

## **St Laurence Church Appleton with Besselsleigh**

### **Practice Guidance on visiting adults who may be vulnerable in their homes and in residential homes.**

Visiting vulnerable adults\* in their homes is an essential element of many Church Officers' roles. The Church of England defines a Church Officer as "*anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid*". Many parishioners will be well known to the Church Officer and where there have been no previous concerns the level of risk to the Church Officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a Church Officer at risk. For example, the unexpected presence in the home of a relative or friend with a history of violence or threatening behaviour. Unfortunately, case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a Church Officer. For these reasons it is very important for a Parish Church to ensure that their Church Officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be, and that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which Church Officers engage in lone working or visits to residential homes.

#### **Safer Practice**

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a Church Officer:

- If possible undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person. If there are any concerns or risks known before a visit is made, you are advised always to undertake a risk assessment (see Model Risk Assessment Checklist for Home Visiting). In these circumstances, consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should be accompanied by another Church Officer. In addition, visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/ support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer "over the counter" remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If

someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.

- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well. They will report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSA if they are not available.

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**\* *Vulnerable Adult***

*For the purpose of Church policy and guidance the definition of a “Vulnerable Adult” is contained in the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 where a vulnerable adult is defined as:*

*“a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired”*

## Lone Working/Residential Unit Model Risk Assessment checklist

Name of adult to be visited \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the adult have a history of violence, or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
2. Is the adult a risk to themselves?	Yes/No Not known
3. Does anyone living in the house have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not Known
4. Does anyone who visits the adult have a history of violence or threatening behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not Known
5. Does the adult have any vulnerabilities that would make it inappropriate for them to be visited alone (eg by a single male or female?)	Yes/No Not Known
6. Does the adult have any health problems that may cause unpredictable behaviour? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not Known
7. Are there any health risks associated with visiting the adult at home? (Examples might be infestation, smoking, intravenous drug use, infectious diseases, dangerous pets?) <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not Known
8. Is the adult's home in a well lit area? <i>Please detail below any difficulties you are aware of.</i>	Yes/No Not Known

9. Is there suitable parking nearby and is this well lit? <i>If known, please state below the best place to park</i>	Yes/No Not Known
10. Is there easy access to and exit from the home, more than one exit from the home. Are doors obstructed and not easily opened. <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
11. Are there any other risk factors or hazards (including mental health, substance/alcohol mis-use)? <i>If yes, please detail below</i>	Yes/No Not known
<i>Please detail below any other information you think is important</i>	
<p><i>Completed by .....</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Role:</i></span></p> <p><i>Copy passed to Parish Safeguarding Officer on .....</i></p> <p><i>Signed .....</i></p> <p><i>Date:</i></p>	