



Walking with young people through
School, Community and Church life in South East Somerset.

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CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A) KEY DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

A Child

In this document, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. "Children" therefore means children and young people throughout.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully

B) CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Definitions of Abuse:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Domestic Abuse
6. Other forms of abuse relevant to the Church and The Linx Project

As an employee or a volunteer in the Church community we are **not responsible** for diagnosing child abuse, but the document '*Working Together to Safeguard Children from Harm*', 2006, outlines categories of abuse that act as useful indicators to **assist in protecting** children from harm. These definitions can be seen only as broad markers and often with overlapping across the categories. It is also important to emphasise that sometimes signs of abuse such as being physically intrusive or over tactile can be extremely subtle, reflecting a general misuse of power and manipulation by trusted adults, which may lead on to specific harm through the crossing of boundaries and inappropriate 'relationship'.

1. **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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2. **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age-related or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve the child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
3. **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, involving prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
4. **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
 - * Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
 - * Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
 - * Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)
 - * Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
5. **Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse is controlling and often violent behaviour, involving physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological abuse of adults within all kinds of current and former intimate and family relationships. Domestic abuse affects children as it can cause emotional, psychological, and / or physical harm. It has the potential to affect the daily lives of children through fear, insecurity, and lack of confidence. Children worry about their parents more than may be recognised, particularly if they fear for their parents' safety.
6. Further categories relevant to the church community:
Spiritual Abuse: In the context of the Church community there is a further form of abuse that can have devastating effects on the spiritual development of the child. When trusted members of the Church community abuse children in their care this also constitutes spiritual abuse. Whatever the nature of the abuse the child's trust is betrayed and the child's belief in the natural and divine justice is damaged. One effect may be that the child turns away from the Church and from God.

Organised Abuse: Organised or multiple abusers can involve one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children or young people. The abusers may be acting as part of a network or in isolation and may use as an institutional framework or a position of authority or trust to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children.

No form of abuse can ever be justified and the child is never to blame.



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C) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIOCESE

The Linx Project, as an ecumenical youth project in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, relies on and makes use of, the Diocese as a source of support and advice. Moreover, where Linx Project workers are at least partly funded by the Diocese, notice must be taken of the Diocese's child protection policy. The relationship between the Diocese and the Linx Project is outlined as follows.

- a. Responsibilities of the Diocese
- b. The role of the Bishop's Child Protection Group
- c. The role of the Child Protection Adviser

a. Responsibilities of the Diocese

- Provide a structure to manage safeguarding and child protection in their diocese
- Provide a structure to support, inform and advise parishes on their responsibilities
- Provide training and support on child protection matters to parishes and other relevant groups
- Provide a handbook of procedures and recommended good practice to enable parishes and others to undertake their duties, encouraging them to implement such procedures and good practice according to their local needs.

b. The role of the Bishop's Child Protection Group

The Bishop's Child Protection Group includes diocesan personnel and professional experts in the field of child protection; the group meets four times a year. The function of the group is as follows:

- To monitor child protection policy and guidelines
- To ensure that appropriate responses are made to incidents including referral to statutory agencies
- To advise the Bishop on specific situations

c. The role of the Child Protection Adviser

- Develop and renew the policy
- Provide appropriate training in safeguarding
- Advise and respond to child protection incidents
- Advise and support those who are managing those who pose a risk of harm
- Liaise with statutory agencies and other advisers



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D) RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROJECT

- One of the responsibilities we have as The Linx Project is to ensure the well-being of children and young people whom we work with within our communities. This is done by being vigilant to signs of abuse from others, reporting abuse or suspicions to the appropriate authorities and organisations, signposting to appropriate support for those who need it, and preventing it within our own organisation by following good practice guidelines to ensure the safeguarding of young people.
- The following pages in this policy set out how we aim to safeguard children and young people, and the ways in which we will deal with accusations or suspicions of abuse towards children and young people through the course of our work.
- Our appointed person for the organisation is Janet Lowe, who is a part of Wincanton Parish. Although the project stretches over several parish boundaries, Janet Lowe is the appointed person for anyone working within the bounds of The Linx Project.
- Alongside Janet Lowe, our appointed children's advocate is Anna Tolhurst. Their role is to be available for children or young people to talk to, and whose main concern is the welfare of a child or young person in any subsequent involvement the project has if involved in any cases of abuse. They can also act as an advocate / supporter in any cases involving children or young people where appropriate.
- The project works within many different arenas; schools, communities and churches. Within the office the Child Line number is displayed, and workers have a duty to encourage other sites which are used for youth work to also display the number.
- The project has a responsibility to ensure that all those who work with children and young people are appropriately appointed, trained and supported. All who work with children and young people should be made aware of the procedures for reporting abuse or suspicions, as well as good practice guidelines to safeguard children and young people. Employees in particular have a duty to create and encourage a culture of good practice.
- We need to make sure that children and young people from ethnic minorities and/or with special needs are fully cared for and supported in the best way possible to ensure their full integration within the project.
- As a youth orientated charity we need to create a culture which takes children and young people seriously, and informed vigilance. This culture needs to be encouraged with other agencies and organisations with whom we work.
- For those whom it is disclosed that they have been victims of abuse, either children, young people, or volunteers / workers within the project then as a project we need to be able to provide adequate support, if it is within our capabilities. Otherwise we have a responsibility to sign post and support children, young people and adults to find the relevant support. This will be found alongside our appointed person.
- As well as providing support for victims of abuse, we also need to be aware of others who are affected by abuse which can include parents and families. If support cannot be appropriately resourced within the team, then sign posting and support to gain help from other organisations is needed. The Child Protection Advisor is to be contacted as a part of this process.



