

Diocese of Gloucester

**Working with Children
and
Young People**

**Advice on the Diocese of Gloucester Policy
for working with children and young people
and on the Home Office Code of Practice
"Safe from Harm" (Sept 1993)**

According to the Children Act (1989) a child is a person under 18 years of age for most purposes

Updated September 2006

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The Diocesan Policy on Working with Children and Young People

1. Scripture teaches that all people are special because they are made in the image of God. This is therefore true for children and young people, who should be respected and protected. Jesus warned that those who exploited or abused children deserved profound condemnation. Within the Kingdom of God, children matter in their own right and are to be taken seriously.
2. The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who work for the Church in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility.
3. The highest standards should be maintained therefore in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances. The exploitation of any relationships for any purpose will not be tolerated.
4. The Diocese of Gloucester accepts the principle of the "Children Act 1989" that the welfare of the child is paramount, and will follow the Home Office Code of Practice: "Safe from Harm".
5. If allegations of abuse are made then the Diocese of Gloucester will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations of child abuse. It will not conduct investigations on its own.
6. It will be standard practice in the Diocese of Gloucester to require completion of a common declaration form in accordance with guidelines of the Children Act 1989, from the following categories of people prior to selection or appointment:
 - ▶ all candidates for ordained ministry and accredited lay ministry
 - ▶ all clergy and accredited lay ministers moving into and within the diocese
 - ▶ employees of the Diocesan Board of Finance who are likely to have opportunities for contact with children and young people
 - ▶ volunteers who support the work of the Diocesan

Advisory Boards and Committees on a regular basis

7. It will be required that all PCCs will discuss this policy, in order to formulate a PCC policy relevant to their own situation.

*Accepted by Gloucester Diocesan Synod
4 November 1995*

The Diocese of Gloucester Policy for Registration with the CRB

This is a part of the diocese's Child Protection Policy

1. The Diocese of Gloucester will seek to ensure that each paid post or volunteer position for which it is asked to act in the *disclosure* process is assessed for the appropriateness of a CRB *disclosure*, That any advertisement or other indication of an employment or volunteering opportunity will indicate the level of *disclosure* that will be sought, and that the conditional nature of any offer of employment or volunteering role until the receipt of satisfactory *disclosure* information is clearly indicated.
2. The Diocese of Gloucester will seek to ensure that a candidate for a paid post or volunteer position for which it acts is asked in writing to list any convictions or other or other disqualifying behaviour that might be revealed in the *disclosure* process in order to assist the recruitment decision process and in the knowledge that it will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. Also, that the candidate should be invited to submit any conviction or related information in writing prior to interview in an envelope clearly marked 'Private and Confidential' which should be handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process.

3. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to encouraging the re-submission of applications for *disclosure* in respect of all paid employees and volunteers for whom this is appropriate, every 3 years as part of its ongoing strategy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
4. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to the safe storage and disposal of *disclosure* information in line with such guidance as may from time to time be provided by the Criminal Records Bureau.
5. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to the fair and sensitive use of *disclosure* information and will take every step to ensure that it, and those, for whom it acts as Umbrella Body, seek to achieve and maintain models of best practice. Where an applicant feels that *disclosure* information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeal process will be available, details of which can be obtained in writing from the Bishop's Officer for Child Protection.
6. The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to the recognition of each individual's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications and will take every step to ensure that these are given appropriate weight and consideration in the appointment or recruitment process where it acts as Umbrella Body for an associated *disclosure*.

Why do we need a policy on working with children and young people?

The aim of this policy is to affirm and support what is already good practice. It is clearly recognised that the whole church has a responsibility to aim for the highest possible standards of child care and to protect children from harm.

Most work with children rightly takes place in the parishes. We believe it is therefore a parish responsibility to

- (i) maintain this high standard and
- (ii) support those who work with children and in whom children and parents place their trust.

To support this, the Diocese of Gloucester has adopted a clear policy on working with children and young people (November 1995). This is to protect the children and the adults working with them.

All PCCs are required to discuss this policy in order to formulate their own policy relevant to their particular situation. If this is not the case and there is current work with children and young people being undertaken under the authority of the PCC, then the situation should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

“Safe from Harm” (1993) is a Code of Practice giving 13 guidelines for the protection of children and young people. It also protects all those who work with them from unfounded accusations or from behaving in a way that may be well intentioned but inadvisable. The Code supports and reinforces existing legislation such as The Children’s Act (1989).

It would be good to feel that children in church-led activities are always safe. However, child abusers can be found in many situations and the church is not excluded. The church, as do other voluntary organisations, seeks to take appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of all ages to the best of its ability.

The complete list of Safe from Harm guidelines can be found at the back of this booklet.

The following information sets out what these guidelines mean for your church and for yourself.

Working with Children and Young People

1. The PCC accepts the Diocesan Policy on Working with Children and Young People.
2. The PCC seeks to provide a caring, warm and consistent atmosphere and environment in which children and young people can develop and grow, and in which they can learn in safety. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and with equal concern.
3. Therefore the PCC:
 - recognises the following areas of work with children and young people in _____ (*name of parish and then a list of current children's work*)
 - will ensure that everyone involved in the care of children and young people is personally made aware of the Diocesan Policy and the PCC Policy/
 - will ensure everyone involved in the care of children and young people (*existing and future/from the date the PCC policy accepted*) will be interviewed by the parish priest or (other) an asked to complete the **disclosure form** which will be checked by a Diocesan Counter-signatory. (It will be strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law will be seen only by the above named person or those acting on the Bishop's behalf). The completed forms will be held in Church Records.
 - will ensure everyone involved in this work is clear of the nature of the work they have agreed to do and the name of the person to whom they are responsible.
 - will ensure *the parish priest/named person* will be responsible on the PCC's behalf for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy.
 - will ensure that training opportunities are encourage (*elaborate if you wish*).
 - will ensure that at least two adults will be present with any group of children or young people.

4. The PCC will be informed of the names of those who work with children and young people and will be kept notified of any changes.
 5. The PCC nominated _____ to be the Nominated Person to whom all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be reported immediately.
 6. The PCC will make adequate provision for insurance cover.
 7. A copy of this policy will be made available to members of the church and to parents/guardians.
 8. This policy will be reviewed *annually/at the first PCC meeting after the AGM/other* and a report will be on the agenda at the AGM.
-

Please Note:

- ∪ All information on workers with children and young people should be kept locked away safely and confidentially.
- ∪ All records must be kept indefinitely.
- ∪ PCCs are responsible for an annual review of the Child Protection Policy
- ∪ Each parish should have a nominated person for Child Protection
- ∪ It should be clear who supervises work with children and young people and what responsibilities he or she holds.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY FOR THOSE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

WHEN IS INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL?

The Children's Legal Centre document says 'it is generally accepted that a duty of confidence arises where confidential information comes to the knowledge of a person (the confidant), in circumstances where that person has notice, or has agreed, that the information is confidential'.

In a youth work setting circumstances should include if the young person makes any attempt to restrict the environment or the audience. For example, asks to talk in private, moves you away from others before talking, talks in a whisper, and watches the whereabouts of others.

