

SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**For the parishes of Coryton, Lamerton, Milton Abbot with Dunterton,
Marystowe and Sydenham Damerel**

January 2016

Reviewed and amended Mar 2017

SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The following policy statement was agreed at the APCM meeting held on

An overarching policy document has been agreed between the parishes of Lamerton, Sydenham Damerel, Milton Abbot, Dunterton, Coryton and Marystowe. Issues common to all parishes are described below, followed by practical plans which are applicable to every parish.

Everyone has their role to play in the Benefice by acting in the best interests of all vulnerable adults and children – whether or not they attend church. Safeguarding is an opportunity to show Christian principles in practice. Good advertising of this policy will allow all parishioners to voice their concerns in a safe and caring environment, knowing that they will be listened to by the Church and that appropriate action will be taken.

1. Mission Statement

As members of the joint PCC we commit our church community to the support, nurture, protection and safeguarding of all, especially the young and vulnerable. We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church community. We are fully committed to acting within current legislation, guidance, national frameworks and the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures. We will also act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory team, Children and Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Probation Services and other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. We welcome staff and volunteers who are recruited in accordance with the 'Practice Guidance: safer recruitment' June 2015 policy document produced by Church of England. This means we will ensure that those who are employed or who volunteer to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults have been recruited via the 'safer recruitment procedure', are suitable for the role, that they know what the role entails and that they are supported in carrying it out.

This policy was compiled following the Exeter 'Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Guidance for Parishes' document, published May 2014.

2. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action taken by others to promote welfare and prevent harm to all children and vulnerable adults in our society. As well as being reactive, safeguarding should also be proactive. A good safeguarding policy encourages vigilance and includes measures that promote a safe environment, in order to lessen the risk of abuse and harm.

2.1 Safeguarding children and young people

A child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Young people are generally considered to be aged 14 – 17, but are legally children. The Children's Act 1989 provides statutory powers to the Local Authority to investigate and intervene where there is significant harm to a child. Harm can be physical or mental violence, injury, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. Maltreatment occurs where their health or physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, social or spiritual

development is damaged by other people. Children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

Children can be harmed in the home, at school, at friends' or relatives' houses, during sport or leisure activities and at Church. Signs of abuse can include injuries (especially those that cannot be explained or occur on unlikely parts of the body), bites, burns, scalds. The child may show signs of depression or unusual aggression or begin using drugs or alcohol. The signs are varied and many – but those with frequent contact with a child should bring common-sense to bear. Any change in the normal, sunny disposition of a child warrants investigation, especially if it occurs frequently.

2.2.Safeguarding vulnerable adults

Unlike children (who are always considered to be vulnerable), adults can experience periods of vulnerability, depending upon circumstances. Adults with a permanent mental disability may always be vulnerable, but physical illness, mental ill health, addiction or unresolved emotional issues can render anyone temporarily vulnerable. Therefore any adult aged 18 or over is vulnerable, who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness, or other situation is permanently or temporarily unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

People can be at risk from members of their own family, neighbours, 'friends', people in authority and from those giving care in residential homes. Domestic abuse by a spouse is widespread and common. Vulnerable adults can be physically, psychologically and sexually abused, neglected, denied health care and taken advantage of financially. Spiritual abuse can also occur in the form of manipulation of thought and emotions e.g preaching that sinfulness will result in dire consequences unless the person repents. Abuse in the form of texts, emails, Twitter and other malicious internet avenues cannot be ignored either.

As for children, the signs of adult abuse are varied and many – ranging from injuries, malnutrition, addiction and emotional disturbance. Robust communication and a policy of inclusion may help to identify those at risk in the parishes.

3. When to act – whistle-blowing and reporting

In the case of children, where abuse is suspected, it is your duty to speak-up, even if the abuse is proved to be unfounded. Reasons for not acting if child abuse is suspected can include:

- disbelief, particularly if the person is well known and liked
- fear of getting it wrong and maligning an innocent person
- making things worse for the child
- making excuses, such as 'I don't know who to contact'

Some of these reasons are placing more emphasis upon the well-being of the adult, rather than the child and are therefore unacceptable.

