

Section 1

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Preface by The Right Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham

In 2004 the House of Bishops published “**Protecting All God’s Children** – the child protection policy for the Church of England” (Third Edition). This sets out in one discrete booklet the essential features of the Anglican Church’s child protection policy. A copy of this booklet is being made available free of charge to each parish. I cannot overstate the need for each incumbent as well as his or her church wardens and PCC to have not only read but to have understood the policy. It gives guidelines for the formulation of a child protection policy and also what steps should be taken if abuse is suspected. It sets out the Responsibilities of the Diocese (Chapter 3.3 in the House of Bishop’s Policy) and the Responsibilities of the Parish (Chapter 3.4 in the House of Bishop’s Policy).

I greatly value the work of my Diocesan Child Protection Management Group. The current membership of this group is set out in Appendix A2. That Group meets at least every six months and if you have any queries about this Policy, it is essential that you raise it with one of the members of the Group.

Details of my Child Protection Adviser is also set out in Appendix A1. This adviser and my Child Protection Adviser’s Support Group, as well as being available at short notice to advise you on how you should deal with any child protection matter, are also keen that, rather than delay, if you have any query which cannot be dealt with comfortably within your parish but you should raise it with one of them. Details of the members of the Support Group appears at Appendix A2.

The Responsibilities of the Parish (Chapter 3.4 of the House of Bishops’ Policy) are listed in paragraph 1.3.7 of these Guidelines.

It is my intention that all these guidelines should be published and regularly updated on a CD sent to every parish and on the Diocesan Website. You will be notified through the Bulletin of the Diocese of any significant alterations to these Guidelines.

The Right Revd David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham

27th February 2009

Forward by Peter Hay, Strategic Director for Social Care & Health, Birmingham City Council

We all accept that Childhood needs to be a safe space if children are to become confident and compassionate adults. The last thirty years have seen our society struggle to cope with the impact of learning the lessons from numerous individual tragedies of children killed or harmed by those responsible for their care. We have also seen incidents of a collective failure of organisations.

The most powerful point of our learning from all of these experiences is that protection of children is a responsibility for us all. Wherever we sit in our communities or in our professional roles, we all have a part to play in keeping children safe. It is vital therefore that we are positive in taking actions which can prevent threats to children, particularly in promoting safe activities and recruitment practices.

Good guidelines create good practice. In an area as complex and as laden with emotion as the protection of our children, we all need a route map which helps us achieve the aim of keeping children safe. I commend these guidelines to you and their assistance to the work that you do.

**Peter Hay
Strategic Director for Social Care & Health
Birmingham City Council**

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1.1 Introduction

In 2004 the House of Bishops published "Protecting All God's Children: the Child Protection Policy for the Church of England" (Third Edition). At the Bishop's Council on 19th October 2005, the Diocese adopted this House of Bishops' Policy. That policy itself calls for the Diocese to "adopt the House of Bishops' Policy on Child Protection together with any additional Diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines which shall be endorsed by the Diocesan Synod".

The previous policy of the Diocese, called "Policy on Child Protection" was published in 2001. In addition the booklet "Children and Young People", commonly known as the Orange Book has been in use since 1997. These have been long overdue for fundamental revision.

The aim of this Policy, which supersedes these previous policies, is primarily to provide parishes in a single volume in loose leaf form with a set of policies and best practices for the protection of children as well as matters such as safe recruitment and health and safety issues for children's activities.

It has been produced in this ring binder format in order that, as different parts need updating, this can be achieved without an entire re-write. Practice in child protection is continually evolving, so this format provides a way of adding new sections and substituting original parts as these changes occur. In the future, these amendments will be issued with specific instructions on how to integrate them into the manual.

These guidelines have been approved by the Bishop's Child Protection Management Group, the membership of which includes the two Archdeacons (see Appendix A2). We hope that it will be a tool to assist good practice and not just a reactive document when problems arise.

Further we hope that the format will provide easily understood guidelines at all levels of parish work with children and young people, and will recognise that many tasks are undertaken by volunteers or even paid staff who normally find issues of child protection daunting.

May I express particular thanks to Julia Hill and Emma Duke from my office whose support and perseverance has been of immense assistance in preparing this Policy for publication.

Peter N Baldwin
Bishop's Child Protection Adviser

November 2005

Important Note

Whilst every attempt has been taken to ensure that the contents of this Policy are accurate, the law and the matters of best practice can change rapidly. Therefore this Policy is issued for guidance only of parishes. It is PCC's, incumbents, church wardens or other parochial officers who are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they have acted properly and within the law. The Diocesan Staff may be able to assist in that respect but ultimately each parish is responsible for taking its own professional advice in matters set out in this Policy.

