

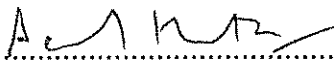
**PARISH OF ST. HILDA, WARLEY WOODS, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**RESPONDING WELL TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

This policy statement was adopted on behalf of all members of the congregation of St. Hilda at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on 03 March 2014. This policy will be reviewed each year to monitor the progress which has been achieved. The next review is due in January 2018.

This Church appoints the following two Responding Well Advisors to represent at our meetings and to outside bodies, the concerns and views of anyone who may have been sexually abused:

Richard Haynes and Anne Harris

**Signed:**

Incumbent: .....  ..... Date: 27.2.17

Churchwarden: .....  ..... Date: 27.2.17

Churchwarden: .....  ..... Date: 27.2.17

**Statement of Safeguarding Principles**

St Hilda's Church endorses the following statement of safeguarding principles which appears at the head of each safeguarding policy of the Church of England.

We are committed to:

- the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry for all: children, young people and adults,
- the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and all adults,
- the establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

To this end:

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognizes the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation.
- We will seek to protect survivors of sexual abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

## **Policy Statement**

### **1. Related Policy Documents**

This Responding Well policy has been written within the context of the following related safeguarding policy documents:

#### **1.1 'Diocese of Birmingham Parish Pack for Safeguarding Adults' (2010)**

The purpose of this document is to assist Churches to respond to current requirements and also to adopt a policy for safeguarding adults. It was written with reference to the House of Bishops' document "Promoting a Safe Church: Policy for Safeguarding Adults in the Church of England" (2006). It includes a section which addresses care in the Church for adult survivors of abuse.

#### **1.2 Church of England – Birmingham: Safeguarding Policies 'God's Children: Our Diocese' (2011)**

This is the latest revision of the safeguarding children policy for the diocese of Birmingham. It was written with reference to the House of Bishops' document "Protecting All God's Children: Policy for Safeguarding Children in the Church of England" (2010). It includes a section entitled "The Care and Counselling of Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse".

#### **1.3 Parish of St. Hilda, Warley Woods Policy and Procedures for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People at St. Hilda's Church (March 2014) and Policy and Procedures for the Safeguarding of Adults at St. Hilda's Church (March 2014)**

These policies respectively offer guidelines for the care and safeguarding of children and young people under the age of 18 and for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, age 18 and over.

#### **1.4 The Document 'Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused. Policy and Guidance for the Church of England' (2011)**

This is a resource to help parishes and dioceses to focus on the needs of those who have suffered from and survived the trauma of sexual abuse and to help us all to "respond well". It applies to all children and adults who are being or have been subjected to sexual abuse, including those adults for whom the procedures of a safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults would not always be applicable.

#### **2. Overlap with the Parish Safeguarding Policies**

If a child under 18 years of age or an adult who meets the definition of "vulnerable adult" under the parish safeguarding policy, starts to speak about being sexually abused, they should be listened to carefully and non-judgementally, and the safeguarding policy should be followed. This includes letting the person know what you are going to do next, making careful notes of what has been said, and immediately informing a member of the relevant Safeguarding Referral Group.

#### **3. Listening and Respecting a Person's Right to make Decisions**

If an adult who does not meet the definition of "vulnerable adult", under the parish safeguarding policy, starts to speak about being sexually abused, they should be listened to carefully and non-judgementally. It is also important to remember that they have the right to make their own decisions about their lives.

#### **4. Third Party Information**

If the person speaking is a third party i.e. not directly experiencing the abuse, but reporting abuse being carried out by another person, then great care should be exercised by the listener, who should consult as soon as possible with a Responding Well Advisor who will help to decide the most appropriate action to be taken.

#### **5. Risk of the abuse continuing**

In all situations, it is important to ascertain whether there is any risk of the abuse continuing, either for this person or for others. If there is, then it is necessary to let the person know what you are going to do next and immediately to inform the relevant person, according to the parish policy for responding well to those who have been sexually abused.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

Any information disclosed must be treated as confidential, but it should be explained to the person disclosing that whilst confidentiality will be observed, it will be necessary to share the information with one or more of the Responding Well Advisors, whose role is to provide informed support and guidance. Whilst it is important to offer confidentiality, it is essential to be clear about the limits on confidentiality where there is any continuing risk/harm to others. This should be explained carefully so that the person can understand the reasons.

**7. Responding Well Advisors**

St Hilda's Church will annually appoint two Responding Well Advisors who are complementary to and will work with the Incumbent, the Safeguarding Children Co-ordinators, the Children's Advocate and the Safeguarding Adults Lead Persons. Their role is to be:

**7.1 familiar with the 'Responding Well' document,**

**7.2 the first point of contact** for anyone involved in a disclosure of present or past sexual abuse,

**7.3 aware of the boundaries** between listening and counselling,

**7.4 aware of when to seek help or advice from others** when encountering or working with adults who disclose abuse,

**7.5 familiar with national, diocesan and local resources** available for adult survivors, and ensuring that the PCC and Ministry Team are aware that this information is held.