Vulnerable adults need to be treated with respect and dignity. Questions must be asked regarding the extent of the harm or exploitation - and what the adult feels about the situation. Nevertheless, if there is a risk of repeated, serious acts against the individual and they lack mental capacity, then the abuse should be reported.

When in doubt, the general rule is to speak-out, rather than risk harm.

Even if the whistle-blower does not wish to be involved with the mission community safeguarding procedure, they should, at the very least, be given details of agencies that can help, and ensure that the child or vulnerable adult has the ability to contact these agencies themselves.

3.1 How to report suspected abuse

Parishioners are more likely to be encouraged to report incidences if they know that they can do so in a safe, caring environment and that the person they confide in is non-judgemental, does not gossip and maintains appropriate confidentiality. In some circumstances, where a child or adult is in immediate, significant danger the Police, Social Services or Health services may be called, regardless of confidentiality. In this event the informant would always be told.

As a Benefice we also have a duty to inform the Vicar, Diocese Safeguarding Adviser and Archdeacon – unless they are implicated in the abuse.

Parishioners are encouraged to report to their Benefice Safeguarding Representative, but may prefer to speak to the Vicar any other person in the Church that they feel comfortable talking to. The Benefice Safeguarding Representative will always be ready to take your call and offer a quiet space for you to report your concerns at a suitable place and time. In practice, anyone can listen to a child or vulnerable adult and then report to the Benefice Safeguarding Representative or Vicar.

If the problem is urgent and involves immediate danger then call 999.

The Benefice Safeguarding Representative for the South Tamar Mission Community is:

- **Julie Hibbert Tel: 01822 618221**
Email: safeguarding@southtamar.church

Vicar of the South Tamar Mission Community is:

- **Rev. Andy Atkins Tel: 01822 870298; Email: vicar@southtamar.church**
Address: The Vicarage, The Parade, Milton Abbot, PL19 0NZ

Contact details for parish safeguarding representatives and church wardens for the individual parishes can be found in Appendix 2, on the church website: www.southtamar.church and in the Parish magazine.

3.2 What happens then?

The person who receives the information must either complete an incident form (see appendix) or ask the Benefice Safeguarding Representative to do so.

Such documentation could be used in evidence in any criminal investigation, therefore it is important to be accurate and try to record what is said verbatim. The form records details of the abuse, including - where possible – the date(s)/time(s) of the event, what happened (in their own words) and person(s) affected/perpetrator.

A paper copy of the disclosure report will be held by the Vicar and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. No electronic copies will be held by either the Vicar or the Benefice Safeguarding Representative.

The Benefice Safeguarding Representative or vicar has a duty to report the matter to the relevant statutory agency and also inform the Archdeacon and the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor in Exeter- who will investigate the incident and take action. It is important that the incident is followed-up and the Benefice Safeguarding Representative has a duty to do this.

It is NOT the role of the Benefice Safeguarding Representative (or any other person the abuse is reported to) to investigate the matter themselves.

Confidentiality underpins this safeguarding policy and it is vital that the person reporting suspected abuse is confident that the information will only be shared with those who really need to know. Therefore it is incumbent upon the person receiving the report of suspected abuse that they maintain strict confidentiality. It is recognised that gossip has the potential to spread very quickly in small communities and this must be guarded against. Remember - allegations of abuse may prove to be unfounded.

4. The aftermath - Pastoral care

A suitable person, probably the Rector, should provide pastoral care to anyone in the Parish who has suffered abuse – either recently or in the past. Confidentiality must be strictly maintained, especially in small communities.

It is important that any reports of abuse do get acted upon swiftly and appropriately. It is the duty of the Benefice Safeguarding Representative, Vicar, Archdeacon and Diocese Safeguarding Adviser to ensure that matters are addressed – and there is provision on the report form to record this.

Ultimately the incident should be formally closed when matters have been resolved.

