

Section 2

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

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WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Good Child Protection practice means ensuring that staff and volunteers know how to recognise child abuse. This does not mean that staff and volunteers are responsible for deciding whether or not child abuse has occurred but that they do have a responsibility to be alert to the behaviour by children or workers, which suggest something may be wrong.

Even for “experts” it is often very difficult to decide if a child has been abused.

There are four different categories of officially defined abuse used by every local authority in England and Wales.

- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer (almost always a mother) feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy
- **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so much as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

SOME MORE FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Physical abuse

- Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or, at the extreme, death.
- Harm may be caused to children both by the abuse itself and by the abuse taking place in a wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression.
- Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, emotional and behavioural problems and educational difficulties.
- Physical abuse in babies is more prevalent than people perhaps realise, and often results in serious – even fatal – injury. The younger the child the greater the risk of suffering severe harm. The most common forms of serious injury in babies are fractures, which can be caused by dropping or hitting the baby, and brain injury which can be caused by shaking.

Emotional abuse

- There is increasing evidence of the adverse long-term consequences for children's development where they have been subject to sustained emotional abuse.
- Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy.
- Underlying emotional abuse may be as important, if not more so, than other more visible forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child.
- Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse.

Neglect

- Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development.
- Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.
- Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

Sexual Abuse

- A child is **never** to blame for sexual abuse
- Child sexual abuse is prevalent among all classes, professions, cultures and ethnic groups.
- Most child abuse takes place by adults the child knows and trusts. In 75% of reported incidents the abuser is someone known to the child.
- It is not only men who sexually abuse children – women also abuse but the most commonly quoted figure is that around 90% of all sexual abuse is by men, most of whom are heterosexual.
- Boys are abused as well as girls.
- Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse. They are more dependent on intimate care and sometimes less able to tell anyone or run away from abusive situations.
- There are rarely any obvious physical signs that a child has been sexually abused. Child abuse is very hard to “diagnose” – even for professionals.
- Child sexual abuse is abuse of power – it is an abuse of the power that adults have over children.
- Sexual abuse has serious long-term effects on children and young people. If untreated, the effects of abuse on children can be devastating and continue into adulthood.
- Children and young people who are sexually abused can be very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.
- Children very seldom make false accusations that they have been abused and in fact frequently deny the abuse or take back an accusation after they have made it.
- The reported cases of child abuse are just the tip of the iceberg of the cruelty, exploitation and neglect to which some children in our society are subject.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

The church recognises a fifth category of abuse, that of spiritual abuse.

Spiritual abuse occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others.

It has two main facets:

- A church/group leader who has unhealthy power over individuals or even a whole congregation
- Accepted doctrine of a church/group that directly or indirectly controls or oppresses its members through peer pressure.

Spiritual abuse is likely to happen when:

- One person usually tells others what to do and always expects to be obeyed.
- The leader or other person in authority within the relationship reacts strongly and personally to being questioned or contradicted.
- Leadership is based on hierarchical authority rather than greater ability.
- Leadership is never shared or handed on.
- The leader or person in authority expects agreement without having to justify or prove their point.
- The leader or person in authority frequently prefaces their remarks with comments which defy rational analysis – like ‘The Lord has told me ...’.
- People in the group or relationship are afraid to make their disagreement known.
- People in the group or relationship never share their different opinions for fear of being put down.

Spiritual abuse can be avoided if:

- A climate of challenge is encouraged.
- Opportunities are created to encourage the minister or leader to be questioned about theological, biblical, spiritual and human-relationship issues, particularly relevant to their working with groups, congregations and individuals.
- People are encouraged to form their own opinions and to express them

- Clergy and leaders are made accountable to the Parochial Church Council who observe practices and monitor behaviour, teaching, approachability and style of working.
- Clergy and licensed workers who are accountable to the Bishop fully participate in accordance with their professional guidelines.

WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?

Good child protection practice means ensuring that staff and volunteers know who can abuse.

Did you know?

- You can't tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser – they don't appear different from the rest of society;
- Abusers come from all classes in society, all professions and all races;
- Abuse of children may sometimes be carried out by strangers but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child, e.g. parent, sibling, baby-sitter, relative or friend of the family;
- It is not only adults who abuse children – children may suffer abuse from other children and young people;
- Sometimes people in a position of trust or authority abuse children such as a teacher, youth worker, children's worker or a church worker/leader;
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who abuse children set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children.

You need to be aware that your staff and volunteers may include:

- Some adults who are unable to provide consistent care;
- Some adults, including professionals, who manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit children, physically, emotionally or sexually;
- Some adults, including professionals, who by consistently behaving inappropriately towards children can cause them to suffer physical or emotional harm;
- It is very important to draw the distinction between sexual abuse and other ways in which children may suffer harm – the reasons for sexual abuse of children are very different from the reasons why people physically abuse or neglect them.

