

ADULT PROTECTION POLICY/PROCEDURES

1. THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

1.1 *Mission Statement*

“The Catholic Church in Scotland is concerned with the lives, safety, wholeness and well-being of each individual person within God’s purpose for everyone.

It seeks to safeguard the welfare of people of all ages who are involved in whatever capacity with the Church and its organisations.

As a Church community, we accept that it is the responsibility of all of us, ordained, professed, paid and voluntary members, to work together to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults.”

1.2 *Why Do We Need a Code of Good Practice?*

- 1.2.1 To ensure that all adults have the right to be safe, secure and protected from all forms of harm, neglect and exploitation.
- 1.2.2 The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of those who are at risk of harm to whom the Church has a special duty of care.
- 1.2.3 It is vital for those involved in working with vulnerable groups in the Catholic Church have an understanding of the nature and impact of harm in the lives of those who are vulnerable and knowledge about the extent of such harm.
- 1.2.4 We recognise that some adults may be at risk due to their age, disability, mental health problems or general poor health, and may need protection to ensure their rights are maintained.
- 1.2.5 No type or level of harm is acceptable.

- 1.2.6 It is the duty of all of us to take steps to try to prevent harm from occurring and to act appropriately when it does occur by reporting concerns that we may have relating to possible or suspected harm or neglect of an adult at risk.
- 1.2.7 Most adults and older people with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities, or other additional needs manage to live their lives comfortably and securely either independently or with the assistance of caring relatives, friends, neighbours, professionals and volunteers. However, for a small number, dependence on someone may lead to exploitation, conflict, mistreatment or neglect.
- 1.2.8 Responsibilities that are common to all agencies and organisations are to:
- ***recognise concerns about adults at risk of harm;***
 - ***take steps to protect the individual;***
 - ***co-operate with other agencies;***
 - ***share information;***
 - ***keep accurate records.***

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Adults who would be regarded as at risk have in recent times received much awaited attention from the Government. The subject of adult protection has not been as well researched as child protection; however, recent studies and data that have been made available indicate that high levels of harm are a symptom of widespread discrimination against those with disabilities on the grounds of age, physical, sensory and mental health problems.
- 2.2 There are more elderly people than ever before and their support needs increase as they become older. Adults with disabilities can be at risk of harm and neglect as well as those with mental health problems and conditions such as dementia. Diligence is needed to ensure the Church is a place of welcome to all and that measures are in place so that all people will be confident that they can participate in the life of the Church in safety.
- 2.3 Our policy is about what the Church aims to do to protect all people of all ages who are involved in the life of the Church. Many clergy, religious and members of the laity are in ministry with disadvantaged groups offering advice and counselling to such as those experiencing domestic abuse or homelessness. The Church has responsibilities for organising, visiting or befriending. All adults who benefit from these ministries are more likely to be at risk of harm if the support and help they require from other people are not there, or fail.
- 2.4 All people visiting adults at risk on behalf of the Church must be clear about the boundaries of their role and relationship with the person visited.
- 2.5 Our policy is about safeguarding: protecting adults (and children).

3. WHO IS AT RISK OF HARM?

3.1 All adults may be at risk from time to time. You may come into contact with people who are at risk of harm. For example, people with limited or no verbal communication may be particularly vulnerable as they may have difficulty sharing their distress with people who could help them.

3.2 An individual who:

- *is elderly and frail;*
- *has a mental health problem including dementia or a personality disorder;*
- *has a physical or sensory disability;*
- *has a severe physical illness;*
- *is a substance misuser;*
- *is an unpaid carer;*
- *is homeless, displaced or exploited;*
- *has a learning disability;*

may be at risk.

3.3 The presence of a disability or age alone does not signify that adults are necessarily at risk, i.e. unable to protect themselves from harm and exploitation.

3.4 There are many definitions of adults who are at risk of harm. For the purposes of Disclosure application (criminal record check), everyone who is in receipt of a caring service could be at risk of harm.