1.2 Definitions

- 1.2.1 **Abuse** – child abuse consists of anything that individuals, institutions, or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development into adulthood (see Section 2).
- 1.2.2 **Area Child Protection Committee** – is an inter-agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups within a Local Authority should co-operate to safeguard children in that area, and for making sure that arrangements work effectively to bring about good outcomes for children. They are soon to be known as Local Safeguarding Boards.
- 1.2.3 **Black Minority Ethnic Child** - A child who is from a black minority ethnic group which may include black or asian families and includes children of dual heritage, (the term dual heritage replaces the term mixed race and refers to a child whose parents are from different ethnic groups).
- 1.2.4 **Child** – a person under the age of 18 years as defined by the Children Act 1989 when addressing issues of abuse. (Note that although 16-18 year olds are legally able to give their consent to sexual activity, they may nevertheless be harmed by those who are responsible for them and whom they trust)
- 1.2.5 **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)** – an executive agency of the Home Office, set up to help employers and voluntary agencies make safer decisions about the recruitment and appointment of workers with children and vulnerable adults (see Section 11).
- 1.2.6 **Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator (PCPC)** – A person appointed by a Parish to co-ordinate all Parish matters relating to the protection of children and young people and to help the Parish develop a culture of 'informed vigilance'. This will involve passing on relevant information, maintaining records, ensuring children and youth workers receive appropriate training, and maintaining an up to date Parish policy. It may also include taking action or being involved in recruitment.
- 1.2.7 **Parish Children's Advocate (PCA)** - A person appointed by a Parish to represent and promote the views and needs of children in decisions made by the church in all aspects of the life and ministry of the church. The person will be a member of the PCC and should be in regular and direct communication with children, young people and those who lead their groups
- 1.2.8 **Employee** – clergy are not employees as such but are office holders. Because of the position of trust inherent in their role and the authority vested in them, they and non-stipendiary ministers are considered to be employees for the purposes of this policy, as are full and part-time paid parish staff.
- 1.2.9 **Perpetrator** – a person who uses their position of trust, influence and power to force another to participate in sexual activities (see Section 5).
- 1.2.10 **Racism and Racial Harassment** – The definition given in an Area Child Protection Committee's procedures is as follows:
- a. **Introduction** – Some communities in British society suffer systematic disadvantage in many areas of their lives. Racism can be defined in various different ways: however, for the purposes of these procedures it can be defined in general terms as consisting of "conduct of words or practices which disadvantage or

advantage people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt forms" (Macpherson Report 1999). The effects of racism differ for different communities and individuals, and should not be assumed to be uniform.

- b. **Institutional racism** – This has been defined as “the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture and ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (Macpherson Report 1999).

The impact of institutional racism on black families and communities can result in families not accessing direct services, either because no appropriate support exists, or because they are unwilling to expose themselves/their communities to perceived censure.

'The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry: Report of an enquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny' - The Stationery Office, 1999

- c. **Racial harassment** – This can be defined as a continual/ongoing series of incidents of varying degrees of severity, ranging from insults, through assault to grievous injury (possibly fatal), which are perceived by the victim and/or any other person to be racially motivated. This may mean, for example, that an isolated parent cannot go out, or that a child cannot play in his/her own garden.

Racial harassment could therefore have an impact on a child's emotional and social development. The stress it causes could become a contributory factor towards physical or mental ill health of children or parents.

Racial harassment can occur in dual heritage families, where one side of the family may subject the child to name-calling and other rejecting treatment.

- 1.2.11 **Screening** – part of a formal recruitment process that helps to ascertain whether or not an applicant has the knowledge, skills and experience to work with children. The Diocese of Birmingham uses the Criminal Records Bureau to screen the records of applicants for any matter that indicates unsuitability for work involving contact with children and young adults.
- 1.2.12 **Survivor** – an adult or a child, male or female, who has been a victim of abuse. Such abuse could have taken the form of a “one off” incident, or have been ongoing for a number of years.
- 1.2.13 **Volunteer** – someone who carries out unpaid work, which may involve contact with children and young people in the name of the Church. The nature of the work varies from formal to informal, education to leisure, in small and large groups, in all sorts of contexts. Good practice applies every bit as much to somebody opening their home on occasion, as it does to officially appointed volunteers.
- 1.2.14 **Vulnerable adults** – anyone whom society undervalues and exploits because they are different developmentally and/or culturally. In the Care Standards Act 2000, a “vulnerable adult” is defined as a person who is not a child and – (a) suffers from a mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983, or otherwise has a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; or (b) has a physical disability or is suffering from a physical disorder.

1.3 House of Bishop's Policy Statement

Principles of the House of Bishops' Child Protection Policy '*Protecting All God's Children*'

- We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children within our church community.
- We will carefully select and train ordained and lay ministers, volunteers and paid workers with children and young people, using the Criminal Records Bureau, amongst other tools, to check the background of each person.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that a child or young person for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- We will fully co-operate with statutory agencies during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the church community.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

1.3.1 Aims and Purpose

The purpose of this policy document is to identify and outline the issues and principles of child protection for the Church of England.

