

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The PCC of Stockton Parish Church formally adopt The House of Bishops safeguarding policy statement 'Promoting A Safer Church' on which this statement is based.



Introduction

1. This document sets out the safeguarding policy statement of Stockton Parish Church. It is based on the latest policy statement of the Church of England *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017) and should be read in conjunction with the Diocese of Durham Safeguarding policy.
2. Stockton Parish Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and service of church.

Safeguarding Statement Areas

3. Stockton Parish Safeguarding Statement falls into six main areas

Statement Area 1: Promoting a safer environment and culture

4. Stockton Parish Church will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions for children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is the responsibility of all who work and volunteer in Stockton Parish Church, and particularly those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
5. In *Promoting a Safer Church* a 'vulnerable adult' is defined as '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, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired'.
6. Stockton Parish Church will support all those who have regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power.

Policy Area 2: Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Diocese

7. Stockton Parish Church will recruit all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church, in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance (2016).
8. Stockton Parish Church will equip and train all those who have responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the confidence and skills they

need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by offering consistent and accessible safeguarding training. It will be a requirement of those who work or volunteer with these groups to undergo safeguarding training appropriate to the role they undertake.

Statement Area 3: Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

9. Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Steve Whitehouse, will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the relevant policy and practice guidance from the Church of England.
10. All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the relevant safeguarding practice guidance.
11. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser, or other designated safeguarding adviser, to the appropriate statutory authorities.
12. Notwithstanding the policy statement outlined above, anyone should feel able, if a child or vulnerable adult is under immediate risk, to contact either the police on 101, or local social services:

Telephone: 01642 130080

Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk.

Telephone: 08702 402994 (For outside office ours).

Where possible consent should be given by the child's parents or the vulnerable adult, unless it is considered that seeking consent will increase the risk of harm.

Statement Area 4: Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

13. Stockton Parish Church will offer care and support to all those in their care that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
14. Stockton Parish Church is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse.

Statement Area 5: Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

15. Stockton Parish Church, in exercising its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law of any accused. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and (where appropriate) Church inquiry process. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

16. Stockton Parish Church will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when there are known persons accessing church services who are considered to be a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done in conjunction with police, probation and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and aim to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement.

Statement Area 6: Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

17. Stockton Parish Church will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and (where appropriate) ecclesiastical law.

Hiring Premises

18. Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises must contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.

The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

We shall ensure that all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this, or be covered through the church insurance (for example hire for a children's party).

Safer Recruitment Support and Training

19. We shall ensure that all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are:

- recruited following the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment practice guidance;
- aware of and work to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance (includes both policies and practice guidance);
- attend diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years;

We shall ensure that appropriate insurance to cover is in place for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults.



If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Steve Whitehouse on 07855 384772 or by emailing safe@stocktonparishchurch.org.uk