HOW PAEDOPHILES INVOLVE CHILDREN

Sexual abuse is an addictive and developing process involving careful planning and manipulation

It is impossible to understand the mind of a paedophile: below are just some of the ways they will try to befriend and reach children.

- By befriending, spending time with them; spending money on sweets and presents;
- By targeting vulnerable children and their families, e.g. lone parent families, isolated children who may have been emotionally deprived, neglected or previously abused;
- By "grooming" – gradually introducing a child to physical contact, cuddles and kisses that a parent may feel is quite innocent. Physical contact becomes increasingly sexual over a period of time;
- By taking photographs or videos or by introducing a child to exciting information and material on the internet;
- By saying to a child that what is happening is OK – parents won't mind etc. – or threatening dire things if a child should "tell".

Normally if anyone on the Sex Offenders' Register joins a congregation, the Diocesan Child Protection Officer will be informed by the Probation Service. The CPO will manage the situation, liaising closely with the Police, Probation Department and key people within the parish/church.

However, if you have concerns that anyone attending your church has been involved in abusive situations, you should contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer immediately.

HOW MAY I BECOME AWARE OF THE ACTUAL OR LIKELY OCCURRENCE OF ABUSE?

- A child may tell you;
- Someone may tell you that a child has told them or that they strongly believe a child has been or is being abused;
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation;
- A child's behaviour may indicate to you it is likely that he or she is being abused;
- Something in the behaviour of one of the workers or in the way a worker relates to a child alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way;
- Your awareness of a suspicion about abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you by a third party (parent, friend, co-worker) who suspects or has been told of the abuse.

If you are concerned that a child or young person has been or is at risk of abuse, you have no choice but to act.

ACTIONS FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF ABUSE

There is no one simple set of rules to follow in responding to these situations. However, the following key points are designed to help when situations arise during the course of your church's work with children, and young people. They should guide the actions of anyone who is told of abuse:

Do's

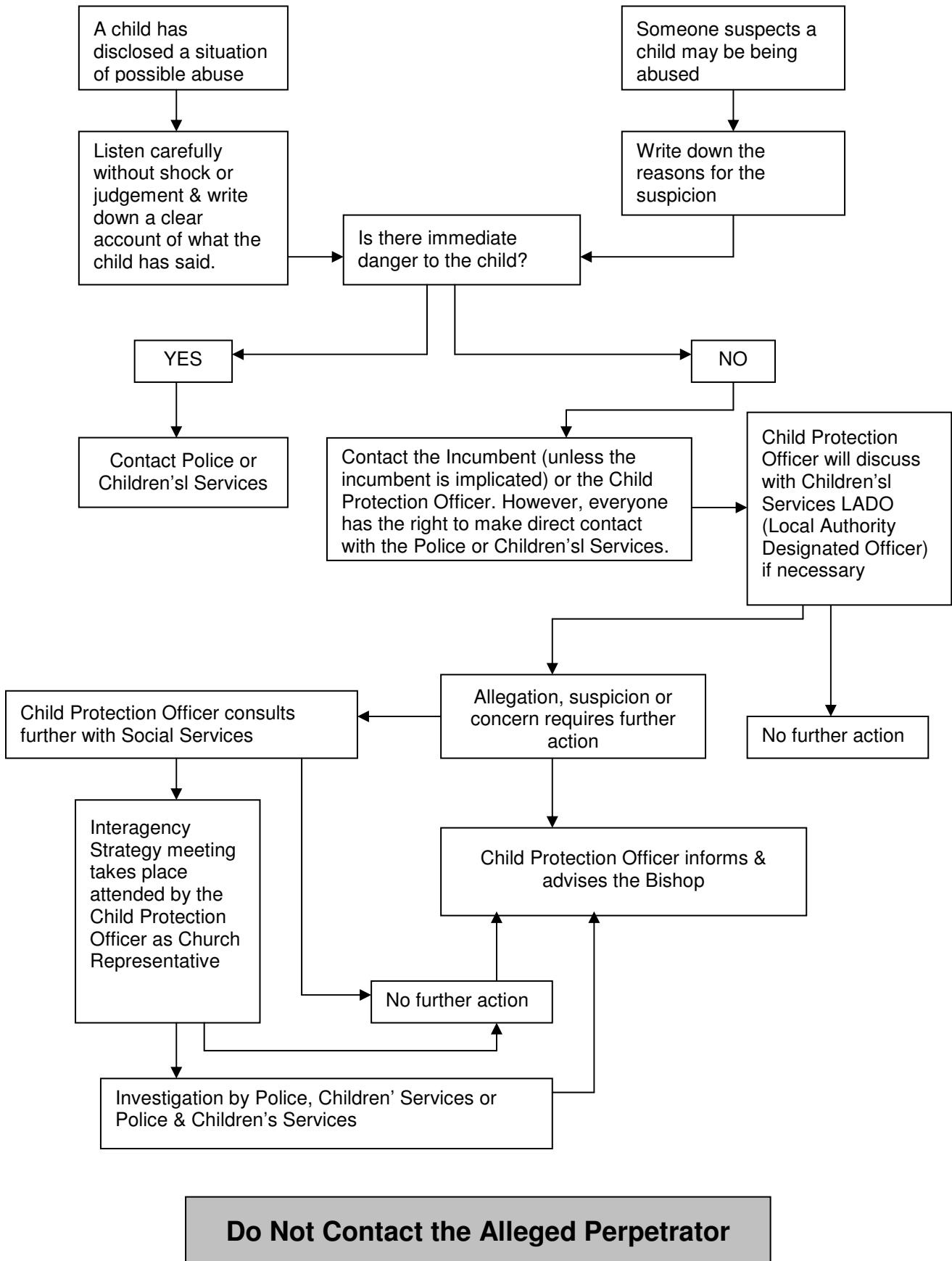
- Stay calm.
- **Listen** and hear.
- Give time to the person to say what they want.
- **Reassure** that they have done the right thing in telling.
- **Record in writing** what was said as soon as possible.
- **Report** to the incumbent (unless they are the alleged abuser) and/or Diocesan Child Protection Officer.
- **Record** your report.
- **Inform the parents** unless to do so would be contrary to the child's welfare.

