



Guidelines for those working with Vulnerable Adults

For the purposes of this document River Church recognises the following definition of a Vulnerable Adult:

Any person aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

River Church seeks to make church welcoming to all, so that vulnerable people feel included and able to engage with regular worship and other appropriate activities.

As Christians we are charged to love and care for each other. This is particularly true with regards to the most vulnerable in our community.

River Church has a duty of care to ensure that it provides a safe environment for all. This includes both the physical environment and the support and pastoral care that is offered by the church, both formal and informal.

We at River Church are committed to respectful pastoral care of all adults in our community. We are also committed to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people.

This short guide is intended to assist leaders and helpers in their role; to keep themselves safe, to protect vulnerable adults from unnecessary harm and to provide guidelines to follow when there are concerns regarding the welfare of a vulnerable adult or when allegations are made.

For more detailed information about River Church's policies and procedures please refer to the safeguarding pages on the River Church web site.

Good Practice

You should:

- Respond to everyone in a friendly and caring way.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language.
- Visit people of the same gender as yourself.
- Aim to visit in pairs.
- Record any concerns/accidents/incidents and pass to your team leader, signed and dated.
- Report any unsafe practices to the safeguarding coordinator.
- Allow any adult to make their own decisions unless they are incapable of doing so.

You should not:

- Allow your own prejudices to affect your ability to care.
- Allow unknown adults access to the vulnerable adult's home.
- Try to persuade the vulnerable adult to do anything they are unhappy about.

or (unless DBS checked for vulnerable adults and agreed by the primary carer))

- Be involved in any form of personal care including feeding, dressing, washing etc.
- Handle any money belonging to the vulnerable adult, including doing shopping.
- Offer a lift to any health care appointment.

What to do if.....

An adult discloses information about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interrogate them but question normally without pressure in order to be sure you understand what is being said.
- Do not put words into their mouth.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- Never promise to keep a secret but tell them you must pass the information on, but that you will only tell those who need to know. Tell them who you will speak to.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.

- Make notes of the date, time, place and what was said and done immediately after the event, not during. Sign the report.

Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report **immediately** to the congregational safeguarding coordinator or deputy. Do not speak to anyone outside the investigation, including the carers.

You are concerned that a vulnerable adult may be suffering from abuse:

If a vulnerable adult has an unexplained physical injury, symptoms of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional or other abuse:

- Document your concerns, with dates.
- Inform your church safeguarding coordinator.
- If your safeguarding coordinator or deputy are not available, contact River Church's safeguarding officer or trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. If none of these are available contact CCPAS for advice.
- Do not talk to the carers unless advised to do so.

Useful Contacts

Safeguarding Officer:

Rachael Odeniyi safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk

Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding:

Graham Burgess graham@riverchurch.org.uk

Church Safeguarding Coordinators:

Maidenhead

Andrew Green via River Safeguarding Officer:
safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk

Marlow

Susan Scott safeguardingmarlow@riverchurch.org.uk

Slough

Julie Ioakeim safeguardingslough@riverchurch.org.uk

The Journey

Diana Saunders safeguardingjourney@riverchurch.org.uk

The Hub

Gulnar George safeguardinghub@riverchurch.org.uk
Manager

Local Authorities Social Care for Vulnerable adults:

RBWM 01628 683744

Thames Valley Police, Non-emergency: 101

Thirtyone:Eight 0303 003 1111