Diocese of Westminster
SAFEGUARDING SERVICE

Visiting adults in the home: Safer Practice for Volunteers/workers

This guidance only applies to 'formal' visiting done by parish appointed volunteers/workers in the name of the parish. We've included templates to further support the visit which can be adapted by the parish to support best practice delivery.

Visiting adults at home can be a valuable aspect of pastoral care. Sometimes this will be done on an informal, neighbourly basis. Visiting at home is especially important for adults who are home-bound, for instance through disability or illness, and can contribute greatly to the quality of their lives.

Care must be taken, however, both for the protection of those being visited and for the those doing the visiting. There should be accountability and transparency in the manner in which church officers engage in visits to homes.

The Safeguarding Service strongly recommends that home visits, particularly those undertaken by volunteers, always be conducted in pairs.

Good Practice for Volunteers / Workers when visiting people at home:

- **Before attending ensure that an appointment has been made to visit in advance, particularly if it is your first visit. Let the person know that you will bring identification to each appointment.**
- **If this is a first visit, or if the conversation is likely to move onto sensitive pastoral matters, ensure that the person is aware that the conversation is confidential, but also what the boundaries of confidentiality are.**
- **Carry identification with you and be proactive in letting the person see it. This is particularly important for elderly people living alone, who may have other people (including perhaps 'bogus callers') visiting to exploit them in some way. Transparency in letting them know that they have a right to see identification does them a great service.**
- **Consider the risks of the visit. Is the person, or another occupant, volatile or unpredictable? Do they have a dog who does not like visitors? You may not know everything before a first visit but try and find out what you can.**
- **Carry a mobile phone. You should always let someone know when you enter and leave the person's home.**
- **Ask the person whether they would like repeat visits, whether and how they would like to be contacted again, and so on. Leave them feeling fully in control of your contact with them.**

- **Make a note of the visit; store all such notes in accordance with data protection requirements. The notes do not need to be extensive, but the date, time of arrival and departure, and any significant observations or points of conversation should be recorded. Let the person you are visiting know that you keep brief records, and always be prepared to show them your notes should they ask.**
- **Set appropriate boundaries: It's important thay you do not stray beyond the ministry related to the appointment you have made e.g. providing the eucharist to the housebound, and if other services are needed refer to the suitable service after the visit. e.g. help with shopping contact your St Vincent De Paul group.**
- **To avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family please take care when accepting any gifts other than token items. If you accept a small gift, declare it someone at the parish such as the Parish Priest or Parish Safeguarding Representative to ensure transparency. If someone wants to make a donation to the parish, refer them to the person/team responsible for donations.**

Lone Visiting Considerations

The Safeguarding Service strongly recommends that home visits, particularly those undertaken by volunteers, always be conducted in pairs to safeguard the people being visited and the volunteer/staff who undertake this role.

The leader/co-ordinator of the activity/home visits e.g. Parish Priest, Deacon or Lead Volunteer will have greater responsibility for the supervision, monitoring and support for volunteers to ensure compliance in safeguarding and health and safety while carrying out the task. The purpose of the visit, timings, risk assessment and interactions should be regularly monitored and reviewed. e.g., a risk assessment for a Eucharistic Minster delivering to the house bound vs weekly bereavement visits will require different considerations.

While this guidance does not place restriction on home visits by one person, it's important to ensure the other aspects of safer working practice in this guidance are followed and that the Parish has the following in place:

- **A lone visiting policy that is provided to the volunteer as part of their induction. This includes a signed agreement from the Volunteer/Staff undertaking the home visit making it clear their role and responsibilities while working in isolation.**
- **A person responsible for co-ordinating the visits (e.g. Parish Priest or Parish priest's delegate/Lead Volunteer) who must ascertain the risk to the team / team members when working in isolation and provide parish guidance to manage the risk.**
- **The safeguarding risk assessment for visiting the housebound should include lone visiting procedures, timed review of the visit records between the volunteer and leader of the activity and steps undertaken to support the volunteers carrying out their role (including training)**
- **Appropriate health and safety guidance including insurance, security, first aid and fire safety.**

Duty of Care when visiting the home

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk in the home that you are visiting, even if it's someone other than the person you have been asked by the parish to visit, do not delay in contacting the police, using 999 if there is immediate danger.

It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to report all allegations of abuse to statutory authorities, regardless of whether the abuse occurred recently or in the past, or whether the accused person is living or deceased. If you are in any role within the Catholic Church in England and Wales, you must refer allegations directly to the diocesan safeguarding service or directly to the Police.