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- We need to ensure that those who could potentially be considered a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored. Anyone who is unsuitable to work with children and young people will not be put in positions where harm can be caused to children and young people.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people the project has a duty of care to all involved to ensure that health and safety is kept up to date, and guidelines are followed as best as possible to the projects capabilities. For more information on the health and safety policies and risk assessments, please see the other documents held by The Linx Project regarding Health and Safety.
- All activities which are undertaken by The Linx Project should have appropriate insurance cover. For activities taken jointly with other organisations, it should be made clear in the planning and preparation processes whose responsibility this is.
- As part of our commitment to ongoing development the safeguarding policy, procedures and guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure that practice is being followed, and any updates are made.

Our child protection policy, although amended by the project to encompass all our work and the areas in which we work, falls firmly under the diocesan policy, and their process for safeguarding and child protection. This provides us with a structure for ensuring that Child Protection and safeguarding is implemented, and gives us accountability. It also enables us to implement an appropriate system for recruiting workers and volunteers and checking their suitability to work with children and young people. This policy has been developed out of theirs, and has been rewritten in order ensure that safeguarding is happening most effectively within the Linx Project.

E) PROCEDURES AND ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES

1. What to do if you are concerned about a child or young person (see accompanying H M Government booklet, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*)
2. What happens when an allegation is made involving an employee or volunteer in the church
3. Safer recruitment in the church
4. Risk Assessment, managing those who may pose harm to children
5. Support for those who are survivors of abuse

All allegations of actual harm, whether they are about neglect, physical, emotional or sexual, must be acted on immediately (see flow diagram 1)

If you are concerned or have a sense of unease about any behaviour toward a child or young person, or if a child tells you that they, or someone they know, is being abused take your concerns and the concerns of any child seriously.

All and any concerns should be shared.

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Do:

- **Listen carefully** to the child, rather than directly question him/her
- **Accept what the child says** – children rarely tell lies about being abused
- **Take the abuse seriously** (no incident of abuse is ever significant)
- **Reassure the child** who has spoken to you, that they have done the right thing in bringing it to your attention
- **Write down** exactly what was said, including any inappropriate language that might have been used, whilst it is still fresh in your mind, making a note of the timing, setting and people present
- **Explain to the child** what actions you are going to take – that the information must be shared
- **Report what you have heard, seen or suspect**, either to children's social care, the police, or the NSPCC, or to the appointed person in your parish. He or she then needs to inform the statutory agencies. Always inform the diocesan Child Protection Advisor as soon as possible.

Do not:

- **Dismiss your concerns** – the Diocese will take them seriously
- **Approach the person about whom you have concerns**, instead seek advice from either the diocesan Child Protection Advisor, your local Children's Social Care (previously Social Service), the police or the NSPCC
- **Confront** the alleged abuser
- **Ask questions** to obtain further information – children will only want to tell their story once
- **Promise confidentiality**, or make promises to the child that you cannot keep
- **Stop a child** who is freely recalling what has happened. If they are interrupted at this stage, they may not continue and might not let you or anyone else know what has happened

Telephone the diocesan Child Protection Adviser:

Fiona Gardner
The Old Deanery, Somerset, BA5 2UG
01749 685135 email: Fiona.gardner@bathwells.anglican.org

Diagram 1 – When abuse is suspected or alleged

When abuse is suspected or alleged

Where the evidence, or the allegation is clear (e.g. if a child discloses abuse, or there are injuries to the child) make an immediate referral to the Children's Social Care or the NSPCC, or the police

If your suspicions are unclear, or you are not sure what to do, contact the diocesan Child Protection Advisor for advice. Do NOT talk to the suspect at this stage, or the child's parent

Having made your referral to the appropriate authority, inform the diocesan Child Protection Advisor

If you are unable to make contact with the diocesan Child Protection Advisor, contact Children's Social Care, the police or the NSPCC immediately for advice. DO NOT delay in reporting your concerns or suspicions

F) WHEN
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No individual within the Church community, including The Linx Project, involved in disclosure need or should act alone.

