



Parish of St. Matthew's. Kingsdown

## **Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse**

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**All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:**

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

**We recognise that:**

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

**We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:**

**In all our activities –**

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**In our publicity –**

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**When concerns are raised –**

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

**In our care –**

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

**If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one please contact**

**Julia Wright, Parish Safeguarding Officer, St Matthew's Church.Kingsdown.**



## Handling of Disclosure Information

**Storage and Access:** DBS Disclosure Certificates (including any copies or downloads) must never be kept on an applicant's personal file. They must be stored separately in a secure, lockable, non-portable cabinet, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

**Handling:** In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. A record should be kept of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass the information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

**Usage:** Disclosure information must only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

A disclosure certificate must be for the correct workforce only and at the correct level. i.e. a person recruiting for a role in the child workforce at enhanced level should not ask to see a certificate for child and adult workforce at enhanced plus level as the certificate may include information that the recruiter is not entitled to see.

**Retention:** Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, a disclosure certificate (including any copies or downloads) should not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, consultation should be made with the umbrella body CCPAS. Advice can then be given regarding the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access would still apply in these circumstances.

**Disposal:** Once the retention period has lapsed, Disclosure certificates must be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure certificates must not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). No copies of the Disclosure certificate may be kept, in any form. However, a record should be kept of the date of the issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

*This policy stands for all staff and volunteers recruited by St Matthews Church, Kingsdown. Bristol*

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## Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders policy

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, St Matthew's undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any unspent criminal record at an early stage in the application process.

Unless the nature of the position allows St Matthew's to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Where the nature of a position does allow us to ask questions about your entire criminal record excepting any "protected" information we will ask you to complete a "Self Disclosure Form" before asking you to apply for a DBS disclosure. (Further information about what information should be disclosed is available from DBS in their 'DBS Filtering Guide', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide>). This enables us to discuss with you at an early stage any information which may cause you to be unable to progress to confirmation in role. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the person within the organisation who is responsible for processing your DBS disclosure application and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.

Where a caution, conviction or additional information is disclosed by you or on a DBS disclosure your consent will be sought to forward a copy of the document to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST).

The DST will make contact with you to discuss the information and the circumstances in which the caution, conviction or concern arose. The DST may need to speak to statutory bodies or individuals and will seek your consent to do so. The DST will provide a written risk assessment to the recruiter which includes a recommendation of safe to proceed, proceed with amendments to role or not safe to proceed. You will be provided with a copy of that assessment.

The recruiter will then communicate to you a decision regarding whether they are able to continue with the appointment process. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought

could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work. Failure to consent to risk assessment will result in any offer of employment or voluntary work being withdrawn.

**Quality Assurance and Appeals:**

Should the individual subject to this process feel that they have been treated unfairly or that the process is contradictory to Church of England practice guidance, they may appeal. The individual subject to risk assessment states in writing that they wish to appeal. If the individual initially states verbally that they wish to appeal they may be assisted by any party in producing a letter stating their reason for appeal.

In the first instance the appeal should be made to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/Recruiter. The Parish Safeguarding officer will discuss this appeal with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and act upon their advice. In order to ensure that this process is followed according to Church of England agreed policy and practice (see National Church of England [‘Practice Guidance: Risk Assessment for individuals who may pose risk to children or adults’](#) June 2015) the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will be made aware of all appeals.

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Changes at Review		
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**APPENDIX.**

**\*Application Form for Volunteers**

**\*Risk Assessment Form**

**\*Additional comprehensive Social Media Policy added in 2020.**

**Application form for voluntary workers**

**Application for the post of:**

<b>Surname:</b>		<b>First Name:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>		<b>Previous names:</b>	
<b>Home Address: (Current)</b>		<b>Post Code:</b>	
		<b>Telephone – Day:</b>	
		<b>Telephone – Evening:</b>	
		<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>How long have you lived at the above address? (if less than 12 months please provide previous address)</b>			
<b>Previous address:</b>		<b>Postcode:</b>	
		<b>Time at this address:</b>	
		<b>Church attended:</b>	
		<b>Name of minister:</b>	

<b>Relevant qualifications / training (this may not be an essential requirement for the role but helps identify suitability)</b>			
<b>Qualification/ Training</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Previous experience of working with children or adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect - continue overleaf if necessary</b>			

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**Please provide two references one of which must be from current employer or previous church**

**Referee 1**

<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>	
<b>Role:</b>		<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>		<b>Postcode</b>	
		<b>Telephone:</b>	

**Referee 2**

<b>First Name:</b>		<b>Surname:</b>	
<b>Role:</b>		<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>		<b>Postcode</b>	
		<b>Telephone:</b>	

**Please return this from when complete to: [db-admin@stmatthews-bristol.org.uk](mailto:db-admin@stmatthews-bristol.org.uk)**