3.5 People at risk of harm are a diverse group.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

4.1 There is no single piece of legislation that covers the protection of those who are at risk of harm. The key pieces of legislation are as follows:

4.2 *The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007*

4.2.1 This Act provides measures for taking legal action to safeguard 'Adults at Risk'. The general principles are:

- *that an intervention in an adult's life should provide benefit to the adult;*
- *the local authority has a duty to make enquiries about a person's well-being, property or financial affairs if it knows or believes that person is an 'adult at risk' and it may need to intervene to protect him or her from being harmed;*
- *the importance of striking a balance between an individual's right to freedom of choice and the State's duty to protect must be taken into account when an intervention under the Act is being considered;*
- *the Act's accompanying Code of Practice states that voluntary organisations should discuss and share with relevant statutory agencies (Social Services and/or the Police) information they have about adults who may be at risk of harm.*

4.3 *The Meaning of an 'Adult at Risk' of Harm*

4.3.1 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 defines 'Adults at Risk' as adults who:

- *are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests; and*
- *are at risk of harm; and*
- *because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.*

4.3.2 All three parts of the definition have to be met.

4.3.3 In practice this means that the following groups of people may sometimes be at risk of harm: people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities or mental health difficulties, older people, people with addictions, and people who are homeless, displaced or exploited.

4.4 What is Harm?

4.4.1 Harm includes:

- *conduct that causes physical harm;*
- *conduct that causes psychological harm, for example by causing fear, alarm or distress;*
- *conduct that unduly appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests, for example theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion;*
- *conduct that causes self-harm.*

4.5 The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (PVG Act)

4.5.1 The PVG Act builds on and replaces the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, which created a Disqualified from Working with Children List (DWCL).

- *The Act will create two lists: an extended Children's List and a new Adults' List (Disqualified from Working with Adult List).*
- *A new, improved checking and monitoring scheme aiming to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with children under the age of 18 and with 'protected adults' will be established in 2010.*
- *The scheme membership will play a major part in reforming current vetting and barring practices by barring those who pose a risk to vulnerable groups ... but employers still retain their responsibilities for ensuring safe recruitment and employment practices.*
- *If an employee is dismissed or moved from regulated activity because of inappropriate behaviour towards a vulnerable person, this must be reported to the team within the Disclosure Scotland Agency.*
- *If an employee under investigation for inappropriate behaviour resigns before a disciplinary investigation is complete, this must be reported to the team. This includes volunteers as well as paid staff.*
- *New entrants to the workforce and those moving positions will go through the scheme, and members of the existing workforce will be phased into the scheme over a period of time.*

4.6 *Definition – The Meaning of 'Protected Adult'*

4.6.1 For the purposes of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act, a *'Protected Adult'* is an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with a service, for example a care home service, a service prescribed by a health body, a community care service, a prescribed welfare service. (Welfare service includes any service that provides support, assistance or counselling to individuals with particular needs.)

4.7 *Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000*

4.7.1 Everyone is assumed to have capacity. Incapacity has to be proven – only a medical practitioner can legally certify that a person has incapacity.

4.7.2 Adults with incapacity are people over the age of 16 who cannot make some or all decisions about their well-being for themselves. A fuller understanding of the Act requires the advice of an appropriate expert.

5. WHAT IS HARM?

- 5.1 Harm is the new term when speaking about adult protection. Harm is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any person or persons.
- 5.2 Definitions are varied. Harm means different things to different people.
- 5.3 Harm may:
- ***consist of a single act or repeated acts;***
 - ***be physical, verbal or psychological;***
 - ***be an act of neglect or omission to act;***
 - ***occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial arrangement or sexual relationship to which they have not or could not have consented;***
 - ***occur within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust.***
- 5.4 Harm involves elements of power imbalance, exploitation and the absence of full consent.
- 5.5 Harm is often divided into different forms or types. Harm can be emotional, physical, financial, sexual and institutional. Neglect also constitutes harm. There can be overlap amongst the types of harm. People who suffer physical harm can also be neglected and sexually harmed. Different forms of harm are often accompanied by emotional harm. It can be difficult to separate the categories as some indicators (e.g. low self-esteem) are common to all forms of harm.
- 5.6 Harm detracts from the dignity of the person.