This guideline should be used in respect of all situations in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has...

- You will be advised by the Children's Social Care, or the police what you should do next.

Inform the diocesan Child Protection Advisor as soon as possible afterwards

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There may be up to three strands in the consideration of the allegation:

- A police investigation of possible criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by the Children's Social Care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services

If agreed, continue to support the child/family (if they want this) whilst the investigation is conducted

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- Consideration by an employer (this includes organisations that use volunteers) of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

All allegations (even apparently less serious allegations) are to be followed up and referred to statutory services and/or the Child Protection Adviser

- The person involved should be suspended pending investigation. Suspension is to be seen as a neutral act. For more information on suspension of employees see The Linx Project Disciplinary Procedure
- Pastoral support should be offered to all parties
- All involved should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation
- The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up
- Employers need to keep a full record of the situation
- If an allegation does not lead to a conviction but concern remains a risk assessment will take place by the Child Protection Adviser
- If someone tells you that they are involved in committing abuse then follow the procedures for disclosure by a child
- If there is a conviction then procedures for managing the risk of harm will be followed.

G) SAFER RECRUITMENT INTO THE LINX PROJECT

The appointed person is the link person with the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser and the child protection and CRB administrator.

The appointed person oversees the selection of adults in contact with and involved in voluntary activities with children. Follow the recruitment flow chart, diagram 2.

The following forms need to be completed:

- Job description form
- Application Form
- Self-Disclosure Form
- CRB Form
- Reference Request Form
- Appointment Letter

Although the Linx Project works across many different Parish boundaries, to ensure that the process is swift, consistent and all workers and volunteers know who to work with, all of the volunteer and worker checks are to go

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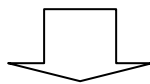
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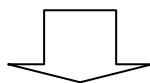
through one Child Protection Appointed Person. Currently this is Janet Lowe, who is part of the Parish of Wincanton.

Diagram 2: Recruitment Procedure

Person shows interest in volunteering to help with children/youth work in church or community under the remit of The Linx Project



This person is then asked to complete an application form, and a self disclosure form. Identity is also checked



- An interview or review then takes place with the volunteer
- The appointed person and 2 others need to be in on the interview / review panel. This ideally should include a Linx Project worker and a Trustee
- This is also a time to agree the job description and discuss what the volunteer will be doing
- This information needs to be fed back to the Trustees

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H) RISK ASSESSMENT, MANAGING THOSE WHO MAY POSE HARM TO CHILDREN

If there is someone who may pose a risk of harm to children then a formal risk assessment takes place, involving the appointed person, clergy, and relevant others. This is facilitated by the Child Protection Adviser.

A booklet '*Managing the risk in the Church, 2007*' is available.

Details are completed on an initial form and a written agreement is drawn up in consultation, which is then signed by relevant parties.

This is monitored and reviewed.

This will mostly be called upon for open events, such as community days where someone who is considered a risk may attend. There is an expectation that anyone deemed unsuitable to work with children and young people will not be given access through our normal youth work.

I) SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

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Pastoral care is offered to adult survivors of childhood abuse and appropriate support services can be offered. Please contact the Child Protection Adviser for further information.

If the perpetrator could still pose a risk of harm to children then statutory authorities may need to be approached.

J) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This policy has been developed from the Bath and Wells Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidelines, 2008

The 2008 Diocese of Bath and Wells procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children are based on the following:

Every Child Matters, Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government 2006

Protecting all God's Children House of Bishops of the Church of England 2004

Further information can be found also at the following:

Children Act 2004 www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/

Child Protection without the jargon www.swcpp.org.uk

Stop it now! UK www.stopitnow.org.uk

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) www.ccpas.co.uk

K) USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1. Children's Social Care

Somerset

Somerset 0845 3459122

Out of hours 01458 253241

North Somerset

Nailsea 01275 851231

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Weston Super Mare 01934 627611

Out of hours 01454 615165

Bath and North East Somerset

Bath 01225 477000

Out of hours 01454 615165

2. Local Police station or child protection teams covering Avon and Somerset constabulary area

When reporting a concern, state that you wish to report a situation of alleged child abuse. In most offices such a referral will go to a senior officer

3. NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Childline 0800 1111

Diocesan Child Protection Adviser 01749 685 135 / 670 777

For more details regarding the good practice guidelines for working with children and young people, see the accompanying document entitled 'The Linx Project Good Practice Guidelines'