



BETHLEHEM CHURCH LIFE CENTRE

VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES



Bethlehem Church Life Centre Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

BCLC acknowledges that the role of a voluntary organisation (including churches) has a wide range of functions and may be in a position to identify abuse. BCLC has a responsibility to report any suspicions of abuse to the appropriate agencies determined by the **Inter-agency Policy for responding to Alleged Abuse and inappropriate Care of Vulnerable Adults in South Wales.**

As Christians we are charged to love and care for each other. This is particularly true where the most vulnerable members of our community are concerned. We believe that being part of the BCLC community places responsibilities on all our active participants, both institutional and individual, to ensure that the environment for all is safe. This includes safety for all those who are vulnerable and all who wish to share in the life of the centre and who are offered support and pastoral care by the centre, both formal and informal.

Bethlehem Church Life Centre Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. At BCLC we commit ourselves to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and ensuring their well being in the life and activity of BCLC.

2. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

3. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with vulnerable adults.

4. BCLC is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.

5. Each person who works with vulnerable adults will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines.

6. BCLC will carefully consider requests for involvement in Church life and in all activities of the centre from vulnerable adults in the same way in which we consider all requests.

7. BCLC appoints Rob McAvoy as the designated person to:

- Advise BCLC on any matters of Vulnerable adult abuse arising.
- Take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.
- Oversee and monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures.

Bethlehem Church Life Centre Vulnerable Adults Procedure

What is a vulnerable adult?

A person who is 18 years of age or over and who:

- ◆ Needs (or may need) community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and
- ◆ Is (or may be) unable to take care of him/herself and/or
- ◆ Is (or may be) unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Law Commission 1997

A person may have special needs as a result of:

- ◆ Sensory or physical disability
- ◆ A learning disability
- ◆ A physical illness
- ◆ A mental illness (including dementia) severe and enduring or otherwise
- ◆ An addiction to drugs or alcohol (although under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, this is excluded)
- ◆ A significant reduction in physical or mental or emotional capacity

◆ Ageing

◆ Becoming unable, for whatever reason, to protect him/herself from significant harm or exploitation.

What abuse or ill treatment means.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is ill treatment, which may or may not cause physical injury. It includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, forcing, inappropriate restraint, withholding or misuse of medication, squeezing, biting, suffocating, drowning or killing. Whilst the use of medication or restraint may be appropriate in some circumstances, the point is that if the use is beyond being reasonable, or outside of any prescription, or recommendation, or is excessive and disproportionate to what is required in the circumstances then this is abusive.

Financial or legal abuse

Financial or legal abuse is the wilful extortion or manipulation of a vulnerable adult's legal or civil rights, including the misappropriation of monies or goods. This includes not only the more obvious cases of theft, embezzlement and fraud, but also the abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will.

Neglect

Neglect is any behaviour by one person that seriously impairs another. This may include failure to intervene in situations where there is a danger to vulnerable adults or to others, particularly where the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk.

Neglect may also include not giving personal care, deliberate withholding of aids (this includes hearing aids), withholding food,

drink, light and clothing, restricting access to medical services, denial of social, religious or cultural contacts, denial of contact with the family, leaving alone unsupervised.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviour that is abusive. To be deemed to be abusive, the behaviour has to be done without the consent of the other party. This includes the making of sexual remarks and suggestions, introduction to indecent material, indecent exposure, teasing, indecent assault, touch and sexual intercourse, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is often difficult for churches to identify because its definition may be more of an issue of personal interpretation of practices that are common in the church. Nevertheless churches need to be aware of pastoral practices that may be "forcing" people into accepting religious values or ideas. Others' views and cultures should be respected when we are trying to convey a Christian gospel message. Harm can be done by inappropriate promotion of Christian belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of the leadership, discipline, oppressive teaching or obtrusive healing or deliverance ministries. Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters may reduce choice and responsibility. Vulnerable adults are more susceptible to suggestion and may sometimes feel humiliated by the way in which they are addressed. These actions may also result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful, it should be discussed with the church leaders. Other forms of spiritual abuse may include the denial of a vulnerable adults's right to explore

the meaning of faith in their life, or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God

Some people believe that limited understanding or distorted perceptions, as a symptom of mental illness, for example, should automatically bar someone from expressions of their faith. This view is incompatible with our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in His work of spiritual growth for all people.

Seek to promote

PREVENTION - INCLUSIVENESS - PROTECTION

Who may be the abuser?

Vulnerable adults 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, associates and people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people

Stranger abuse will warrant a different kind of response to abuse within an ongoing relationship or care setting.

What to do if someone discloses to you or you discover abuse

- ✚ You must ensure the care and safety of the alleged victim
- ✚ Do not promise to keep the information secret
- ✚ Listen carefully to the account without interrogating the Vulnerable Adult - only clarify the facts
- ✚ Note persons, places, and times referred to in the account given.

- ✚ Write down as soon as possible exactly what the person said then sign and date it.
- ✚ Preserve any physical evidence.
- ✚ If the perpetrator is also a vulnerable adult equal consideration will need to be given to their needs.
- ✚ Contact the Designated person who will then inform the appropriate authority. If he is not available then contact Social Services Duty Desk on 01656 642353

It is essential to be sensitive as in cases of possible sexual abuse or situations where there is a danger of exposing the person to further immediate risk of abuse or injury.

What to do when an incident does not appear to require emergency procedure or there is insubstantial evidence of abuse or neglect.

1. The BCLC leadership and volunteers should be sensitive to cultural, racial and other factors affecting families.
2. The BCLC leadership and volunteers observing any indicators of abuse should initially inform the designated person for safeguarding vulnerable adults: Rob McAvoy.
3. The designated person should listen to the concerns and decide what action, if any, needs to be taken.

4. These concerns will be recorded, dated, signed and kept in a locked cabinet in the minister's office. Action taken by the designated person will also be recorded.
5. If the BCLC leadership or volunteers observe more indicators of abuse, they should pass on the information immediately.
6. If a vulnerable adult begins to disclose information about abuse, the BCLC leadership or volunteer should listen carefully without prompting or probing but having first explained the limitations imposed by the law and the churches confidentiality policy. The exact words should be recorded as soon as possible. **It is not the role of the BCLC leadership or volunteer to investigate or diagnose abuse.**
7. If the designated person finds cause for concern, she will contact the appropriate officer at Social Services, the GP or the police. One of the Core Leaders will also be consulted.

Bethlehem Church Life Centre

Procedure adopted July 2008

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Signed

Mike Holmes

Minister of the Church and BCLC Core Leader.