6. TYPES AND FORMS OF HARM

6.1 These descriptions are the most common.

6.2 *Physical Harm*

6.2.1 Physical harm is the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury, for example:

- *hitting,*
- *slapping,*
- *punching,*
- *pushing,*
- *kicking,*
- *hair pulling.*

6.2.2 Indicators include:

- *bruising,*
- *a history of unexplained falls and/or minor injuries;*
- *fractures not consistent with falls or explanations of the injury.*

6.3 *Sexual Harm*

6.3.1 Sexual harm is any act with a sexual content carried out to which an individual has not given consent, or could not consent, or was pressurised into consenting to, and may include:

- *rape or sexual assault, fondling or inappropriate touching;*
- *sexual innuendos, offensive or suggestive language;*
- *sexual activity or viewing sexually explicit materials.*

6.3.2 Indicators include:

- *unexplained behaviour change – becoming aggressive, withdrawn, moody;*
- *unwillingness to be with a particular person;*
- *indicators that will be apparent only to medical or nursing staff, or someone entrusted with personal care.*

6.4 Psychological and Emotional Harm

6.4.1 Psychological and emotional harm is any pattern of behaviour by another person that results in the psychological harm to an individual, and may include:

- ***threats of harm or abandonment, insults, ridicule, bullying, enforced isolation, deprivation of contact, lack of privacy or choice;***
- ***denial of dignity;***
- ***harassment, verbal abuse;***
- ***withdrawal from services or supportive networks.***

6.4.2 Indicators include:

- ***strain within the relationship,***
- ***indications that the abuser acts differently with another person present than when alone with the individual;***
- ***an air of silence in the home when the alleged abuser is present;***
- ***a general lack of consideration for the needs of the individual;***
- ***refusal to allow the individual an opinion of their own.***

6.5 Financial or Material Harm

6.5.1 Financial or material harm is the misappropriation of the funds, theft or misuse of property of an adult at risk, and may include:

- ***misuse of finances;***
- ***theft or fraudulent use of money;***
- ***pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions;***
- ***misappropriation of money or goods, the misuse of finances, property or possessions.***

6.5.2 Indicators include:

- ***situations where, despite having a personal income/pension, the individual is without money soon after its receipt, particularly where that person is not able to spend money without assistance;***
- ***unexplained shortage of money despite a seemingly adequate income.***

6.5.3 We need to be aware that a symptom of a person's increasing confusion or dementia may be an allegation of misuse of property or misuse of finances, and may not be financial abuse. Such allegations should not be dismissed, but should be investigated having regard to the possibility that they may not be proven.

6.6 Neglect and Acts of Omission

6.6.1 Neglect and acts of omission may be deliberate or by default where the perpetrator is not able to provide the care needed and may not recognise the need for that care to be given. The carer may also be neglecting her/himself.

6.6.2 Indicators include:

- ***persistent hunger, loss of weight, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress;***
- ***consistent lack of supervision for long periods, especially during activities that hold danger for the individual;***
- ***denial of religious or cultural needs;***
- ***constant fatigue or listlessness;***
- ***physical problems and medical needs that are not addressed;***
- ***failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services;***
- ***withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating;***
- ***lack of access and appropriate communication supports or physical aids.***

6.7 Discriminatory Harm

6.7.1 Discriminatory harm can occur in many ways and frequently includes a combination of forms of harm. What differentiates it from the other categories is that the harm is motivated by a prejudice and discrimination against the individual because he or she is perceived to belong to a specific group or groups. These may be:

- *age;*
- *gender;*
- *sexual orientation;*
- *race;*
- *religion;*
- *cultural background;*
- *disability.*

