

WARWICK ROAD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

August 2014

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1 Introduction

1.1 Warwick Road Church & Church Centre provides services to a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout Coventry and we recognise that some of our clients will be vulnerable adults.

1.2 We believe that all vulnerable adults have the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity;
- privacy and confidentiality, (i.e. the right to be free from intrusion into their personal affairs);
- lead as independent a life as their disability will allow;
- free to make such lifestyle choices as their disability will allow; and
- have their rights as citizens upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

1.3 A person, being aged 18 or over, may be considered to be vulnerable if that person:

- receives personal care, nursing, or other support to live independently in their own home, or a care home, or
- receives any other ongoing treatment or support from health or social services, or
- has a substantial learning, physical or sensory disability, or
- has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs, or
- has a substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or illness.

1.4 All staff members and volunteers of Warwick Road Church & Church Centre can play an important part in promoting the safety and protection of vulnerable adults with whom the organisation works. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in receipt of services from Warwick Road Church & Church Centre. In addition to this policy, Warwick Road Church & Church Centre has a framework of policies which are designed to ensure the emotional and physical safety of service users, staff and volunteers which includes:-

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Complaints Procedure.

2 Recruitment, Selection & Training of Staff & Volunteers

- 2.1 Warwick Road Church & Church Centre will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures will take account of the need to protect vulnerable adults. Two references will be taken up for all successful candidates prior to a formal offer of employment, and where appropriate referees will be asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 Where relevant to the post, the successful applicant will be asked to agree to an appropriate Vetting & Barring Scheme (VBS) check in accordance with latest Government guidance. Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post. and employment will not commence until clearance has been notified.
- 2.3 Induction for new staff and volunteers will include information on all relevant policies and procedures, including the protection of vulnerable adults, and on-going training will be provided if necessary.
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide appropriate ongoing support and supervision.

3 Reporting Procedure

- 3.1 Abuse of vulnerable adults can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Warwick Road Church & Church Centre, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is therefore vital that staff raise all cases of suspected or alleged abuse in line with the procedures identified in this policy. It is important to do this as there may already have been concerns expressed by others, and failure to report concerns may put a vulnerable adult at risk.
- 3.2 Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse should be reported to the Church Centre Manager, Church Secretary or Assistant Church Secretary as soon as possible.
- 3.3 In addition, a note should be entered into the Vulnerable Adults Record Book which is kept in the Church Centre Office.
- 3.4 The Church Centre Manager and/or Church Secretary will gather (through discussion) further information and details by interviewing the person making the report or the service user directly.
- 3.5 The Church Centre Manager and/or Church Secretary will then devise and propose an appropriate plan of action. The exact nature of the action taken will be determined by the individual circumstances, but it may include the involvement of external authorities, such as the URC West Midlands Synod, referral organisations and the Police. This will need to be discussed with the Named person for Safeguarding or Assistant, or the Minister, and the Support Group.
- 3.6 All staff and volunteers (where appropriate) of Warwick Road Church & Church Centre will be familiar with good practice guidelines on the immediate action to be taken following a report of abuse (see appendix 1).

- 3.7 Any allegation made against a member of staff or volunteer should be reported to the Church Centre Manager and/or Church Secretary who will investigate and take action as per the Disciplinary Policy. In the event of an allegation being made against the Church Centre Manager, Church Secretary or Assistant Church Secretary, this should be reported to the Chair of Trustees or nominated representative.
- 3.8 If a disclosure of abuse is made by a service user, care should be taken to explain to them the procedure that will be followed and they should be told that it may be necessary to pass otherwise confidential information to other agencies or the police.
- 3.9 If a service user of the Warwick Road Church & Church Centre makes an allegation about another organisation this should be reported to the Church Centre Manager, Church Secretary or Assistant Church Secretary who will investigate and take appropriate action.

4 Good Practice

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers should be familiar with and adhere to Warwick Road Church & Church Centre Guidelines for Dealing With Issues Raised by Vulnerable Adults (Appendix 1) and Some Dos and Don'ts in Working With Vulnerable Adults (Appendix 2).