At a national level, it is the House of Bishops which approves the policy and provides recommended procedures, where it is judged that the Church of England should have common practice across the dioceses.

Building on this, dioceses may provide additional procedures and examples of good practice to give further substance to the House of Bishops' policy, so that those authorized volunteers, employed laity and people holding the bishop's licence can properly and with confidence engage with children.

The House of Bishops will also approve a handbook of good practice, collated from the experience of dioceses and parishes. It is expected that future guidance from dioceses and parishes will be based on these documents.

These documents are not specifically aimed at the protection of adults who have been harmed in a church context, although it is recognized that many of its principles are relevant to them.

1.3.2 Our Theological Approach

Every human being has a value and dignity, which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in His own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore to protect them from harm. Christ saw children as demonstrating a full and intimate relationship with God. He gave them status, time and respect.

Because redemption and the possibility of forgiveness are so central to the Gospel, the Church is not only well-equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders but is also particularly challenged by them. Our congregations can be a refuge for those who have perpetrated abuse but are seeking help in maintaining a non-abusive way of life. Other abusers may see church membership as an opportunity to be close to children in order to continue

their abusive patterns of behaviour. Experience shows that whether penitent or not, abusers always need support in taking responsibility for their own actions and in stopping their abusive behaviour, and of course children need protecting against them. The genuine penitent will accept the need for careful arrangements for their return to church fellowship. This is in line with the Church's realistic understanding of sin and its effects.

A Christian approach to child protection will therefore ask both individuals and communities to create a safe environment for children, to act promptly on any complaints made, to care for those who have been abused in the past, and to minister appropriately to those who have abused. The Church must take seriously both human propensities to evil but also the God-given resources of goodness.

1.3.3 The Child Protection Policy Statement of the Church of England

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people, both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

1.3.4 Context

Child protection and the abuse of children can only be considered in the context of the wider role of the family in society and the relationship between family, communities and the state. The interaction between these is never static. The last 40 years, in particular, have seen major changes in the structure of families, and this process has involved debate about the care and nurture of tomorrow's adult population and a belief in the rights of children to be protected as they grow. The health of a society can be judged by its care and concern for its most vulnerable members.

It was from this background and in response to the publication of *Safe from Harm* by the Home Office in 1993 that the House of Bishops produced its first policy document in 1995. This document was amended in 1999.

This current rewriting draws on the experiences of parishes and dioceses since the publication of the first document, and integrates those experiences with changes in the law and developments in good practice.

1.3.5 Responsibilities of the Church of England

The Church of England, within its national institutions and within dioceses, has an obligation to support parishes and those working with children and young people in exercising their primary responsibility for those entrusted to them. There is a necessity:

- To be involved with Parliament, government departments, the voluntary sector and ecumenical partners in the continuing debate about child abuse.
- To keep abreast of new research and initiatives, including information about how abusers of children operate.
- To ensure that the national Church institutions follow good practice procedures for recruitment of staff.
- To modify institutional practices, in the light of research, putting in place appropriate systems of accountability and supervision at all levels of the Church's life, and ensuring that disciplinary and employment procedures are robust enough to manage risk.
- To listen to those who have been abused to learn how to improve practice.

- To ensure that all licensed ministers are carefully selected and trained, and that their training equips them for the responsibilities of ministry in this area amongst others.
- To ensure the continuing development of procedures and guidance on good practice, which are the main ways that those who are in direct contact with children and young people are properly equipped to undertake their responsibilities.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that those with responsibilities towards children can undertake their tasks confidently and without feeling unduly vulnerable to unfounded allegations.

It is important to recognize that it is people who protect, and not only procedures. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in the Church by:

- Raising awareness of the issues involved in protecting children in the Church.
- Addressing the needs of our children in all their cultural, spiritual, intellectual, racial and physical diversity.
- Responding to the needs of children and adults who have been abused.
- Supporting and training those who work with children, encouraging them to work together to follow good practice.
- Caring appropriately for those in the church community who have abused children.

The Church is probably unique in its ministry to both those who have been abused and those who have abused. It is within this tension that policy, procedures and good practice must be made to work. The Church seeks not simply to keep the law in regard to Child Protection, but to foster and promote best practice as part of its work for and witness to God's kingdom. Therefore:

- The Church of England fully endorses the principle, enshrined in the Children Act 1989, that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- The Church recognizes that it is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, respect, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who come into contact with children within the Church need to operate within a carefully thought out framework of policy, procedures and good practice which will ensure that children are safeguarded and nurtured within a culture of informed vigilance.
- Clergy and laity need to have an awareness of their use of authority and power, and never betray the trust that is given them.
- Clergy and laity in the Church should seek to maintain the highest standards of conduct in all worship, pastoral, educational, and recreational situations.
- The Church will take allegations of abuse seriously, fully co-operating with the local authority area child protection committees in any matter concerning the welfare of children and young people. It acknowledges the prime responsibility of statutory agencies to investigate any significant harm to a child. The Church will never itself investigate incidents of suspected child abuse.
- The Church will work with the statutory agencies to manage the presence in congregations of those who have been convicted of offences against children, including those who are on the Sex Offenders Register.
- The Church of England will seek to work with other Christian and faith traditions to promote the welfare and safety of children and young people.

