****

**Visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes (lone working) and in residential homes.**

Visiting vulnerable adults\* in their homes is an essential element of many church officers’ roles. The Church of England defines a church officer as “*anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid”* Many parishioners will be well known to the church officer and where there have been no previous concerns the level of risk to the church officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a church officer 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 church officer. For these reasons it is very important for Parish Churches and the Cathedral to ensure their church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which church officers engage in lone working or visits to residential homes.

**Safer Practice**

**1 Risk Assessments**

1. Always undertake a risk assessment for a first visit whether you know the person to be visited or not. (see risk assessment checklist)
2. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a risk assessment using the checklist below. In these circumstances, give careful consideration to whether the visit is absolutely necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another adult.
3. Always consider undertaking a risk assessment periodically in relation to all parishioners you visit.
4. Keep a written record of all risk assessments undertaken
5. Use the risk assessment checklist (below)

**2** To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a church officer, and irrespective of whether a risk assessment has been made:

1. Wherever possible carry a mobile phone on a home visit, and/or ensure that someone knows where you are and when you are expected to return
2. Wherever possible avoid calling unannounced – call by arrangement, if appropriate telephoning the person just before going
3. If you are not known to the person you are visiting, carry identification, photographic if possible, (this could be a driving licence) or a note of introduction from the church.
4. Always knock on the door before entering a room or home, respecting the person’s home and possessions.
5. As a general principle, leave information about how and where you can be contacted (telephone or e mail) including a central contact point e.g. a parish office, if you have one. Unless absolutely necessary don’t give your home address.
6. Always endeavour to be clear about what behaviour from a vulnerable adult is acceptable and what is not.
7. Where you consider you should refer the person to another agency, talk this through with the vulnerable adult, seeking his/her permission before passing on personal information. If it is more appropriate for the vulnerable adult to do so themselves make sure they have all the information they need and that their contact will be expected. If you are concerned about a person and they do not wish to be referred, consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
8. If you feel uncertain about what to do, seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. In any case always let the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser know of any contact you intend to make or have made with a statutory agency (e.g. police, local authority) on behalf of a vulnerable adult.

**--------------------------------------------------------------**

***\* Vulnerable Adult***

*For the purpose of**Church policy and guidance the definition of a “Vulnerable Adult“ is contained in the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 where a vulnerable adult is:*

*“a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself 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”*

# Lone Working/Residential Unit Risk Assessment checklist

Name of adult to be visited ……………………………………………………………………...

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Does the adult have a history of violence, or threatening behaviour? *If yes, please detail below* | Yes/No *Not known* |
|  | |
| 2. Is the adult a risk to themselves? | *Yes/No*  *Not known* |
|  | |
| 3. Does anyone living in the house have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? *If yes, please detail below* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 4. Does anyone who visits the adult have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? *If yes, please detail below* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 5. Does the adult have any vulnerabilities that would make it inappropriate for him/ her to be visited alone (eg by a single male or female?) | Yes/NoNot Known |
|  | |
| 6. Does the adult have any health problems that may cause unpredictable behaviour? *If yes, please detail below* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 7. Are there any health risks associated with visiting the adult at home? (Examples might be infestation, smoking, intravenous drug use, infectious diseases, dangerous pets?) *If yes, please detail below* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 8. Is the adult’s home in a well lit area? *Please detail below any difficulties you are aware of.* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 9. Is there suitable parking nearby, is this well lit?  *If known, please state below the best place to park* | Yes/No *Not Known* |
|  | |
| 10. Is there easy access to and exit from the home, more than one exit from the home. Are doors obstructed and not easily opened. *If yes, please detail below* | *Yes/No*  *Not Known* |  |
|  | |
| 11.Are there any other risk factors or hazards (Including mental health,  substance/alcohol mis-use)? *If yes, please detail below* | *Yes/No*  *Not Known* |
|  | |
| *Please detail below any other information you think is important*  *Completed by …………. Role:*  *Copy passed to Parish Safeguarding Officer on ………………………………………..*  *Signed ……………………………………………………*  *Date:* | |