APPENDIX 1 – GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ISSUES RAISED BY VULNERABLE ADULTS

The following are guidelines on immediate action to be taken when a vulnerable adult reports abuse, either of themselves or of another vulnerable person:

- React calmly and reassure they are right to seek help/advice.(not to frighten or deter him/her).
- Confirm again that you are glad they have told you, and it is not their fault.
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself. At the earliest opportunity remind them of our confidentiality policy and explain what this means.
- Explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to somebody trusted to deal with it appropriately.
- Listen carefully to what they say and take them seriously.
- Allow them to tell you what happened in their own words.
- It is important to clarify what you have heard, and to establish the basic facts. However avoid leading questions and do not ask them specific questions about explicit details.
- If possible make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to them why you are doing this. If not possible to do at the time, make notes as soon as possible afterwards but before leaving the premises. All notes should be dated and signed by the staff member or volunteer taking them. The information recorded should include:
 - The nature of the suspicion or allegation.
 - A description of any visible injury.
 - Dates and times and any other factual information.
 - The distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay.

APPENDIX 2 – SOME DOs AND DON'TS IN WORKING WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

Do

Treat vulnerable adults with the same respect as you would when speaking to or about anyone else, always refer to them by name.

Make sure that everyone can get to where the coffee or refreshments are and that they receive all the necessary books and papers on arrival at church. Clear access to enable independence is always the preferred option but remember to be available to offer help should it be needed.

Learn and use proper sign language for anyone who is deaf or those with learning difficulties.

Always give the same respect as to anyone else. Knock on the door before entering a room or their home. Ask permission to join them; respect their home and possessions.

Respect differences – whether in appearance, ability or ideas.

Make sure everyone has access to any projected words, pictures and presentations by offering seating with a clear “sight line” by for example offering seats at the front (if wanted). Have more than one screen for OHPs or Powerpoint presentations and check that the images are not adversely affected by light or give written copies.

Have a proper conversation using appropriate language. Ask about interests or hobbies.

Ask first before initiating any kind of physical contact. Vulnerable adults sometimes welcome a degree of physical contact and this should not be withheld merely because someone has a disability

Check the building for accessibility. This doesn't only mean doors, steps and toilets but also includes distinguishing colour schemes, sight lines, lighting, acoustics, etc.

Respect the person's dignity and feelings. Ask about personal preferences, forms of address and how much help might be needed.

Remember the needs of carers for breaks and short times apart. (They may want to go to the shops or the person cared for may welcome the chance to go shopping without their carer –it also gives something to talk about when they return home).

Carers, partners, relatives and friends may also need to be supported in other ways. (They may be able to represent and support the vulnerable adult although sadly, it is not unknown for some to abuse and this also needs to be borne in mind.)

Where necessary and possible, use interpreters, sign language users, etc to assist in communication with and by the vulnerable adult. Where it isn't possible try to identify where these resources can be accessed.

Do Not

Maintain a “them” and “us” divide in attitudes, speech and actions. Don’t fail to speak to vulnerable adults as one would to other adults -or talk about “them” without using their names. Don’t use terms such as “handicapped” or “retarded”, for example or otherwise refer to them by their condition.

Treat all vulnerable adults as if they were the same instead of as individuals. Grouping people as if they are all the same removes their individuality.

Use action songs as a substitute for signing. The “actions” are not necessarily intelligible to anyone who is deaf or those with learning difficulties.

Assume that a person with a disability has no need of books, etc.

Assume that all disabled people have to be served and cannot help themselves or express a choice or preference.

Touch or move possessions (including tidying up) without permission. Many people rely on familiarity as navigational aids around their homes

Exclude people from everyday events or special occasions either by not inviting them or by not ensuring proper communication takes place about them.

Talk only to the person’s companion who is at your own eye level. Don’t stand while talking to someone in a wheelchair. It seems as though you are “talking down” to them and makes two-way communication difficult.

Use euphemisms, irony and jokes which may be misunderstood: the intended meaning may be misunderstood or even felt to be offensive.

Talk in childish language. Just because someone has a disability doesn’t mean they cannot hold an adult conversation with you.

Hug the person without asking (which may cause distress). At the same time, leaving a disabled person out of “hugging” or handshakes can feel very rejecting and hurtful.

Fail to see that everyone has similar needs.

Exclude vulnerable adults from events such as funerals because you think they may be upsetting for them.

Assume that help is needed all the time and with everything.

Attempt to change someone’s appearance (without their informed consent) so that they are more “acceptable” to you or (as you perceive it) to the community.

Assume that odd or challenging behaviour is a sign of demon possession. Don’t pile on the guilt by expressing the view that sickness, disability or behaviour are the marks of sin or demon possession.

Impose “ministry” on vulnerable adults without their informed permission or assume everyone shares your own Christian values

Be insensitive or neglectful of the emotional needs of carers or judgemental about how they spend their money.