Don'ts

- Do not panic.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Do not enquire into the details of the abuse.
- Do not ask probing, leading or suggestive questions.
- **Do not investigate** any allegations.
- Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- **Do not contact the person the child alleges has abused them.**
- **If you receive third party information do not contact the person alleged to have been abused.**

- **Under no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer attempt to deal with the problem alone.**
- **The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously.**
- **In the first instance the concern should be reported to the Priest/Churchwarden. The Diocesan Child Protection Officer should then be contacted immediately.**
- **Anyone has the right to contact Children's Services or the police, but the Diocesan Child Protection Officer is always available for consultation and will liaise with Social Services on your behalf.**
- **Failure to observe these guidelines may leave a child unprotected against further abuse.**

THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE



BREAKING THE SILENCE ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE

Diocese of Newcastle Domestic Abuse Charter for Action

We believe that Domestic Abuse is unacceptable. By Domestic Abuse we mean:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.” (A Home Office definition)

This Diocese

- **Acknowledges** that Domestic Abuse is an affront to humanity.
- **Resolves** to do all it can to make our churches safe places where those who experience or have witnessed domestic abuse can find sanctuary and informed help.
- **Calls** on churches and congregations to be aware of the signs of domestic abuse, and the support available for victims, families and perpetrators.
- **Will support** initiatives to help local churches be better informed about Domestic Abuse.
- **Urges** local congregations to help break the silence about Domestic Abuse.

We encourage the Church in every locality to:

- Take Domestic Abuse seriously and take action to become better informed
- Ensure that its message and ministry consistently reflects the view that Domestic Abuse in all its forms is unacceptable
- Accept that domestic abuse can be a serious problem that occurs in church families as well as in wider society.
- Undertake to sensitively listen, support and care for those affected by Domestic Abuse.
- Undertake no action that will put victims at further risk.
- Make contact with, support, learn from and publicise local support agencies.
- Seek to witness to the love, justice, mercy and forgiveness of God.
- Teach what it means to be made equally in God's image.
- Ask its Responsible Caring Group to ensure that appropriate and up to date information is readily available in churches.

This charter has been drawn up from the National Guidelines published by the Archbishops' Council and is indebted to similar charters from other dioceses.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BECOME AWARE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

The term 'Domestic Violence' describes a continuum of behaviours ranging from verbal abuse through threatened intimidation, withholding of finances, manipulative behaviour, control and disempowerment, physical and sexual assault to rape and homicide.