A confidence may even seem trivial, but it does not mean it should be treated with any less discretion. It is not for youth workers to judge what personal information is.

HOW DO I KNOW IF INFORMATION SHOULD BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL?

There are three principles to be applied in assessing whether information given is to be treated as confidential;

- a) The information must be confidential. Once the information is in the public domain and is generally accessible to others, it is no longer confidential.
- b) The information must not be useless or trivial.
- c) The information must have been given in circumstances where the confidant must reasonably have understood that what was said was confidential'.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL ASPECTS?

The concept of a 'confidential relationship' is recognised by law. Certain professions have an obligation of confidentiality, by the nature of the relationship that exists between the worker and the client. There can be little doubt that the youth worker is included in this group. A young person therefore has the right to have their confidence respected, and the youth worker has an obligation to maintain and respect that right.

There exist exceptional circumstances where confidentiality cannot be maintained, and a young person's wishes must be overridden, defined as being where:

- The young person is in a life threatening situation (including self harm)
- Inaction might place them or someone else in a life threatening situation
- If a young person is threatened by an abuser
- Where the rights of other young people who have not been consulted would be infringed
- Where someone else could be harmed

However, they do not include disclosure about a young person's

- Drug use
- Illegal activity
- Sexual activity

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE TO DISCLOSE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION?

When a decision is taken to disclose confidential information the following procedure must be followed:

Inform Senior Leader (eg Line Manager, Parish Priest, Diocesan Child Protection Officer). This can be done directly or the youth worker can inform their immediate line manager, who will then pass the information on. Speed is of essence, especially in cases where exceptional circumstances apply. There is an emergency call out system, this should be used.

An action plan following guidelines and attached flow chat will be agreed with the Senior Leader which could include an agreement as to who informs Social Services. In these circumstances Youth workers have a statutory duty to inform Social Services of 'suspected or identified abuse', whether sexual or physical, which would include information disclosed about another young person.

Whenever possible this should be done with permission of the young person, who may need a lot of in depth support from the youth worker to be able to make this decision. However, with or without the permission of the young person involved, the information must be passed on to Social Services.

Confidential 'file notes' need to record all actions taken.

**A Parish Policy Statement when using the facility
of the Diocesan Umbrella Body**

1. The Parish of will ensure that each paid post or volunteer position is assessed for the appropriateness of a CRB *disclosure*, that any advertisement or other indication of a paid post or volunteer position will indicate the level of *disclosure* to be sought, and that any offer of a paid post or volunteer position will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory *disclosure* information.
2. The Parish of will request candidates for a paid post or volunteer position to submit in writing any convictions or other disqualifying behaviour that might be revealed in the *disclosure* process in order to assist the recruitment decision process. This information will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. It should be submitted in an envelope clearly marked 'Private and Confidential' and handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process.
3. The Parish of is committed to encouraging the re-submission of applications for *disclosure* in respect of all paid employees and volunteers for whom this is appropriate, every 3 years as part of its ongoing strategy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
4. The Parish of is committed to the fair and sensitive use of *disclosure* information, and where an applicant feels that this has not happened an appeal process will be available, details of which can be obtained in writing from the Bishop's Officer for Child Protection.

Guidelines in full from *Safe from Harm*

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur
3. Introduce a system whereby children may appeal to an independent person
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid or voluntary work with children
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction(s) for criminal offences against children
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period
11. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse

USING THE GUIDELINES

Guideline One

Policy Statement

In July 1995 the House of Bishops published a "Policy on Child Abuse". This was followed in November 1995 by the Diocese of Gloucester's "Policy on Working with Children and Young People". This policy can be found at the front of this booklet.

The Diocesan policy requires all PCCs to discuss the policy in order to formulate a PCC policy relevant to their own situation.

The policy should show agreed aims and policy statements so that everyone is clear about what they are trying to achieve.

The first guideline asks that this statement of policy should be brought to the notice of all existing and new workers with children and young people.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure ALL are aware of the PCC's policy which should show clearly agreed aims and policy statements

Guideline Two

**Plan work in order to
minimise situations where
abuse may occur**

Potential abusive situations can be avoided by being aware of possible opportunities.

The parish policy should show the potential situations which are relevant to that parish's situation.

The following are areas to be considered, but it is up to the individual PCC to devise its own guidelines.

Therefore consider:-

1. Opportunities for adults to supervise each other. So far as possible, arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of activity being observed. Groups may need to meet in one large room or in adjoining rooms with the door left open. At least two adults should be present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. In many situations one should be female. (e.g. young children or girls being present).
2. The situation of toilet facilities e.g. avoid the situation where an adult takes a single child to the toilet away from the rest of the group. If this is unavoidable, inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose.
3. The policy for meeting a child/young person e.g. Ensure that no arrangement is made to meet a child or young person off church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
4. Arrangements for taking children on outings. Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults.
5. Arrangements for transporting children. Where children or young people have to be transported by car or minibus, try to arrange to have more than one of them in the vehicle.
6. Access to the premises e.g. Consider the path to and from your premises. For example, avoid expecting children or young people to walk along a dark, unsupervised path.
7. Who can have access to the groups e.g. someone unknown to the group organisers should not have unsupervised access to children or young people.
8. Discipline procedures. It should be made clear that no physical punishment is allowed.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Look at the above in the light of your own situation.

Add to this if you wish

Guideline Three

**Giving children a chance
to talk with an independent person**

This could be to

- Childline 0800 1111
- NSPCC 0800 800500

Information for telephone contact should be displayed where children and young people can easily see it (e.g. Want someone to talk to? Ring ...)

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure you are aware of the name of a suitable person whom a child or young person can contact and that such information is displayed

Guideline Four

**Apply agreed procedures to
all paid staff and volunteers**

If agreed procedures are in place they may act as a deterrent to a would be abuser. The PCC policy should apply to ALL those in close contact with children and young people.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Be aware of all who may come into contact with children and make sure they are all aware of the PCC policy

Guideline Five

**Clear roles given to all paid
staff and volunteers**

Paid workers, employed by the church, must have job descriptions clearly setting out their work and responsibilities. Volunteers should also have a clear idea of what is expected of them.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make clear in a brief, written statement, what is expected and to whom individuals are responsible

Guideline Six

**Supervision as a means of
protecting children**

Regular opportunities should be given for workers to meet together with a named supervisor/consultant to

- review and plan work
- share experiences
- receive training
- talk about relationships with the children and young people

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure such opportunities are available

Guideline Seven

**Treat all would be paid staff
and volunteers as job applicants**

It is recommended that everyone wishing to work with children and young people in the church community should be asked to fill in an approved form. This would include details of name, address, date of birth, previous address and church if moved in last twelve months, details of previous related experience and a contact name for a reference (see sample form at the end of this booklet)

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Consider this even for those who are already working with children and young people

Guideline Eight **Taking up references**

It is recommended that all references are taken up. If the applicant has not been known for at least two years, then these references **MUST** be in writing. Equal opportunities must be taken into consideration. Confidentiality should be maintained.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure references are given and ARE followed up

Guideline Nine **Interviews**

An extended conversation is recommended, based on information given in the written application, e.g.

