

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



All churches and faith communities are expected to have in place arrangements which include:

- Procedures to respond to and report concerns
- Codes of practice
- Safe recruitment procedures

In the same way arrangements must be in place to respond to concerns about any form of abuse or maltreatment of a vulnerable adult.

The principles contained in 'No Secrets' (DoH 2000) and 'Safeguarding Adults : A National Framework for Good Practice (ADSS 2005)' must be followed with the acknowledgement that the Catholic Church in England and Wales must not act alone but in partnership with all other agencies to combat the abuse of vulnerable adults.

## Child

The term "child" is used to include all children and young people up to the age of 18. Someone who has not yet had their 18th birthday.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up with safe and effective care;
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

## Child Protection

Is a part of safeguarding and refers to the activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering Significant Harm.

## Significant Harm

'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

'Health' means physical or mental health; and

'Ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

Are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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 known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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## 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

## Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

## Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images and photos, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the offence of viewing or downloading abusive images of children from the Internet. This is not a "victimless" crime but is both evidence of abuse taking place and is a criminal offence. It should be referred on in all cases.

## 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, or at any age, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate carers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

The above definitions are from **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006**.

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## Domestic Violence

This term is used to describe the physical, sexual or emotional (including verbal and financial) abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This form of abuse affects both the victim, who by the very nature of the offence is a vulnerable adult in this context, and any children in the household. In 2005, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 extended the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill-treatment of others, especially in the home.

## Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over,

*'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.'* ('Who decides')

Section 2 'No Secrets', Department of Health and the Home Office (2000).

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines a vulnerable adult as follows:

'A person is vulnerable in the context of the setting in which they are situated or the service they receive as follows;

- those in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing or in receipt of domiciliary care services;
- those receiving health care;
- those in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer;
- those receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority;
- those receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of their age or state of health;
- those who need assistance in the conduct of their affairs.

A person's level of vulnerability may increase or decrease according to the circumstances they experience at any given time. Vulnerable adults could include people with:

- learning or physical disabilities;
- a sensory impairment;
- mental health needs;
- who are HIV positive;
- substance misuse needs;
- dementia.

*'Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by another person or persons'* ('No Secrets', DoH 2000).

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*'Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to or exploitation of the person subjected to it.'*

(*'No Secrets'*, DoH 2000).

A consensus has emerged identifying the following main different forms of abuse:

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| <b>Physical abuse</b>               | Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.  |
| <b>Sexual abuse</b>                 | Including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.   |
| <b>Psychological abuse</b>          | Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.    |
| <b>Financial or material abuse</b>  | Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.                                      |
| <b>Neglect and acts of omission</b> | Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. |
| <b>Discriminatory abuse</b>         | Including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.  |

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Neglect and poor professional practice also need to be taken into account. This may take the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice, at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems and this is sometimes referred to as institutional abuse.

**Who may be the abuser?** Vulnerable adult(s) may be abused by a wide range of people, including relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers.

Applying these definitions to different circumstances may not always be easy. Many situations may involve combinations of these elements. If there is difficulty in defining a situation this should be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer/Advisor/Co-ordinator. Religious Safeguarding Co-ordinators will link and consult with their Diocesan colleagues as appropriate.



## SECTION 2