- **Domestic violence has an impact in a number of ways.** It can pose a threat to an unborn child, because assaults on pregnant women frequently involve punches or kicks directed at the abdomen, risking injury to both mother and foetus. Older children may also suffer blows during episodes of violence.
- Children may be greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent or by being drawn into the violence or pressurised into concealing it. The physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children. The negative impact of domestic violence is exacerbated when the violence is combined with drink or drug misuse.
- Domestic violence occurs between people from all ethnic backgrounds, all abilities and ages and all income levels. Whilst domestic violence occurs between people in same sex relationships, the major presentation is from men to women in a heterosexual relationship. Men are also victims of domestic violence, although fairly small numbers are involved in comparison with the most prevalent presentation of domestic violence as being perpetrated by men against women and children. Nonetheless this experience may, in particular, constrain the ability of children to disclose.

Did you know that?

- 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence at some time in their lives.
- Approximately 2 women a week die at the hands of partners or ex-partners.
- Domestic violence is the most widespread violent crime in Britain.
- Domestic violence has been found to feature in a high proportion of families where a child has died and abuse or neglect has been a factor.
- In a high percentage of reported incidents of domestic violence, children are either present or in the household.
- Even if children are not physically hurt through an episode of domestic violence, they are exposed to an emotionally damaging and painful experience.

- Even if children are not present in the home whilst a violent episode occurs, they are sensitive to the 'atmosphere' and to the power and control imbalance in the parental relationship.
- Domestic violence often begins or intensifies during pregnancy.
- Child abuse is 15 times more likely to be present in situations where domestic violence is occurring.

Recognition

Due to a number of social factors, domestic violence is rarely the presenting problem for Child Protection agencies. More usually, requests for assistance are in respect of:

- Direct physical/sexual/emotional abuse of children.
- The child's behaviour (mum has difficulty in coping with).
- Bullying or being bullied.
- Frequent injuries or accidents.
- Sexually aggressive behaviour towards other children.
- Alcohol and drug use.
- Suicide and self-harming behaviours.
- Mental health/mental illness (primarily women or children).
- Housing repairs/criminal damage.
- Financial assistance requests.

Where a separation has taken place for a variety of reasons, often due to pressure from the man concerned and family members, a woman may resume the relationship. It is therefore crucial to recognise that if a recent separation has taken place, it does not mean that there is no longer a need to share concerns with relevant professionals/agencies about the welfare or safety of the child(ren).

Referral to Children's Services

The 2002 Adoption and Children Act recognises that children witnessing Domestic Violence are at 'Significant Harm' and therefore constitutes Child Abuse.

If you become aware of incidents of domestic violence, discuss this with the Diocesan Child Protection Officer, who will be able to offer advice.

WHEN SEEKING TO HELP IN A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATION

Do's

- Listen and believe.
- Find out what the victim wants.
- Keep resources available and visible for people to pick up.
- Signpost people to expert help.
- Remember we have a responsibility to protect the weak and the vulnerable.

Don'ts

- Do not seek simplistic solutions – if they existed the victim would probably have used them.
- Do not seek to impose your solution on the situation – you will only compound the abuse by taking control away from the victim. In any case the situation will look different from inside than it does to you, from the outside. The solution must be the victim's. S/he may decide to remain in the abusive situation; this must be accepted.
- Remember that leaving a violent situation is usually a process not a single event. A victim may return to the abuser several times before they make the final break.
- Remember that the most dangerous time for the victim and their children is at the point of leaving and just after it when the abuser is seeking to re-impose their control or gain revenge. Their personal safety has to be of the highest priority then.
- Remember that what the victim needs above everything else is your support. One of the weapons an abuser uses is isolation. By being available to the victim you are helping to break that part of the cycle.
- Remember that domestic violence is usually a complex situation needing assistance and advice from a number of different Agencies. (No single statutory or voluntary Agency has responsibility for tackling it). If you really want to help you will find out which local agencies recognise domestic violence and give it priority. Housing, legal services, health, social work, police and a range of voluntary organisations are likely to be able to help, depending on what the need is. There may also be local support groups for such persons.
- Northumbria and Durham Police Services have local Domestic Violence Coordinators.
- For more information contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Substance refers to illicit drugs, alcohol, prescription drugs and solvents.

The word **Misuse** refers to consumption of substances which is either dependent use or use associated with having a harmful effect on the individual or the community.

Research suggests that there are all kinds of reasons for misuse; that key factors include unemployment, low self-esteem, educational failure, boredom and physical, psychological or family problems. Sometimes addiction can be the result of experimentation or enjoyment or a shift from alcohol or tobacco to more serious substances. The fact is that overtly mind altering substances have greater pull than other activities. Many people misuse drugs because they don't have the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives

Correcting some misconceptions

- All young people do not take drugs;
- All drug takers are not addicts;
- All drugs do not kill;
- All drug takers do not commit crime;
- Illegal drugs are not the unique preserve of people from particular social and ethnic backgrounds.