- previous work in the church
- personal relationship with children (family baby sitting etc)
- work with voluntary organisations
- previous experience of working with children
- reasons for being interested in working with children and young people in the church

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure an interview, formal or informal, is given

Guideline Ten **Convictions for criminal offences against children**

All situations which involve work with children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions must be declared. References are very important in this. Such information will be kept strictly confidential.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure the application form includes a declaration. Follow up if necessary, through the Diocese. Make sure all such information is kept confidential and securely locked away

Guideline Eleven

Probationary Period

This probationary period would be between three months and a year. This should coincide with a period of induction and training with regular supervision meetings and, at the end, a review meeting.

Short-term volunteers should be supervised as if undertaking a probationary period.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make available resources for such supervision and training

Guideline Twelve

How to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse

See pages 16 - 20

**Abuse: What to look for
What to do**

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Make sure everyone working with children and young people is given a copy of this and understands it

Guideline Thirteen

Training

It is recommended that those agreeing to work with children and young people and being accepted for such work should undertake some form of appropriate training.

This can be at parish, Deanery or Diocesan level.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN:

Be aware of training opportunities and give encouragement and, where necessary, financial backing to training initiatives

GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATED PERSON

The reason for having a nominated person in each parish is to ensure that a lay person shares with the parish priest the responsibility for child protection. It is not intended that it should be an arduous or very time consuming appointment. He or she will be a person to whom the children's and youth leaders may turn for support and advice, particularly if they have concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The nominated person in each parish :

- * should be familiar with the contents of the booklets and is jointly responsible with the parish priest for the implementation of these guidelines.
- * is jointly responsible with the parish priest for the protection of children who come into the care of the church.
- * should take an interest in the work of his/her church with children and young people so that he/she knows the children and youth leaders and is familiar with the type of activities undertaken by children's and youth groups.
- * should be involved with the careful selection and appointment of children's and youth leaders and should be one of the interviewers of prospective volunteers or paid workers.
- * should ensure that the names of volunteers are recorded in the PCC Minutes.
- * should be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship on the part of any church worker with a child or young person.
- * should, in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from one of the Diocesan Advisers and when it is necessary to inform The Safeguarding Children Service immediately.

There will be training days in child protection available for all nominated persons and clergy.

GENERAL

- Be known and especially to those who are working with children
- Understand, and question, how church activities can ensure that children are best protected
- Develop their activities, with the PCC, to monitor good practice and suggest better ways of doing things
- Ensure Children's Workers know who to talk to if the Nominated Person is not available
- Seek appropriate advice and keep up to date on best practice
- You may phone Bishop's Officers to explore answers to any questions that you have
- You need to be clear about the Insurance cover for the Church, so that appropriate and proper action can be made.

STATEMENT

- Child Protection is working in the "grey" world and the Nominated Person is not working in a situation where the answers are clear cut.

ALLEGATIONS

- You need know the appropriate telephone numbers:

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours)
01242 261112 (if no reply 01242 521321)

The Safeguarding Children Service Child Protection Unit
01452 425144
(office hours 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.)

Bishop of Gloucester
01452 524598

The Bishop's Officer for Child Protection is:
Reverend Canon Adrian Slade
01242 253162

- If an allegation is made then the Nominated Person must immediately get in touch with one of the investigating agencies (The Safeguarding Children Service or Police)
- Be clear of difference between an allegation and a suspicion or concern. (The Safeguarding Children Service can be phoned to give advice about a

suspicion or concern, so that the Nominated Person can be clear about the way forward)

- If allegation is made against an authorised minister, then the Nominated Person should let Bishop David know after they have spoken to The Safeguarding Children Service of the Police
- A confidential record must be kept of any accusation, and this will include a record of phone calls, letters and conversations about the allegation
- The Bishop's Officer (01242 253162) and/or CCPA. (01322 667207) will give advice

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

From April 2002 it will be possible to check children's workers, youth workers and relevant church leaders against police, DoH and DfEE records, using the Criminal Record Bureau's 'one-stop' disclosure service for England and Wales. Access has to be through a 'registered' body and the Diocese of Gloucester has registered.

The CRB will provide Wider access to checks and it will allow us to have a more stringent level of checks, including Police information

Any person who, whilst in the course of their duties, are in positions which involves regular contact with children or vulnerable adults should be checked.

For most posts in the Diocese and Parish, people working with children and vulnerable adults will require an *enhanced disclosure*, some post could be covered by a *standard disclosure*, which gives a lower level of information.

This will provide information on: –

- Spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings held at a national and local level
- May also include relevant non-conviction information held by local Police Forces.

Application is made by individual, and countersigned by registered body. *Disclosure* sent to individual and copy to the registered body

**Two examples of the notification
of the outcome of a *disclosure***

1) ***disclosure* Assessment Outcome**

Date.....

For the attention of:-(*being the person responsible for making the appointment*)

.....(*name of applicant*), having applied for the post/volunteer position (*delete*)of.....has submitted an application for a ***Standard disclosure/Enhanced disclosure*** (*delete*) to the Criminal Records Bureau .

The CRB has now supplied the Diocese of Gloucester, in its capacity as Umbrella Body, with the resulting ***disclosure***. On the basis of the information contained there is nothing to hinder the appointing body from completing the recruitment process.

Recipients of this document are reminded that the information contained in a ***disclosure*** is limited to a statement of fact up to and including the date on which it was issued, subject to any error or omission in the sources of information at the disposal of the Criminal Records Bureau.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Slade

The Diocese of Gloucester
38 Sydenham Villas Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 6DZ

2) **disclosure Assessment Outcome**

Date.....

For the attention of:-(being the person responsible for making the appointment)

.....(name of applicant), having applied for the post/volunteer position (delete) of.....has submitted an application for a **Standard disclosure/Enhanced disclosure** (delete) to the Criminal Records Bureau.

The CRB has now supplied the Diocese of Gloucester, in its capacity as Umbrella Body, with the resulting **disclosure**. On the basis of the information contained we advise that further thought be given to the nature of this appointment and the person being considered. It is possible that the matter can be progressed with appropriate counselling and support, or with certain conditions in place, however this is likely to depend on the willingness of all concerned to work constructively towards such an outcome. Since this decision is likely to have significant pastoral consequences beyond the post or volunteer in question please do not hesitate to ask for advice or support in taking this forward.

Recipients of this document are reminded that the information contained in a **disclosure** is limited to a statement of fact up to and including the date on which it was issued, subject to any error or omission in the sources of information at the disposal of the Criminal Records Bureau.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Slade

The Diocese of Gloucester
38 Sydenham Villas Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL52 6DZ

Risk Assessment

The suitability for employment of a person with a criminal record will vary depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions or other disqualifying behaviour. Risk assessment is not an exact science. Even employing people after the normal recruitment processes of assessing information provided on an application form and personal interview is not risk free.

Assessing an applicant's criminal record should be done in relation to the tasks he or she will be required to perform and such related circumstances as the level of support, supervision and monitoring.

The two tables are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to provide a systematic or professional risk-assessment strategy. Risk assessment in this difficult area should not be undertaken without the support and advice of those professionally qualified and experienced in this field. They are merely a guide to the sorts of issues that are at stake.