6.7.2 Harm may include:

- *bullying;*
- *humiliation;*
- *harassment;*
- *slurs or similar treatment.*

6.8 Institutional Harm/Poor Practice

6.8.1 Institutions may develop practices that may intentionally or unintentionally cause harm to adults at risk. Institutional harm is harm that has become commonplace in a setting and that restricts the freedom of individuals, harms them or denies them human rights. This includes:

- *ignoring people's beliefs;*
- *expecting them to conform to the majority view;*
- *disregarding special diets;*
- *providing a minimal 'standard' service and disregarding the individual needs of a person.*

6.9 *Spiritual Harm/Neglect*

- 6.9.1 Spiritual harm is forcing people to accept religious ideas or values. Some adults may be more susceptible to suggestion. We need to take care when interpreting their wishes on spiritual matters.
- 6.9.2 Spiritual neglect is not providing access to spiritual development/services, etc.

7. CIRCUMSTANCES AND SETTINGS WHERE HARM CAN OCCUR

7.1 *Who Might Be the Perpetrator?*

- 7.1.1 There is a very straightforward answer to this question. The perpetrators could be anyone – individuals, groups or organisations.
- 7.1.2 Individuals may be harmed by a wide range of people including relatives and family members, neighbours, friends and associates, carers, other adults at risk, members of the public or complete strangers.
- 7.1.3 People may also be harmed by Church members, whether voluntary – undertaking tasks on behalf of the Church with an adult at risk – or professional – a member of clergy or other paid Church worker.
- 7.1.4 In almost all cases, the person who causes harm is known and often trusted by the adult at risk. Harm will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness, or alternatively arise from frustration or lack of support.
- 7.1.5 Relatives who are main carers often experience stress, distress, frustration and lack of respite from the caring role. This may lead to the unintended harm of the person for whom they are providing care. Relatives who are main carers may be more at risk of harm from the person for whom they are providing care. This harm is often endured for long periods, is unreported and unnoticed.

The image of the unknown 'stranger' being the biggest risk is far from accurate. People are much more at risk of harm from people they know.

- 7.1.6 Harmful behaviour can range from an individual shouting disrespectfully at an elderly person to the Church having restricted access to toilet facilities, thereby preventing someone from participating in events that are important to their social, emotional and spiritual well-being. It is important to note that poor practice can constitute harmful practice.

7.2 Other Circumstances Where Harm May Occur

7.2.1 Relationships where there is domestic abuse:

- ***domestic abuse covers a wide range of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse of people who are or have been intimate partners whether or not they are married or cohabiting. Domestic abuse can occur in any relationship and in all social groups, regardless of race, religion, social class or age;***
- ***situations of fear where the individual may be afraid of the perpetrator;***
- ***misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances.***

7.3 Where Does Harm Occur?

7.3.1 Harm can take place in any environment, e.g. an individual's own home, a care setting, whilst on holiday, whilst out and about in the street, a public place, or in a social or Church setting.

8. THE EFFECTS OF HARM

- 8.1 The impact of harm will vary from person to person. The consequences can be both physical and emotional.
- 8.2 The impact can have both short- and long-term effects.
- 8.3 Understanding the effects of harm is helpful in supporting those who have been harmed and in providing insight into reasons why people behave in particular ways.
- 8.4 One of the very negative attitudes towards those who are at risk can cruelly minimise this by statements such as, 'Well, he won't understand what's happened, so that's a blessing.'

9. WHY DOES HARM OCCUR?

- 9.1 There are many reasons why those who are at risk are harmed and there is rarely a full answer to this question. However, research studies indicate that the following risk factors should be considered:
 - *social isolation;*
 - *poor-quality long-term relationship between the perpetrator and the person at risk;*
 - *a pattern of family violence;*
 - *the perpetrator is dependent on the person at risk for accommodation, financial and emotional support;*
 - *the person who causes harm has a history of mental health/drug/alcohol problems.*
- 9.2 The likelihood of harm increases when those caring for or offering support to individuals who require services are inadequately trained, poorly supervised and have little support or work in isolation.
- 9.3 People who live alone are arguably at the greatest risk of harm.

10. WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PROTECT ADULTS AT RISK?

10.1 As the saying goes '**prevention is better than cure**'.

10.2 Minimising the risk of harm is the responsibility of everyone who works with adults at risk.

10.3 Adults at risk have the right to:

- *the protection of the Law;*
- *be treated with respect and dignity;*
- *privacy;*
- *be able to choose how they lead their lives;*
- *have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background;*
- *their chosen language or means of communication.*

10.4 You may wish to consider the following:

- *Do you treat the individuals you are working with, with respect, referring to them by name?*
- *Do you act respectfully, for instance knocking before entering their room/house, asking permission to join them, and respecting their privacy and possessions?*
- *When visiting, do you use cards or letters of authority?*
- *Do you respect differences, their likes and dislikes?*
- *Do you respect dignity and feelings; ask about personal preferences, forms of address and how much help might be required?*
- *Do you take care over the language you use? For instance, do you promote positivity by using language that describes the person as having a physical, mental or learning disability, not being the disability?*
- *Do you use appropriate language and provide for those who do not have spoken language, i.e. sign language. Do you include all in conversation or question-and-answer sessions?*
- *Do you actively promote empowerment and the well-being of the individuals with whom you are in ministry through appropriate opportunities?*

10.5 For all adults who have vulnerabilities our aim should be to:

- ***make the whole Church premises and serving areas accessible and welcoming, not simply for people who use wheelchairs, or have difficulty walking, but also for those who cannot hear or see everything, and for those who cannot ask for or read anything;***
- ***think about appropriate forms of worship, and provide them;***
- ***ensure clear sight lines to anything being presented for all, and consider the use of hearing loops in halls and meeting rooms where the people meet;***
- ***remember the needs of carers;***
- ***be aware that harm does happen. Create an informed listening, watching and caring culture with this in mind;***
- ***ensure that people working for or on behalf of the Church, whether paid or unpaid, will be properly prepared for their role.***

11. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

- 11.1 Where there is, for example, a team of pastoral visitors, there should initially be training for new members and then regular meetings where issues are discussed with the member of clergy or the person leading the team. This should be supportive and include the condition of health, emotional state, extent of support being given and required, and any concerns about the welfare of people visited.
- 11.2 If a group of adults with particular needs meet regularly as a Church group, those planning the activities and usually present should observe the behaviour of volunteers, and be able to discuss issues with them. It is best to have initial training, followed by 'get-togethers' for all those helping – about three times a year. This will give support and opportunity for airing ideas and views, and flag up the importance of the immediate reporting of any suspicion of harm to an adult at risk.
- 11.3 Measures to prevent harm to adults at risk, such as more structured recruitment procedures, may help to reduce the number of cases of harm.
- 11.4 It is vital that the Church acknowledges the importance of accurate recruitment decision-making when employing individuals for work involving vulnerable groups.
- 11.5 Significantly, the creation of the Disclosure Scotland process provides a much improved opportunity for 'police checks' to form part of this process.