5. Safeguarding in practice

5.1 Activities in the parishes

The parishes as a whole undertake many activities involving children and vulnerable adults. There are six churches where activities may include bell ringing, school attendance and 'messy church' for children, two primary schools where parishioners help with reading etc, two residential care homes for the elderly, various community centres and village halls where indoor and outdoor events are frequent. In addition there are local pubs, garages shops and children's play areas.

N.B. All children attending 'Messy Church' will be individually accompanied the entire time by a parent or other responsible adult, aged 18+.

5.2 What should we do to ensure safety?

In order to safeguard vulnerable people the parish recognises the need for vigilance, a method for reporting the incidences and a practical way of avoiding opportunities for abuse to occur.

- Vigilance requires all parishioners to be alert and to use their common sense if they encounter problems.
- Practicality - must include simple steps which are easy to follow.
- Parishioners must be both aware of how to report suspected abuse and be confident that they will be listened to - and that appropriate action will be taken.

Vigilance

The Vicar and lay readers are particularly requested to be vigilant, especially when undertaking pastoral care and visiting elderly people in their homes. Ideally the parishioner should be given an opportunity to raise any concerns during such visits, which should then be reported to the Benefice Safeguarding Representative.

Well-run care homes should not be averse to allowing their guests privacy to express their fears. It is therefore our policy to keep close ties with the care homes within the parish to determine what measures are in place to prevent and report abuse – and to offer a listening ear if necessary.

The church members visiting the school have a good opportunity to observe the children and, knowing them well, are in a unique position to note any problems. The children may also trust them and wish to divulge information. It is our policy to be vigilant to such occasions and allow time and space for the child to speak. Schools will have their own safeguarding policy, so their safeguarding officer would be informed of any concerns too.

Don't give the abuser an opportunity

The best way to avoid opportunity for abuse is to ensure, where at all possible, that no child or vulnerable adult is alone on a one-to-one basis with an adult. The presence of others – be they more children or other adults – provides protection in the form of witnesses. This means that a group (3+) of children could be alone with an adult e.g. during school service practice sessions in the church. It is good practice to keep doors open and for any activity to be readily observed by others.

Church members undergoing pastoral visits may not be able to avoid being alone with elderly and vulnerable people. The DBS check is of particular relevance here, and great trust is placed in the clergy during those times.

6. Advertising the policy

It is important that the Safeguarding policy is known throughout the Benefice and it is the duty of the individual parishes to disseminate the policy to all parishioners whether or not they attend church. The methods for doing this could include notices in the churches, articles in the parish magazine, a special leaflet accessible to children and occasional mention at the beginning of services. There are also other avenues of dissemination not directly involving the church e.g. schools, local pubs and community centres.

7. Training and DBS checks

The Mission Community Safeguarding Representative has the responsibility to ensure that relevant people within the parishes have undergone the DBS check and to keep records to that effect.

Relevant people will include: the Vicar, lay readers, church wardens, bell captains and the Mission

Community safeguarding representatives. Other relevant people could include those who work specifically with children in the parish, or have responsibilities for older members of the congregation. The safeguarding reps will identify these people and arrange for a DBS check. DBS checks are renewable every 5 years. Application for a DBS check must now be made on-line. The diocese has ceased to be an umbrella body for the parishes and this task has been given to the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

N.B. Clergy undergo DBS checks upon renewal of their licence. It is therefore assumed that these checks are automatically in place for lay readers and the vicar.

From early 2017 the Exeter Diocese has arranged formal safeguarding courses which are essential for those undertaking certain roles in the church. Safeguarding representatives, church wardens, bell captains and PCC members are required to undertake this training every 3 years. Currently the training comprises C0 on-line introduction, C1 and C2 face to face. The safeguarding representative will keep record of who has attended and ensure appropriate training is offered to anyone else who would like it. Special provision will be made for those who do not use the internet e.g. group presentation by safeguarding officer or vicar.

Clergy and lay readers undertake C3 training, which is tailored to their role.

undertake training as required by the Diocese.

8. Risk Assessment

Activities undertaken in the church will be assessed to identify the potential situations where abuse could occur. A risk assessment of this nature could be readily combined with a health and safety assessment. Such activities include regular church services, cleaning, flower arranging, Messy church, gardening in church yard, leaving the church open for visitors, social events.