The CRB is currently working with NACRO to devise a risk assessment model that will be generally recognised as a model of best practice in this field. When this is ready it will be made available to all recipients of these notes.

TABLE A

Variables	Nil	Low	Medium	High
One-to-one contact with children				
One-to-one contact with vulnerable adults				
Presence of other adults in workplace				
Presence of supervision/support in situ				
Risk from child-related previous convictions				
Risk from non child-related previous convictions				
Risk from other disqualifying behaviour				
Other risk factors in distant past				
Other risk factors in recent past				

TABLE B

Variables	Nil	Low	Medium	High
Level of remorse in distant past				
Level of remorse in recent past				
Stability of present environment of home & community				
Stability and support provided by family & friends				
Motivation to re-build life in distant past				
Motivation to re-build life in present				
Stability of recently employment pattern				
Stability and support provided by faith community				

Appeals and Complaints Procedure

Diocese of Gloucester

Name of Parish

Every effort is made to ensure that all recruitment decisions involving *disclosure* information are made sensitively and fairly. Should an applicant for a paid post or volunteer position feel that this has not happened in their case the matter can be referred to the Bishop’s Officer for Child Protection, who will instigate an independent assessment of the issues in question.

The applicant should submit the appeal or complaint in writing, stating their name and address, the nature of the complaint or appeal, the date of the *disclosure* document concerned, the identity of the person or appointing body responsible for making the appointment to the paid post or volunteer position, and any other relevant information.

Signed(on behalf of the appointing body)Date

Note that the CRB guidance on a reasonable time frame for such complaints and appeals to be registered in six months.

GUIDELINES ON TOUCHING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the workers.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when they need medical attention or their own safety.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact and should express concerns to the designated person.
- Touch should not be prolonged.
- Corporal punishment in any form should not be used.

Also

- Clear guidelines should be given to workers about listening to what children say.
- Professional help should be sought if any disclosure of abuse is made.

Discipline – What can we do?

1) **Team Agreement**

The leadership team should be in agreement as to the standard of behaviour allowed in the group

2) **The Rules**

The young people in the group must be given the boundaries of behaviour that are acceptable

3) **Supervision**

Always ensure adequate supervision of activities by leaders. Have other leaders helping

4) **Control**

If necessary stop all activities until order is restored

5) **Consistency**

Apply all rules fairly and consistently

6) **Don't**

Shout, lose your temper or strike a child

Say what you mean and mean what you say!

Transporting Children

Our advice on transporting children is as follows:

- Only those who have gone through the church/organisation recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.
- All drivers should have read the child protection policy of the church/organisation and agree to abide by this.
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership.
- Seat belts should be worn, the driver should have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited till other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk and then arrange to meet with the child/young person at a location where there can be other adults around. (Remember a child/young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- Having checked drivers (application form, interview, references etc.) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place as to the most suitable child to be dropped off last and plan routes accordingly. (We have not suggested two workers in a car as this itself does not guarantee protection for a child – there have been incidents where workers have acted together and two adults in a car with one child could be less of a protection).
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- Obviously look at instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a 'crush' on a driver etc., and arrange for someone else to transport the child/young person.

Arrangements when using mini buses

In addition to the above, consider the following:

- Ensure full compliance with mini bus regulations.
- Ensure that you have adequate supervision. As well as a driver, another responsible adult sitting with the children/young people will be needed.
- Ensure the responsible adult has also undergone appropriate recruitment and selection in accordance with the church/organisation's procedures.

SUPERVISION

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to children for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of adults, both general and on specific activities
- Requirements of the organisation/local to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First Aid cover

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe, as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visit in normal circumstances, might be:

1 adult for every 6 children.

The above is an example only. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one adult in charge.

In addition to the adult in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

FIRST AID

It is vitally important to know any medical information about children and young people in your group, and to having, where possible, an appropriate person with responsibility for First Aid in your organisation.

What level of qualification is needed?

The level of First Aid expertise required in your work is dependent on the group and/or organisation you are working for. Even where there is no legal requirement for formal training, it is a useful skill for any person to possess. Churches and youth groups should therefore seriously consider having someone equipped to carry out basic First Aid.

It goes without saying that formal First Aid training must be provided by a recognised organisation and in order to obtain recognised status as a First Aider, training must be undertaken on a regular basis. This ensures that up to date information regarding changes in medicine and practice are taken on board. Refresher training usually needs to be done every three years.

Training Organisations

Organisations such as the St. John Ambulance Brigade, St. Andrew's Ambulance Corps or the British Red Cross are the most well know organisations for providing a recognised qualification in First Aid.

An appointed person is someone who oversees First Aid requirements and supervises any incident that arises.

You should therefore:

- Ensure that all premises used by children have a properly equipped First Aid Kit.
- The First Aid Kit should be clearly located and recognisable. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container and a designated worker should regularly check the contents. A white cross on a green background must identify all First Aid containers.
- Make sure that an accident book is available, properly used and that any notifiable incidents (under H&S regulations) are recorded and dealt with.
- Ensure information regarding any trained first aiders is readily accessible.
- Make sure everyone is aware who is responsible for First Aid.
- Provide a sign giving the nearest available telephone for emergency calls.

You should be aware that supporting children and young people with medical needs to enable them to fully participate in events and activities. Is part of meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Action 1995.

The legal implications of treatment

In the UK there is generally no legal obligation on an individual to assist a person requiring first aid, providing they were not the cause of the casualty requiring treatment.

Where children and young people are being cared for by children's/youth workers they should exercise a duty of care towards them.

If a youth worker provides first aid to a young person, can the young person make a claim for damages if something goes wrong?

In general there are two ways in which the risk of personal liability can be minimised. The first is through good practice and the second is by taking out adequate indemnity insurance.

A member of the general public with no specific first aid training will only be considered negligent if he performs an act that a reasonable and prudent person in his position would not have done in the same situation, or omits to do something that a reasonable person would have done.

The actions of a worker who is trained in first aid would be judged on the individual circumstances. They could only be held liable if the standard of care fell below that to which a reasonably competent person with the same level of qualification and experience has.

It follows therefore that provided the worker who is first aid trained administers first aid in accordance with current guidelines; it is unlikely that a successful claim could be brought. Liability is only likely to arise if first aid is carried out incorrectly and with disregard to accepted practice and guidelines.

As children's workers undertake a general duty of care towards children and young people it would be advisable to check any insurance cover provided by the church/organisation in relation to indemnity.

Organisations and training resources

St. John Ambulance

Web site: <http://www.sja.org.uk/>

British Red Cross

9 Grosvenor Crescent

London SW1X 7EJ

Web site: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/>

Responding to Children

Sometimes children or young people will want to talk about abuse. Your main role is to **listen**.