12. RECRUITMENT (TO INCLUDE DISCLOSURE CHECK)

- 12.1 It is unwise to assume that a volunteer, worker, or someone in authorised ministry will never harm an adult at risk.
- 12.2 Remember that equal opportunities legislation exists. Do not discriminate against candidates on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation or age.
- 12.3 For those working regularly (a regular commitment would be about once every six weeks), the application form in Section 8 should be used. For volunteers, an informal interview would be the appropriate time for the form to be completed and signed, and would provide the opportunity to discuss previous experience, give permission for an Enhanced Disclosure check, and explain the Bishops' Conference of Scotland Policy on Adult Protection. Paid workers would have a more formal interview with more than one person present.
- 12.4 Those interviewed should have read this Guide and be willing to undertake training.
- 12.5 Before a volunteer or paid worker is accepted, two references should be sought in writing – there is a pro forma to be used (see Section 8). It should be made clear that the person is to work with adults at risk and that it is opinions on their suitability for this role that are being invited. If replies seem vague or unclear, it is best to follow them up by telephone. If there is serious doubt about a candidate's suitability the Diocesan Adviser/National Co-ordinator should be consulted. Confidentiality is important.
- 12.6 Everyone should be clear as to what is expected of them. Good practice is to work out a role description. Role descriptions should be completed by existing staff and volunteers as well as those taking up roles for the first time. The Parish Priest is responsible for arranging for the '*Summary of Good Practice*' leaflet to be given to each paid worker and volunteer.
- 12.7 It is difficult to turn down a volunteer, but better to do this than have someone unsuitable for the task. There may be other areas of responsibility in the Church that would be more suitable.

12.8 The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, to be implemented in 2010, will make it an offence knowingly to employ (this applies to paid workers and volunteers) someone to work with vulnerable groups who is on the 'Disqualified from Working with Adults List', which will be managed by Disclosure Scotland as an agency of the Scottish Government.

12.9 *Guidance in Relation to Disclosure Applications for Those Working with Adults at Risk*

12.9.1 *Policy*

12.9.1.1 Eligibility for an Enhanced Disclosure check is a matter of law.

12.9.1.2 Disclosure checks are designed to provide additional information as part of the recruitment process and, although an aid to robust recruitment practice, it is the responsibility of the Church to decide on an individual's suitability for a position.

12.9.1.3 The Church's policy is that where a worker's normal duties enable him/her to have unsupervised one to one contact with an adult at risk it is **essential** to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure check as part of the recruitment process.

12.9.2 *Assessment of the Need for a Disclosure for Those Working with Adults at Risk*

12.9.2.1 The test for assessing the need for a Disclosure check will be based on the extent and nature of the contact with adults at risk:

- ***Positions that should be subject to a Disclosure check at enhanced level include those involving a direct role in relation to adults at risk on a regular basis or for a period of time.***
- ***It is clear that this responsibility extends to those situations and activities in the Church for which carers/parents specifically entrust adults at risk within their family to the care and supervision of those appointed by the Church.***
- ***It extends to those people appointed by the Church with whom adults at risk will come into significant contact through parish life.***

12.9.3 *Positions Involving Work with Adults at Risk*

12.9.3.1 The following positions have the potential to include unsupervised one to one contact with Adults at Risk and should, therefore, be checked:

- ***Bishop;***
- ***Priest;***
- ***Deacon;***
- ***Pastoral Carers who are visiting those unable to attend Church, through either illness, old age or chronic disability;***
- ***those involved in ministry in parish premises through planned activities such as lunch clubs, sacramental preparation groups, and parish activities for adults with specific physical, intellectual or social needs.***

12.9.4 *Adult at Risk/Social Care Service Checklist*

12.9.4.1 To ensure that all applications submitted by the Church comply with legislation, the National Collator requires confirmation that positions applied for meet the new social care service criteria for work (paid or unpaid) with an adult at risk.

12.9.4.2 An Adult at Risk/Social Care Service Checklist must be completed for each application.

12.9.4.3 Please be advised that, currently, applications submitted at the enhanced level for adult positions under the social care service criteria are not entitled to include a check of the Disqualified from Working with Adults List. Therefore, put a cross in the box marked '**No**' at **E8** on the Disclosure application form for this level of Disclosure check.

Adult at Risk/Social Care Service Checklist

I confirm that the attached disclosure application is for the position of [*****] which is of such a kind as to enable me to have **unsupervised one to one contact** in the course of my **normal duties** with an adult at risk.

My normal duties would include contact with those suffering from one or more of the following:

- Learning or physical disability;
- Physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity.

