

## **Responding to domestic abuse policy and statement**

St Mary's, Wootton, is committed to keeping everyone in its care safe. To ensure we keep everyone safe we have adopted a domestic abuse policy and statement. This policy was reviewed by St Mary's PCC on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and will be reviewed annually.

The House of Bishops' policy states 'The Church is committed to those who have been victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse in all its forms is contrary to the will of God and an affront to human dignity. All need to play their part in preventing or halting it'. The welfare of the adult victim of domestic abuse is important, but where there are children in the family, it must be understood that they too are victims of domestic abuse. Where children are involved, all concerns should be raised in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

As a Parish we will:

- Agree a parish domestic abuse statement including who to contact if there are concerns.
- Appoint a named individual who is a point of contact for any advice and support.
- Follow the process on how to respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations.
- Support those in leadership positions, pastoral and safeguarding roles to engage in diocesan domestic abuse training.
- Consider the best place to display the domestic abuse statement including information about helplines and local services.
- Discuss domestic abuse in appropriate contexts such as marriage preparation.
- Challenge inappropriate comments and behaviour by church members.

We will also follow recommended good practice:

- Encourage leaders and those who preach to speak against domestic abuse in teaching, sermons, prayers and parish magazines
- Offer some awareness-raising activities e.g. invite speakers from local domestic abuse agencies.
- Consider including activities around healthy relationships within activities for children and young people.
- Consider organising courses in parenting and confidence-building if appropriate

(Taken from The Parish Safeguarding Handbook, 2018 page 37)

## **Responding to Domestic Abuse**

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

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

### **We recognise that:**

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

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

#### **In all our activities**

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

#### **In our publicity**

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

#### **When concerns are raised**

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.
- PCC will follow the Church of England responding to victims and survivors of abuse policy and will inform the DSA of the disclosure. Further information can be found here: [Church of England responding well to victims and survivors of abuse](#)

#### **In our care**

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

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone, please contact Kate Wilson (Parish Safeguarding Officer) [safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk) or Peter Ackroyd on 01234 768391 or the Church office on 01234 765375.

### Safeguarding contact details

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| <b>Parish Safeguarding Officers:</b>      | Kate Wilson - <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk">safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a><br>Emma Hearn - <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk">safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a><br>Pauline Kendall - <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk">safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a><br>Martin Sanders - <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk">safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a> |  |
| <b>Vicar</b>                              | Peter Ackroyd 01234 768391 / <a href="mailto:vicar@stmaryswootton.org.uk">vicar@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a>  |  |
| <b>Church Wardens</b>                     | Allyson Cable <a href="mailto:wardens@stmaryswootton.org.uk">wardens@stmaryswootton.org.uk</a><br>Tim Dillistone   |  |
| <b>Children's Services</b>                | Bedford Borough 01234 718700<br>Out of hours 0300 300 8123   | Central Bedfordshire 0300 300 8142<br>Out of hours 0300 300 8123   |
| <b>Adult services</b>                     | Bedford Borough 01234 276222<br>Out of hours 0300 300 8123   | Central Bedfordshire 0300 300 8303<br>Out of hours 0300 300 8123   |
| <b>Diocesan Safeguarding Officers</b>     | Jeremy Hirst 01727 818107 / 07867 350886/<br><a href="mailto:safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org">safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org</a><br>Dave Adams - <a href="tel:01727818104">01727 818 104</a> / <a href="tel:07469351357">07469 351 357</a> / <a href="tel:01727818104">01727 818 104</a><br>Warren Lucas - <a href="tel:01727818106">01727 818 106</a> / <a href="tel:07311310545">07311 310 545</a>  |  |
| <b>Police</b>                             | Emergency 999  | Non-Emergency 101  |
| <b>Mental health</b>                      | Out of hours all age mental health line 111, option 2  | Child and Adolescent mental health team 01234 893 300<br><br>Community Mental Health team (adults)<br><br>01234 880433                   |
| <b>Local Authority Designated officer</b> | Bedford Borough<br><br>01234 276 693<br>email: <a href="mailto:Lado@bedford.gov.uk">Lado@bedford.gov.uk</a>  | Central Bedfordshire<br><br>0300 300 8142<br>email: <a href="mailto:LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> |

**Suggested support services:**

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| <b>Mankind – helping men escape domestic abuse,</b> | 01823 334244<br><a href="https://www.mankind.org.uk/">https://www.mankind.org.uk/</a>  | Helping men escape domestic abuse. Helpline open weekdays 10am to 4pm |
| <b>National Domestic abuse helpline</b>             | 0808 2000 247  | 24 hour helpline for anyone experiencing domestic abuse               |
| <b>Women's aid</b>                                  | <a href="https://www.womensaid.org.uk">https://www.womensaid.org.uk</a>  | Advice for woman.   |
| <b>Respect – Men's advice line</b>                  | <a href="https://mensadviceline.org.uk/">https://mensadviceline.org.uk/</a><br>0808 801 0327<br>Monday to Friday 10am to 8pm | Advice line for Males   |
| <b>NSPCC</b>  | 0808 800 5000  | Support for children  |
| <b>Childline</b>                                    | 0800 1111  |   |