Keep in mind the following points:

General Points

- show acceptance of what a child says, however unlikely it may seem
- keep calm
- look at the child directly
- be honest
- reflect back what the child says
- don't promise confidentiality – let the child know you will need to tell someone else and who that person will be
- remember that even when a child has broken a rule, he or she is not to blame for the abuse
- be aware the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- **never** push for information

Helpful things you may say

- *I believe you*
- *I am glad you have told me*
- *It's not your fault*
- *I will help you*

Things *not* to say or do

- *Why didn't you tell anyone before?*
- *I can't believe it!*
- *Are you sure this is true?*
- *Why? How? When? Who? Where?*
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as *'I am shocked, don't tell anyone else'*
- Never try to investigate yourself

Concluding

- Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell you
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Remember to keep information strictly on a **need to know** basis

Guidelines for Good Practice in the Care of Children in Out-of-School Schemes and Holiday Play-Schemes

Guidelines issued by Gloucestershire The Safeguarding Children Service (under the 1989 Children Act) are intended to ensure that children under the age of 8 are properly protected and that standards of care are safeguarded.

They show good practice for our work with all children, whether we need to register or not.

The following are the main recommendations which are worth any group taking into consideration for the protection of the children and of the leaders and helpers.

1. **Group Size and Staffing Ratios**

- not normally more than 30 children (under 8) and in small groups of not more than 10.
- 1 adult to 8 children – a higher ratio for trips out or for children with special needs
- the person in charge should be over 21 years

2. **Premises and Space Requirements**

- minimum of 25 square feet of clear play space per child
- one toilet and washbasin for every 10 children

3. **Safety, Health and Hygiene**

- equipment should meet relevant safety standards and be well maintained and in good condition
- careful attention should be paid to hygiene
- a general safety check should be made inside and out

4. **Records**

- keep records of children to include: name, address, age, date of birth, an emergency contact number, any relevant health problems, any special needs
- **it is important to know who is authorised to collect the child**
- attendance records should be kept (adults and children)
- note should be made of any medical problems occurring during the scheme and any accidents and first aid treatment

5. **Equal Opportunities**

- respect of each child as an individual without stereo-typing

- encourage positive behaviour. Staff, parents and children should be aware of what types of behaviour are considered unacceptable. A child should always be told why the behaviour is unacceptable
- physical punishment (including slapping, smacking or shaking) should not be used
- a child should not be frightened or humiliated

6. **Management**

- aims, objectives and principles upon which the scheme operates should be clearly defined and communicated to parents
- there should be a clear procedure for evacuation in case of fire or other emergency
- there should be a procedure for dealing with accidents
- at least one person should have knowledge of and responsibility for Health and Safety, First Aid, Child Protection and Legal Requirements

7. **Leaders and Helpers**

- it is vital that those working with children are safe to do so. If you have to register the regulations regarding staffing are very strict

8. **Publications**

The 1989 Children Act

For helpful publications on setting up clubs with guidelines for good practice contact:

4Children
City Reach
Greenwich View Place
London
E14 9NN
TeL: 020 7512 2112
Fax: 020 7512 2100
email: info@4children.org.uk

**Informing FACS
(Families and Children's Information Services)
about your Children's Workshop or Holiday Club**

**You should phone FACS about any workshop or holiday club that includes
children under 8 years of age and lasts for 2 hours or more**

Telephone: 01452 336100

The relevant Application Form will then be sent to you and you should return it to:

FACS
FREEPOST
SWC 4298
Gloucester
GL1 2ZZ

FACS need to know the following information

- the name of the church/group organising the event
- the dates of the scheme
- the hours you are *responsible* for the children
- the venue
- the approximate number of children expected
- the age-range of the children
- the number of staff aged 16 and over
- the contact name

WORKING WITH GROUPS OF CHILDREN

Be well prepared.....

try to have ideas 'up your sleeve' and be ready when the children arrive.

Be aware.....

try to notice and avoid situations before they start. A look can do wonders. So can a quiet word or simply saying 'No'. Diverting attention can nullify what they are doing so it doesn't get out of control. Giving responsibility can also help.

Be calm and stay objective.....

decide what is acceptable and what is not. Lay ground rules from the start and keep to them. Be firm, but matter of fact. Involve the child in making rules if you can. Don't be afraid to say 'No'. Think of ways to handle specific situations – decide what sanctions would be appropriate (e.g. restricting privileges). Have a signal for being quiet. Insist on quiet so that you can explain what you are doing. Mean what you say and be consistent.

Be fair, but firm.....

have an element of choice if children refuse to join in.

Be prepared to listen.....

be aware of children and their interests. Beware of misinterpreting behaviour or what they are saying.

Be yourself.....

but look critically at how you behave too. You are their example. Watch what you say and do. Try not to take remarks personally. Answer if you can – laugh if you can.

Be honest in answering questions

Build relationships.....

get to know each child and find out about their background if you can. Also build a relationship with the family – involve parents if there is a problem (sooner rather than later) and ask for their help adopting a professional stance. Don't be critical of the child or the parents – say something like 'He doesn't seem very happy at Sunday School at the moment. Is there any way in which we can help him?'

Have someone to help you.....

who can help diffuse situations whilst you are leading, perhaps by sitting with a child or taking them to one side to talk with them. Often disruptive children are seeking attention for some reason. Also try to share any problems with someone so you do not feel you are alone in having problems.

Have a male role model if possible

some children lack a father figure

Involve the children in ‘doing’

as much as possible. A busy and interested child is less likely to cause problems. Assess the suitability of activities for different children and different abilities. Check that it is not too easy/too difficult/too repetitious. Work at the children’s level. Many children have quite short attention spans and you may need to be ready to change an activity at short notice. Incorporate flexibility and surprise. Games can help. Programmes should always be adaptable.

Praise children.....

as much as possible. Give them a positive attitude.

See the child behind any wrong doing.....

see what might have led up to the bad behaviour. Is the child hurting in some way? Watch out for signs of abuse. Let children know that although their action is being punished, they are still valued and respected. Always let them know why they are being punished. *Also watch out for the quiet child and for the child who shows a change in their normal behaviour.*

Try not to stereotype children.....

give them a fresh start each time.

Have a structure to your meeting....

so that children have some idea of what to expect. This gives them a sense of security. However, once established, do not be afraid to break the routine sometimes. Similarly, building up rituals in worship can help children explore further into the unknown because they are firmly rooted in the known.

Try to avoid confrontational situations.....

diffuse situations wherever possible. It is better to speak quietly to a child alone than make a scene in front of others.

Avoid embarrassing children.....

or belittling them. Help them to work out for themselves what they did wrong and how they can change and also put right any hurt they caused. Support them in doing this.

Exclusion.....

if the worst happens you can say that you can no longer take responsibility for a child.

Remember.....

it is often the children who are misbehaving who are the ones who take on board all you say and do.

Pray!.....

and have others praying for you too.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

WORKING GUIDELINES AND FLOWCHART

This paper refers to all situations where personal or private information is shared, including those which may arise in a befriending relationship, prayer support, or in initial telephone calls/emails seeking advice. It also offers advice to those working in situations where issues of confidentiality relating to eating disorders or self harm may arise.

What does the law say about confidentiality?

Whatever your role, it is important that you know what your position is legally regarding issues of confidentiality – and this is any time when ‘confidential information comes to the knowledge of a person (the confidant) in circumstances where has notice or is held to have agreed that the information is confidential’. What this means is any time you *agree* to keep something confidential, or it might be *assumed* that you would (for example if someone asks to speak to you in private). Relationships such as that between a counsellor/pastoral carer and a client would certainly be covered by the constraints of confidentiality, and would any where you are undertaking one to one support of a young person or child. Greyer areas might be if someone talks to you about something private in an environment where theoretically other people could hear – perhaps at the end of a meeting, or if you are told information that is well known to friends of the person in question, say, but not to their parents.