Creating a Culture of Safeguarding: Training Considerations

Online safeguarding training is provided by Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) via their website https://training.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/

In the Diocese of Westminster everyone completes the same level of training:

- Clergy, Trustees, Employees and DBS Volunteers: Level 3 for Clergy, Staff and DBS volunteers in the Diocese of Westminster
- Westminster Volunteers without DBS: Level 3 Safeguarding for Volunteers in the Catholic Church

Further guidance on registering and using the online training is available on our website: https://rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/traning-dates/

The NSPCC offers an online training course for under £20, 15 mins in duration titled Safeguarding awareness training for workers who enter people's homes https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/safeguarding-awareness-course

Safeguarding Resources to refer to:

RCDOW Safeguarding Service Website www.rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/

- Reporting Concerns: www.rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/reporting-a-concern-about-a-child-or-adult-at-risk/
- Safer Recruitment: www.rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/safer-recruitment-and-dbs-applications/
- Safer environment: www.rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/creating-a-safe-environment/
- Parish Resources: www.rcdow.org.uk/safeguarding/resources-and-links/

Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) Website: www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/

- Parish Resources: www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/parish-resources/
- Practice Guidance: www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/practice-guidance/

The national charity for the UK voluntary sector: https://www.ncvo.org.uk

The Diocese of Westminster and all its parishes, ethnic chaplaincies and other agencies strive to promote a culture of safeguarding.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Appendix 1 - Template Home Visiting Risk Assessment Checklist

Name of adult to be visited ……..

Reason of Visit: ……

Each home should be treated as a separate risk. Some homes may have risks in more than one area - each one should be addressed

If the answer to any of these questions is yes please list any actions that you have taken to reduce the risk posed.

1.	Does the adult or anyone living there have a history of violence, or threatening behaviour? *If yes, please detail below*	*Yes/No* *Not known*
2.	Is the adult a risk to themselves?	*Yes/No* *Not known*
3.	Does the adult have any vulnerabilities that would make it inappropriate for him/ her to be visited alone (eg by a single male or female?)	*Yes/No* *Not Known*
4..	Are there any health risks associated with visiting the adult at home? (Examples might be infestation, smoking, intravenous drug use, infectious diseases, dangerous pets?) *If yes, please detail below*	*Yes/No* *Not Known*
5.	Are there any other risk factors or hazards (Including mental health, substance/alcohol mis-use)? *If yes, please detail below*	*Yes/No* *Not Known*

Representatives of the parish must not carry out home visits if they are unwell themselves, as they could transmit infection.

Representatives of the parish should use antibacterial hand wash when undertaking home visits and between each visit to minimise the spread of any infections

Please detail below any other information that you think is important:
Completed by: *Role:*
Copy passed to Parish Safeguarding Representative on:
Signed: *Date:*

Appendix 2 – ADULTS HOME VISITING RECORD TEMPLATE

Home Visit Record – Parish Name			
Name of Parishioner:		**Name of Parish Representative:**	
Notes:		**Role:**	
		Reports to/Lead of Activity:	

Date	**Day**	**Time In**	**Time Out**	**Notes** (Include discussion/actions/referrals)

Appendix 3 – SAMPLE HOME VISIT RISK ASSESSMENT – NAME OF PARISH

DATE OF ASSESSMENT:- dd/mm/yyyy **DATE OF REVIEW: DD/MM/YYYY**

Hazards	People	Severity of harm	Likelihood	Risk Level	Controls
Aggressive or violent person/visitor/family member	Parish volunteer may be harmed	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	low	Refer to home visit guidance Risk reduced by informing Parish Lead prior to visit 2 persons visit if aware of a risk in the home Take mobile phone for communication
Driving	Parish volunteer may be harmed	Vehicle breakdown Accident Intruder in vehicle when unattended Use of mobile phone Fatigue	Remote possibility	Low	Maintain vehicle properly Belong to a breakdown organisation Carry torch, phone etc for emergency Advise parish lead or family where you are going Phone in if plan changes Do not leave valuables in car (e.g. laptop) Avoid risky areas
Movement through public areas e.g. to/from car parks	Parish volunteer may be harmed	Attack Theft of property	Remote possibility	Low	Back down from confrontation Call for help Use attack alarm Keep valuables secure and out of sight or disguised Surrender valuables if personal safety is at risk Use staff bus or public transport if available Access post incident support
Illness, injury or accident	Parish volunteer may be harmed or injured	Illness or injury	Remote possibility	low	Take mobile Alert emergency services Alert team members if able to Ensure access to phone Take prescribed medication as directed or as needed Complete “injury at parish” protocol on return
Attack by dog or other animal	Parish volunteer may be harmed or injured	Major injury may occur	Remote possibility	low	Avoid contact with animals Seek local advice before entering premises with animals. Appropriate behaviour near animals – avoid alarming them, e.g. sudden movements

I have read and understand the home visit risk assessment.

My mobile telephone number is: XXXXX XXX XXX PERSON NOTIFIED OF ARRIVAL AND LEAVING: _____

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____ TIME:_____