Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, or a Trustee must be present at the interview and the alleged victim should have the opportunity to bring someone for support.

The purpose of the meeting is not to investigate but to establish if there are grounds for the allegation.

In cases where such grounds are established, the Safeguarding Officer will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to report the concerns to statutory authorities and to ensure that the same authorities are given all assistance to pursue any investigation.

Pembroke House will also seek to support the member of staff or volunteer, or where appropriate to ensure that alternative support is in place throughout the process.

When allegations are proven, suspension and/or disciplinary procedures may be implemented according to our disciplinary procedures.

## **Review**

Pembroke House will ensure that safeguarding issues receive continuous attention and will regularly review the way we operate to support this principle. The vulnerable adult safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually and when there are any changes in legislation.