**8. Awareness of this Policy**

The following actions will be taken to ensure that all members of St Hilda's Church are aware of the Responding Well policy

**8.1 St. Hilda's Church website and the Church and Church Hall notice boards** will clearly identify the Church policies for Safeguarding Children and Young People, Safeguarding Adults, and this Responding Well policy, together with the names of the Responding Well Advisors and details of the Diocese Listening Service for adults affected by sexual abuse.

**8.2 Other Organisations who use the Church premises.** A copy of this policy will be sent to the leaders of all groups who are outside our control but who use our premises regularly.

**8.3 Diocesan Training.** Our clergy and licensed lay readers will receive the appropriate Diocesan training on safeguarding adults and on sexual abuse awareness.

**8.4 Annual refresher sessions,** based on the 'Responding Well' guidance, will be provided for the PCC and the Ministry Team, after consultation with the relevant Diocesan Advisors. Members of these meetings will be encouraged to take the same awareness raising to other groups and organisations of which they are members.

**8.5 The 'Responding Well Parish Check List for those with Responsibility for Pastoral Care at St Hilda's'** is taken from the 'Responding Well' guidance. The response of St Hilda's PCC can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy and it will be completed on an annual basis.

## **8.6 Annual Review**

The PCC will review this policy and the arrangements for 'Responding Well Advisors' on an annual basis, possibly at the same time as the annual January review of the Church policies for Safeguarding Children and Young People and for Safeguarding Adults.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: January 2017: Response to the Reviewing Well Parish Check List for those with Responsibility for Pastoral Care at St Hilda's**

#### **7.1 Are the members of your pastoral team familiar with this document?**

We have two Responding Well Advisors who are familiar with the Responding Well document and the document is reflected in the PCC "Responding Well to those who have been Sexually Abused Policy and Procedures". We do not have a formal "pastoral team", however members of our prayer ministry team, in addition to clergy, readers and Children's and Families Missioner have been told about the document.

#### **7.2 Are they aware of the boundaries between listening and counselling in respect of vulnerable people?**

The two Responding Well Advisors are aware of the boundaries between counselling and listening and based on their own knowledge and the Responding Well document (e.g. sections B7c, C1, C3) and they can guide others in this understanding.

#### **7.3 Do they know when to seek help/advice from others when encountering or working with adults who disclose abuse?**

The first point of contact would be the Responding Well Advisors, who are aware of the guidance within the Responding Well document, which includes the roles of the Diocesan Adviser and Authorised Listeners and guidance about when to contact the Police and/or the Local Authority. Posters are displayed in the church porch, church hall porch and scout hut for the wider congregation to be aware of the current key contacts.

#### **7.4 Is your congregation aware of who are the good listeners in your church, whom they might safely approach with concerns?**

People choose their own listeners, and it can take time for them to build up a sense of trust in the listener of their choice. It would be more helpful to rephrase this question to "Are members of St Hilda's Church, who may find themselves in the position of listening to a disclosure of sexual abuse, aware of the Responding Well Advisors and their role? The answer to this question is not yet "yes", and there is still a need to ensure, through publicity and awareness raising that as many people as possible are aware of the Responding Well Advisors and their role.

**7.5 Are your worship/service leaders aware of the way language and situations in church might invoke difficult memories for adult survivors of abuse?**

Awareness is increasing, and the PCC has agreed that our clergy and licensed lay readers receive the appropriate Diocesan training on safeguarding adults and on sexual abuse awareness, as set out in sections 1.4.8 and 1.4.9 of the Responding Well document.

One of the tasks given to the PCC safeguarding group was to “critically examine our liturgical texts” (with reference to section A3 of the Responding Well document). Following a vision day in October 2016, which highlighted inclusion as a key church priority, this work is to continue.

**7.6 Do the worship leaders endeavour to make the worship, i.e. use of liturgy, music etc., inclusive of adult survivors?**

It is recognised that this is an area which requires continuing consideration by the worship leaders, with support from the training they receive and suggestions from the PCC safeguarding group and others. In the past year, worship leaders have improved in their efforts to make worship inclusive of adult survivors, but it is hard to evaluate whether individuals consider the worship to be inclusive for them.

**7.7 As the pastoral co-ordinator are you familiar with local and national resources available for adult survivors and have you made your team aware that you hold such information?**

We are aware of national resources and of who to contact at the Birmingham Diocese for advice and access to Diocesan resources. The PCC safeguarding group is working on updating our information about local community resources and any possible local contacts which can be made. More work is needed in updating our knowledge of local resources who might be of assistance to a person who has been sexually abused.

**7.8 Having read this document, have you ensured that you have continuing access to it, and have a copy to share with others?**

Each Responding Well Advisor has a copy of the document, and others are aware that it can be accessed and downloaded from the Church of England website: [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org) .

The document is reflected in the PCC “Responding Well to those who have been Sexually Abused Policy and Procedures”, which is accessible from St Hilda’s website [www.sainthildawarleywoods.co.uk/](http://www.sainthildawarleywoods.co.uk/) and will also be posted on the Church and Church Hall notice boards. The PCC Safeguarding group express concerns that the document has not been referred to by the Diocese in recent briefings, and a refresher is needed for newer members of the congregation if the policy is to remain effective.

**Appendix 2:  
St Hilda's Policy and Practice for 'Responding Well' to those who have been sexually abused**