The disability is of a level that includes one or more of the following:

- Dependency upon others, or a requirement for assistance in, the performance of basic physical functions;
- Severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others; or
- Impairment in the ability of a person to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

Signature:

Full Name (please print):

Role:

Date:

*** Please insert position applied for**

13. GUIDELINES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE ALLEGATION, SUSPICION OR DISCOVERY OF HARM TO ADULTS AT RISK

13.1 *Action to Take*

13.1.1 If you are a Church worker who becomes aware of an individual who is being or has been harmed, or you suspect is being or has been harmed, the following action should be taken:

- ***If the person is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the emergency services, Police or Ambulance, by dialling 999. Anything that may be required by the Police or forensic team, such as physical evidence, clothing, blood, body tissue or other body fluid, should not be disturbed.***
- ***Safeguard the person, if this is necessary. This may simply involve making the person comfortable or ensuring that a reliable person stays with them until the emergency services arrive. The individual may be distressed, in which case someone will be required to remain with her/him with the emergency services.***
- ***If the individual makes the disclosure of harm directly to you, listen carefully to what is said. Be sensitive to the fact that the person may be from a different cultural, religious or language background, or gender from yourself.***
- ***Make a note of the words said, recording the details as fully as possible, including the time, date and location that the disclosure was made and the time, date, location and nature of the alleged harm. Do this as soon as possible after the disclosure has been made (see Section 8 for suggested pro forma).***
- ***Only seek clarification about the details of what has occurred. Do not prompt the person or ask leading questions. Remember that you are only receiving information that the person feels it necessary to tell you. You are not the investigating officer.***

13.1.2 If there is no apparent *immediate* danger to the individual whom you know or suspect is being harmed (and in any situation), contact should be made with the following as soon as possible (*within an hour*) of the harm or the suspected harm being disclosed to you. Contact details for the personnel listed should be recorded on page 28 of this document.

- ***The Co-ordinator for Adult Protection in your Diocese/organisation.***
- ***Your Parish Priest (line manager, team leader).***
- ***The Social Services Adult Protection Officer/Team.***

13.1.3 You may wish to seek advice from the Diocesan Adviser/National Co-ordinator.

13.1.4 If a Church worker or member of clergy/religious is suspected or alleged to have harmed an adult at risk, you should contact the Diocesan Adviser/Bishop/Congregational Leader/National Co-ordinator immediately.