The majority of people in this country do not nor have ever taken an illegal substance and the majority of those who have are experimenters or casual users. By far the minority of drug users, between 100,000 and 200,000 people, become addicts

SUBSTANCE-ABUSING PARENTS

It should be recognised that children are not at risk solely by virtue of the fact that their parent uses substances. Many children of substance misusing parents receive good enough parenting, stability and have all their needs fully met. However, we should be alert to the possibility that substance misuse by a parent may be a contributing factor to abuse and/or neglect.

For some children parental substance misuse will affect their lives to such an extent that they become children who are in need of protection.

If you have concerns that this is the case, contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer for advice.

For definitions and identification of substances please refer to Reference Section 6. Page 12

BULLYING: A GUIDE FOR ADULTS

Bullying can mean many different things, including actions which some adults may dismiss as trivial or unimportant. It is estimated that as many as one in four children in primary schools and one in ten children in secondary schools are bullied

Adults and children alike are bullied sometime in their lives, by brothers, sisters, neighbours, adults or peers leaving the person scared, vulnerable and quite alone.

Bullying is not easy to define, but may present in the following forms.

Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.

Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreads rumours, persistent teasing.

Emotional: excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, coercion.

Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.

Sexual: unwanted physical contact or abusive comments, homophobic or gender comments

Bullying can happen at school in the playground, in the classroom, on the bus or walking home, in the workplace and even in church.

There are no “natural victims”. Anyone can be subjected to bullying. It may be the case that some children/people are bullied because they are different in some way (they may have a disability, or speak with a different accent, for example) but many other children are bullied for no obvious reason. Often children and young people bully others because the opportunity is there.

Adults often bully each other in the home, workplace, social groups, in P.C.C. meetings and other church activities where there is a dispute over roles and authority.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- Depression;
- Low self-esteem;
- Shyness;
- Poor academic achievement;
- Isolation;
- Threatened or attempted suicide.

A child may indicate by their behaviour that he or she is being bullied. If a child shows some of the following signs, bullying may be responsible and you might want to ask if someone is bullying or threatening them – **remember no-one deserves to be bullied.**

The following advice is given about bullying at school, but could easily be applied to church activities.

- be frightened of walking to and from school;
- change their usual route;
- not want you to go on the school bus;
- beg you to drive them to school;
- be unwilling to go to school (or be 'school phobic');
- feel ill in the mornings begin truanting;
- begin doing poorly in their school work;
- come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed;
- come home starving (bully taking dinner money);
- become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence;
- become distressed and anxious, stop eating;
- attempt or threaten suicide;
- cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares;
- have their possessions go missing;
- ask for money or start stealing (to pay the bully);
- continually 'lose' their pocket money;
- refuse to talk about what's wrong;
- have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- begin to bully other children, siblings;
- become aggressive and unreasonable;
- give improbable excuses for any of the above;

THE BULLY

It can be hard to distinguish bullying from other things which happen to children or adults such as:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Getting into fights
- Intimidating

Usually we would say that a young person was a bully if they were frightening, upsetting or hurting another young person on a regular basis.

You may find it hard to believe at first because you will probably not see it happen – bullying is usually something which happens secretly and can be subtle.

Why are some children bullies?

Sometimes bullies have themselves been bullied by another child – it's almost as if they think "If someone's treated me that way then I'm going to do it too".

What can you do?

- Talk to the young person. They will probably say they don't know why they're doing it and this may be true. Often young people do things without being quite sure why.
- You can explain to the young person that you don't like their behaviour and want to help them to stop.
- If the young person feels inadequate or unhappy in other ways you will need to try to help solve these problems.
- Try to find something that they are good at and give them praise and encouragement with that.
- Try not to stress their problems or point out their failings especially in front of others.
- Think about whether the young person could be trying to prove him or herself or win friends through bullying. If s/he hasn't many friends can you help them to make new ones
- Try to find out if the bullying has stopped and if so make sure the young person knows how pleased you are.

Remember

Bullying can occur in any situation or institution and affect adults as well as children. It is unacceptable to bully another person. It is a misuse of power and authority.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Listen to young people and believe what they tell you about their feelings and concerns.
- Help the young person to explore their options and keep control, do not take over.
- Talk to other adults. Explore options both in school and at home.
- Encourage children to feel good about themselves; both those who bully and the bullied often lack self-esteem.
- Encourage children to understand that we are all different, yet equally important.
- Encourage children to think about their own and each other's feelings.

Action you can take

- If you suspect bullying is taking place in your situation then contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer or link up with the other agencies below.

For organisations who can help see section 6 Reference file.