Legally, confidentiality can be broken on certain grounds – if for example it involves a serious crime. One unusual situation is also if someone is to be forced to receive treatment under the mental health act (for example in-patient treatment for anorexia, or suicidal attempts) – where the Mental Health Act (1983) states that their nearest relative must be consulted. However, situations such as they are very rare.

No information, be that addresses, phone numbers, emails etc or personal details such as those relating to the individual’s mental or physical health, will be passed on to any external parties (ie those not within the main committee) without the permission of the person in question except in the following circumstances:

- If a child or minor may be at risk.
- If the individual in question may be themselves at risk of death or serious injury.
- If the individual is not able to give consent themselves.

In occasions where a request is made for prayer for further support, where possible this shall be achieved preserving the anonymity of the individual. Please note that even using initials may breach this requirement if it makes the individual potentially identifiable. Individuals who receive copies of prayer lists, or requests for prayer should be clearly informed that this information is strictly confidential.

Children, young people and confidentiality

In situations where confidentiality issues concern children and young people, further guidance is required. Working with this age-group, who are by definition at increased risk of both eating disorders and self-harm, may present situations where legal or ethical judgments regarding confidentiality are required. An example of this would be the question of whether or not it is right or acceptable to inform a child or young person’s parent/guardian if the child is struggling with one of these issues.

At what ages does a child become considered an adult?

A document released in 2003 to the NHS offers some up to date guidelines which answer this question¹. It states that young people aged 16, 17 or above are assumed to be as able as adults to consent to treatment – and therefore are entitled to the same confidentiality as adults. Children under the age of 16, however, can also be given the same rights as adults, as long as they can be

demonstrated to what is called 'Gillick competent'. This term dates back to a case in 1985 where a judge ruled that a young person under 16 had the legal capacity to consent for medical treatment (in this case contraception) without his/her parent's knowledge if they met certain criteria. These are that they were able to understand the advice they were being given, and its implications to their health, both long and short term as well as the other choices they had. Children who meet these criteria, according to the NHS guidelines, are also able to make decisions about the disclosure of information they have given in counselling (or similar) situations, when they do not want their parents to know. So basically, if the child or young person has the intelligence and understanding to appreciate the long and short term implications for their health, and what their options are, they can request that their parents are not informed.

So if I think they are able to think like an adult I can treat them as one?

In essence this is the case. However, two important other things MUST be considered.

The first is that it is expected that you will do all you can to try to persuade or enable the child to share the information with his/her parents. This is particularly important in situations such as self harm or eating disorders, where it is difficult to be sure just how much the child/young person is or is not aware of the risk to their health, and may also simply be too afraid of what will happen if their parents find out. It may well be that you are able to assist them in speaking with their parents, and also in what happens next.

The second vitally important point is that whilst the law does protect the child/young person's right to confidentiality, it does not protect them if they are refusing treatment for a condition which might be life threatening. In this situation what is called your 'duty of care' would require you to break confidentiality to make sure that those with parental responsibility (parent/guardian) were able to seek treatment. In this situation, if the child is under 16, the parents can then consent to treatment on their behalf, even in situations where normally the child would be judged as able to consent.

Whatever the situation, you need to be aware that potentially you could be asked to justify the actions you took. Therefore it is essential that you do consider very carefully what action to take.

So what if I do think the parents should be told? How can be sure it is ok (or right) to overrule this and break confidentiality?

Obviously there are two main challenges to anyone working with children or young people presented here. The first is how to determine whether or not a child is or is not 'Gillick competent'. Ultimately, proving Gillick competence can be very complex and could require professional intervention including a psychological assessment which measured the child's cognitive and emotional development as well as identifying any mental disorder which might affect his/her ability to make decisions. Obviously someone suffering from an eating disorder, or in extreme circumstances self harm, may be unable to appreciate the risks they are taking with their health – for example in continuing to try to lose weight even though they are already very thin, or in persisting with risky behaviours such as abusing laxatives. If this were the case then it could be argued that they were not competent to make decisions regarding their treatment. Again, it is vital to realise that if they are refusing to seek treatment, and are risking their long term health or even life, then you have a duty of care to ensure that their parent or guardian is informed.

An aside on the case of child protection

It should always be noted that it is unwise to ever promise a child or young person that you will keep information confidential before they have revealed it to you. In the case of abuse or child protection concerns you may well be obligated to inform the relevant authorities, particularly if children are currently at risk. Situations such as this should be covered by your church or organisations child protection policy. If no such policy exists, it is recommended that the leadership immediately contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer in order to draw up a child protection policy as such guidelines are an essential backup for anyone working with children or young people.

If you do feel it is necessary to break confidentiality and inform a parent/guardian:

In this situation it is important to be aware of the risk that the child/young person may feel betrayed and an overwhelming sense of loss of control. It is important that this is minimised, and for this reason it is important to take the time to explain to them calmly and clearly why you will be forced to inform their parent/guardian. It may be that once they understand the position you are in, they may be more willing to seek treatment, or to try to inform their parents themselves or with your help.

It is always our advice that if you share a confidence with a child/young person, you make clear to them that there may be circumstances where you are unable to keep information completely confidential but might have to tell someone else. Do reassure them that if this is ever the case you will tell them before you take any further action. This helps them to understand when they can and cannot be sure that information will remain confidential, and removes any fear that they have that you may inform someone else without their knowing. It sets out clearly what the position of trust between you is, and also emphasises that you have their best interests at heart.

What about sharing within a leadership team?

If you are working or volunteering for an organisation such as a church or youth group, it is suggested that the leadership of your organisation agree a clear policy on whether or not information regarding potentially risky behaviours (eg eating disorders, self harm, etc) should be shared with any other members of the leadership team. It is inadvisable for one person to make decisions regarding confidentiality issues in such a potentially serious context on their own and for this reason we would advise that at least one member of the senior leadership is always informed if such issues are divulged to any leader. If a decision is made to break confidentiality and contact a parent or guardian this decision should *always* be made at a leadership level and *never* by an individual acting alone. In this situation it should be made clear to the child/young person that the information will be shared with that person, but that it will remain confidential beyond this point unless there is a need to inform anyone else. Decisions regarding any action that may or may not need to be taken should then be agreed between all those who are aware of the ongoing situation.

THE RIGHT 'NOT TO KNOW'

You need to recognise your own limits when it comes to keeping confidences. You should not feel that it is a strict requirement of the job to accept any and every confidence offered to you.

You may feel yourself to be:

- Insufficiently skilled or experienced.
- Worried that your own beliefs or experiences may interfere with your ability to keep a confidence.
- Unable to give the commitment to a young person that the disclosure might lead to.

You need to decide your limits in advance of a confidence being made, in order to avoid putting yourself in a difficult position, breaking the trust of the young person or letting them down. It is important that you seek to inform the young person of these limits before the confidence takes place.