- For the purpose of the Policy and procedures in this document, a child is anyone under the age of eighteen years. All those who work with or are in regular contact with such children must comply with this policy.
- All those working with or in direct and regular contact with children, in a paid or unpaid capacity, will be carefully recruited and their backgrounds checked at the appropriate level through the Criminal Records Bureau. These checks will also be carried out on those supervising people working with children and on those whose representational ministry, office or status gives them the opportunity or the expectation for regular or unsupervised contact with children.

1.3.6 Responsibilities of the House of Bishops

The House of Bishops will:

- Be responsible for this policy for the protection of children and young people in the Church of England and for future revisions.
- Approve such procedures as are appropriate to ensure proper consistency in best practice.
- Appoint a bishop with lead responsibility for child protection.
- Work with the child protection adviser for the Church of England to co-ordinate a Church-wide strategy.

1.3.7 Responsibilities of the Diocese¹

Each diocese should:

- Adopt the House of Bishops' Policy on Child Protection together with any additional diocesan procedures and good practice guidelines which shall be endorsed by the diocesan synod.
- Provide a structure to manage child protection in the diocese.
- Appoint a suitably qualified diocesan child protection adviser, directly accountable to the diocesan bishop, and provide appropriate financial, organizational and management support.
- Include the monitoring of child protection in parishes as part of the archdeacons' responsibilities.
- Provide access to the Criminal Records Bureau for parishes, the cathedral, the bishop's office and the diocesan office for those beneficed and licensed clergy, paid workers and volunteers who need to obtain disclosures. (see Section 11)
- Provide access to a risk assessment service so that the bishop or others can evaluate and manage any risk posed by individuals or activities within the church.
- Provide training and support on child protection matters to parishes, the cathedral, diocesan organizations including religious communities and those who hold the bishop's licence.
- 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.

The Diocese of Birmingham is implementing 1.2.6 above.

¹ The term 'diocese' is used to cover various legal and authority structures within its geographical area. The diocesan bishop will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate people in the diocese take responsibility for the various child protection tasks.

1.3.8 Responsibilities of the Parish²

Each parish should:

- Accept the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) to ensure the well-being of children and young people in the church community.
- Adopt and implement a child protection policy and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishops' Policy on Child Protection, but informed by additional diocesan procedures and recommended good practice, whilst being responsive to local parish requirements. (see Section 11 of this Policy)
- Appoint a co-ordinator to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. (see Section 7.5 of this Policy) The co-ordinator must ensure that any concerns about a child or the behaviour of an adult are appropriately reported, both to the statutory agencies and to the diocesan child protection adviser. Ideally this co-ordinator should be someone without other pastoral responsibility for children in the parish.

In the Diocese of Birmingham it is proposed that a Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator be appointed – see section 7.5 of this Policy.

- Appoint a person, who may be different from the co-ordinator, to be a children's advocate; this should be someone whom children know they could talk to about any problems, if they so wish (see section 7.6 of this Policy).
- Display the Childline telephone number.
- Ensure that all those authorized to work with children and young people or in a position of authority are appropriately appointed, trained and supported, and provide all authorized personnel with a copy of the parish child protection policy, procedures and good practice guidelines. (see Section 9 of this Policy)
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities to ensure their full integration and protection within the church community.
- Create a culture of informed vigilance which takes children seriously.
- Ensure that appropriate pastoral care is available for those adults who have disclosed that they have been abused as children.
- Provide, as appropriate, support for all parents and families in the congregation, being aware particularly of parents whose children have suffered abuse.
- Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored. (see Section 5)
- Ensure that appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place.
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish. (see Section 9)
- Review the implementation of the child protection policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually.

² The term 'parish' is used to denote the PCC and the incumbent who are together responsible for ensuring that the child protection policy is implemented. Particular parishes may wish to use the benefice, group or team as the relevant body for practical reasons. This section should be deemed to include the cathedral of the diocese and other diocesan organizations, including religious communities.

- Rural parishes or parishes held in plurality may wish to join together to implement the policy and procedures. It should be noted, however, that people working in isolated situations can be vulnerable, and care should be taken to implement the policy in full.
- Local ecumenical projects should agree which denomination's child protection policy to follow, and this decision should be ratified by the bishop and other appropriate church leaders.