Risk assessments will be undertaken by the health and safety officer, safeguarding rep, church warden and those involved with the activity. These reports will be available for all to see on the Benefice website.

9. Special circumstances

There may be persons amongst the congregation who are known paedophiles or have committed other offences against vulnerable people. Anyone who is deemed to be a potential threat to others – for whatever reason – will require a sensitive intervention from the Benefice. Such intervention should include a risk assessment, involving the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and Vicar. Such persons must not be put into any role or office within the church which could afford them status and thereby encourage vulnerable people to trust them.

10. Review of Safeguarding policy

The Safeguarding policy will be reviewed periodically, at the instigation of the PCC chairman and/or Mission Community Safeguarding Representative. Any lessons learned about the policy working in practice will be incorporated. Posters and information will be refreshed yearly. The next review will be in September 2019.

APPENDIX 1 - SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM

Date and time	Reported to:	Place:
Person reporting incident		
Person(s) affected		
Description of events , including place, date, time, person(s) involved – in reportee's own words. <i>(Attach, and sign, additional sheet if necessary)</i>		
Actions already taken by victim or person reporting incident (if any)		
Signature Benefice Safeguarding Representative	Signed:	Date:

Agreement to further action by victim or their representative	Signed:	Date:
Further Action		
Details of how report made to Vicar: who, date, method		
Details of reporting to Diocese of Exeter: who, date, method		
Date reported to appropriate authority + notes		
Outcome/Follow-up/Pastoral care requirements		
Incident closed Signed Benefice Safeguarding Representative or Vicar	Signature +Date:	

APPENDIX 2

CONTACT DETAILS FOR SAFEGUARDING IN SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY

Details for contacting all church wardens and safeguarding representatives can be found in the Parish Magazine and on the website: www.southtamar.church.

Person	Role	Contact details
Rev Andy Atkins	Vicar	01822 870298 Email: vicar@southtamar.church
Julie Hibbert	Mission Community Safeguarding Representative (Lamerton)	01822 618221 Email: safeguarding@southtamar.church
Deborah Asbridge	Church warden and safeguarding rep, Marystowe	01822 860378 Email: deborah@southtamar.church
Josie Whitfield	Safeguarding rep for Coryton	See website for contact details via church wardens (Richard Searight, Sylvia Andrews)

APPENDIX 3

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Person/Body	Role	Address	Tel/Email
Charles Pitman	Dioscesan Safeguarding Adviser Exeter	The Old Deanery The Cloisters Exeter EX1 1HS	01392 345908 safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org www.exeter.anglican.org/church-life/
Sophie West	Safeguarding training Adviser Exeter Diocese	The Old Deanery The Cloisters Exeter EX1 1HS	01392 294964 safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org
Phill Parker	DBS co-ordinator	The Old Deanery The Cloisters Exeter EX1 1HS	01392 294969
Ven. Ian Chandler	Archdeacon for Plymouth	St Mark's Church, 1 Sanctuary Close, Plymouth PL2 1EN	01752 202401
Police	Emergency, + 101 number for expert, immediate advice		101 (advice, non urgent) or 999 (emergency only)
CCPAS Church's child protection advisory services	For advice on child protection – working hours		0845 120 4550
CCPAS Church + NSPCC	Confidential helpline (out of hours)		0800 389 5344
NSPCC	Child protection helpline		0808 800 5000 Free and manned 24/7
Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Investigating incidents and liaison between police, social workers, GPs etc	MASH PO Box 723 Exeter EX1 9QS	0345 155 1071 mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk
Care Direct	Info, advice if vulnerable adult being adused		0845 155 1007 Csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk
West Devon Borough Council	Useful website and information sheets	Kilworthy Park Tavistock PL19 0BZ	01822 813600
SPLITZ/Devon domestic abuse	Help and advice – domestic abuse		0345 155 1074
Rape Crisis Helpline	Rape advice and help		0808 802 9999
Silverline	Helpline open 24/7 for elderly people		0800 470 80 90