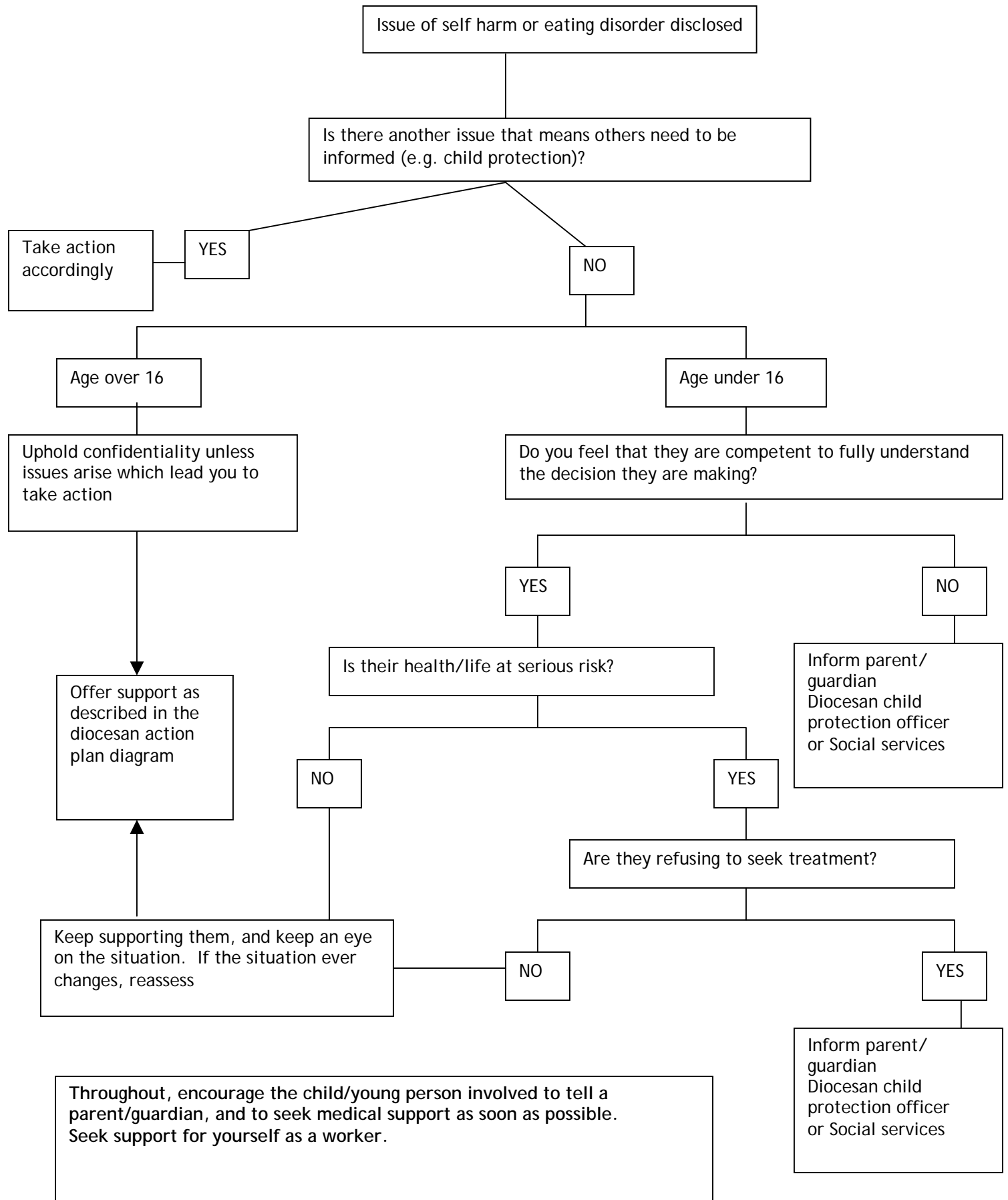
FINAL WORD

As can be seen from the document you have just read, issues of confidentiality are often complex and workers may find it difficult to decide on the best course of action. It is important that staff use the many policy and guideline documents provided for their 'support' and that they do not try to handle the issues alone.

1 Confidentiality: NHS code of practice, Dept of Health 2003

AT A GLANCE - CONFIDENTIALITY & EATING DISORDERS/SELF HARM

- issues of confidentiality regarding children/young people and eating disorders/self-harm



SELF HARM **BACKGROUND PAPER**

Introduction

The self harm is the act of deliberately of injuring yourself physically. It can be unnoticed harm, hitting or punching themselves, or taking small doses of poisonous or reactive substances. It can also include acts of visible damage, such as cutting or burning.

At the present time the UK has the highest rate of self harm in Europe, and self harm leads to around 15,000 A & E attendances each year. About 1 in 10 teenagers say that they deliberately self harm.

It generally starts in adolescences, average age is 13. Peaks in early and mid 20s if no help is sought. It is not just a problem for girls, although more girls than boys seek help. It is strongly linked with problems of low esteem and confidence.

How can we help

- Do talk about what is going on.
- Do help them see that you understand – and help them to understand.
- To ensure their safety in episodes of self harm.
- To encourage them to get some help.
- Get some support yourself.

One of those difficult and frustrating issues about self harm is that it can easily be manipulated. Suffers feel that the only way that they will get love, care and attention is if they force you to show it, and they can do this by self harming. Such manipulative behaviour includes threatening to harm themselves if you don't call round, making sure you see scars or evidence of harm, reluctance to improve, and easy on relapse following any step forward. This means:

- Always needs to keep very clear boundaries.
- Try and not to react to manipulation.
- Try not to confront it when you experience it.
- Do not handle the situation alone.

Practical Suggestions

Discuss why people self harm.

- Teach or trying different ways of dealing with negative emotions.
- Teach the whole youth group.
- Be willing to share how you deal with emotions, being aware of your own strategies.

Note:

1. Self harm can be catching, if one person begins to self harm it is possible that others in the group will want to do the same.
2. Self harm is not the same as attempted suicide ('self harm is an attempt to feel better, not to die. Suicide, in contrast, stems from the desire not to feel at all any more')

EATING DISORDERS **BACKGROUND PAPER**

Introduction

This is generally thought to affect up to 2% of the female population. However some studies suggest much higher rates than this. The EDA estimates that around 1.15m people in the UK are suffering from eating disorders. Only 60,000 on average are receiving treatment.

There are a number of different types of eating disorders, for example, the two most common are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa.

The potential medical consequences can be very serious.

There are many causes for eating disorders, there is evidence, and they may be initial diet, concern about body image, family dysfunction, relationship difficulties. There are also more serious causes, low confidence and self esteem, perceived responsibility of other people's happiness, revulsion of life, abuse etc. In all these cases action needs to be taken.

Action

If you are concerned about someone:

- whatever you do do something.
- early identification is important
- be aware – particularly if you are working with young people who are high risk.
- cover background issue with everyone if you can – e.g. self esteem – discuss weight issues.
- if you find out there is a problem – don't panic, think am I the best person to tackle this.
- do talk to them – but try to avoid focusing on food or weight.
- Be on their side and engage.
- bring hope, and support as they start to seek help.
- don't go it alone – get support yourself.