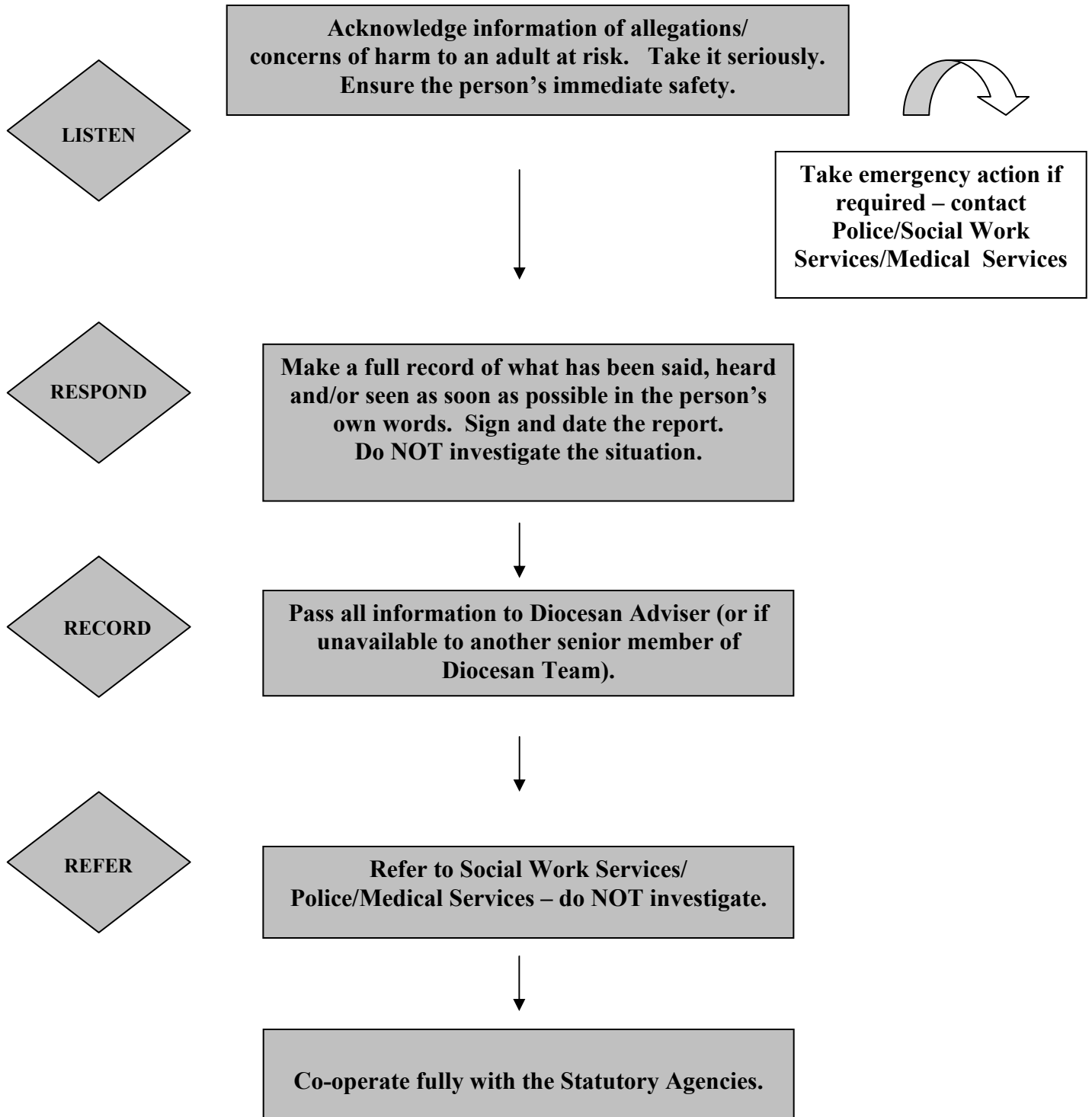
13.1.5 You may have reason to feel that an allegation is unfounded or exaggerated. However, it remains your responsibility to report the allegation or suspicion as outlined above. You should record your misgivings.

13.1.6 Principles:

- ***Any information gained about an individual should be handled with sensitivity and should not be disclosed to others except on a 'need to know' basis. For example, it will be necessary to provide relevant information to the person to whom you are responsible for your work and, in particular, to give details of any concerns about an individual, especially if you think the person may be at risk of harm. The person giving the disclosure should be made aware of this.***
- ***The wishes of the person who may be experiencing harm will be respected, unless there is a responsibility to override them. An individual's wishes cannot undermine an organisation's legal duty to act.***
- ***Where an individual does not have the mental capacity to decide how to protect herself/himself from self-harm, an independent advocate should be sought to represent their interests during adult at risk protection procedures.***
- ***Any intervention in a person's life, including that for immediate protection and its result, should match the wishes, where known, of that person as closely as possible.***
- ***In achieving protection, the life of the person experiencing harm should be left as unchanged as possible, unless they request otherwise.***
- ***Information shared between organisations for the purposes of protecting an adult at risk will be done according to an information-sharing protocol.***

14. THE CHURCH'S REFERRAL SYSTEM

Responding to Allegations/Concerns of Adult Protection issues.



15. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Position	Name	Tel. No.
Parish Co-ordinator		
National Co-ordinator for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults	Jackie McCaig	0141 332 7177
Diocesan Adviser		
Social Work Services Adult Protection Officer		
Local Police phone number (non-emergency)		