Advice for Churches letting premises

It is recommended that when contemplating the hire of a church hall or other premises whose use would involve work with children or young people that the following clause be added to licences:

The Licensees confirm that they are familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice “Safe from Harm” and have an understanding of it and undertake to follow the code of practice contained therein in relation to work with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

It is advised that any groups using the premises specifically for regular or occasional work with children should be able to produce their own policy and confirm that leaders have been checked.

ABUSE: What to look for What to do

1. Kinds of Abuse

Definitions of Abuse (England & Wales)

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) are as follows:

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those know to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally or inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is

happening. The activities may involved physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse)

You therefore may wish to change the definition of abuse in your child protection policy.

2. The following may be signs of abuse

Those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child. It is important to keep an open mind and consider carefully what is causing you concern.

[] *Physical abuse: unexplained injuries or those, which have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect;*

[] *Sexual abuse: allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through*

words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults;

[] *Emotional abuse: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for.*

[] *Other: unexplained reluctance of children to be left in the care of an individual – unexplained mood changes.*

NB: *Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.*

3. If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

It is usually very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone that they are being abused. So

[] *Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you, but that there are some things so serious that you have to tell someone else. **Do not promise confidentiality;***

[] *Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;*

[] *Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events;*

[] *Never push for information or ask leading questions*

[] *Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened;*

[] *Reassure the child or young person they were right to tell you;*

[] *Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens*

[] *Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. **Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.***

4. **What to do if you suspect abuse**

- [] *The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his/her concern is taken seriously.*
- [] *Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse with many intermediate levels*
- [] *Information may reach you from a variety of source*
- Ⓡ a child or young person claiming that he/she has been abused
- Ⓡ another child or young person who is concerned
- Ⓡ a member of the child's family
- Ⓡ a fellow worker of the suspect
- Ⓡ someone who believes he/she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- Ⓡ your own concerns

If you suspect abuse or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place but the way forward is unclear, take the following action

- a. *If abuse or inappropriate behaviour is suspected inform one of the following people of your concerns:*
 - Ⓡ the Nominated Person responsible for child protection in your parish; or
 - Ⓡ your parish priest; or
 - Ⓡ the Bishop's Adviser whose name is at the back of this booklet
- b. *If the suspicions concern your parish priest or an authorised lay worker you should consult the Bishop's Adviser immediately.*

It is important to be aware of the far reaching consequences of making a referral and naming names. The Bishop's Adviser is available to help if you have any doubt.

- c. ***If there is clear evidence of abuse***
While no-one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is

- ® where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of abuse
- ® where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions

You should

- i) *Inform The Safeguarding Children Service and/or the Police immediately*
The Safeguarding Children Service Child Protection Unit
01452 583638 (office hours 9.00 – 5.00)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hrs)
01452 261112 (if no reply 01242 521321)

- ii) *If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations you should also inform one of the following:*

- ® the parish priest; *or*
- ® the Nominated Person responsible for child protection in your parish. **and/or**
- ® the Bishop's Adviser named at the back of this booklet. The Diocesan Policy will then be followed with appropriate pastoral care given.

If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse the one thing you must not do is NOTHING!

Code of Behaviour

- Do** treat everyone with respect
- Do** provide an example you wish others to follow
- Do** plan activities which involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- Do** respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Do** have separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young people
- Do** provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- Do** encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Do** maintain a healthy adult lifestyle
- Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Do** recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.

- Do NOT** permit abusive youth peer activities
(e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)

- Do NOT** play physical contact games with young people

- Do NOT** have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others

- Do NOT** jump to conclusions about others without checking facts

- Do NOT** allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes

- Do NOT** exaggerate or trivialise child-abuse issues

- Do NOT** show favouritism to any individual

- Do NOT** make suggestive remarks or gestures

- Do NOT** rely on just your good name to protect you

- Do NOT** believe “it could never happen to me”

Duties and Responsibilities of Counter Signatories

Applying to become a counter signatory

1. Counter signatories should acquaint themselves with the Code of Practice, relevant publications, legislation and guidance notes issued by the CRB or published on its web site (www.crb.gov.uk).
2. A prospective counter signatory must complete the application form. This requires over 70 pieces of information. This will be read by computer scanner and must therefore be written clearly using block capitals and black ink. Every letter should be contained within its appropriate box. One requirement is for a referee who has known you for over three years. Another is for identification documentation to be verified by the lead signatory.
3. It has been agreed with the CRB that the church is at liberty to use a one-stop clearing-house for *disclosures*. When this arrangement is proposed, those making application as a counter signatory should submit **the diocesan clearing-house address and not their private address** as the appropriate return address for *disclosure*. Thereafter, the diocesan clearing-house address should always be used when countersigning *disclosure* applications.
4. Once this form is completed it should be submitted to the lead signatory within your scheme, who will complete the remaining questions validating your identification documents, sign the form and forward it to the CRB.

The duties of a counter signatory

1. There are two key tasks. The first is to counter sign *disclosure* applications. The counter signatory, however, is responsible for the level of competence, understanding and integrity that are brought to bear in fulfilling this task. The diocese will wish to ensure that there are occasional training briefings to secure models of best practice at all levels in the face of changing personnel, and evolving legislation and official protocols.
2. The second key task is to receive *disclosure*. Again, it has been agreed with the CRB that *disclosure* can be sent to a central clearing-

house such as the Bishop's office. Counter signatories have the task of controlling the use of, access to and security of *disclosures*. The Bishop's Officer for Child Protection is available to give competent and secure advice to counter-signatories on the interpretation of information contained in a *disclosure*.

3. In addition, the counter signatories are required to ensure compliance to the CRB's Code of Practice, that any post or position for which a *disclosure* is sought is covered by the Exemptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and that *disclosure* is requested at the appropriate level.

Resources

Publications

Safe from Harm

A code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales (published by the Home Office) £2.50

Safeguarding children and young people

Methodist Church Division of Education and Youth) £0.60

Kaleidoscope

Training material for workers with children in the church (published by the National Christian Educational Council) £12.95

Spectrum

Training material for workers with young people in the church (published by the National Christian Educational Council)

Tutor's pack £15.00

Participant's pack £10.95

Worth Doing Well

Guidelines for Good Practice in working with children and young people (Methodist Publishing House) £9.75

Children in Creches and Toddler Groups

(Ann Croft) Guidelines for working with families and under 5s (CPAS) £5.50

EIG booklet on Child Protection

Copies of the above are available from the Resource Centre (Reference 04.2)
9 College Green, Gloucester (Tel: 01452 385217)

The Protection of Children Act 1999 or

Practical Guide to the Act for all organisations Working with Children

From: The Department of Health

PO Box 777

London SE16 6XH

FREE

NB Above prices were correct at time of publication

For further help or advice, please contact:

**The Bishop's Officer for Child Protection
Diocesan Officer for Social Responsibility**

Revd Canon Adrian B Slade

38 Sydenham Villas Road

Cheltenham

Glos. GL52 6DZ.

Telephone: (01242) 253162 Fax: (01242 242672)

Mobile: 07976 768298

e-mail : glossr@star.co.uk

We are grateful to the Methodist Church Division of Education and Youth for permission to use ideas and information from "Safeguarding Children and Young People".