

# **The Parish of St Andrew's Handsworth**

## **POLICY for RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

### **PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH**

#### **Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse**

We do not tolerate any form of domestic violence or abuse and will work with any relevant agencies to prevent and stop it.

St. Andrew's Church accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem which occurs in all sections of society, including church families.

We recognise that domestic abuse is the physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional, social or financial abuse of a person within an intimate or family relationship which forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

We recognise that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and irreconcilable with the Christian faith and way of living.

We undertake to listen, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse, especially those who are most vulnerable.

We will signpost people to domestic abuse support agencies and statutory bodies if required

We will teach, model and encourage what it means to be in good, respectful, safe and nurturing relationships.

We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships
- Refuse to condone any form of abuse
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship
- All survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities
- Domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is often a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour
- Working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse, whilst appreciating the need to ensure distance between the parties and refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse
- Raising awareness about other agencies, support services that can be a resource
- Ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community

- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse and identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Guidance as to what to look for if you suspect abuse may be happening.

It includes all violence and abuse of power within a household between:

- Men & women, married & unmarried, parents to children, children to parents, including elderly parents, children to children and between non related parties
- Physical: Punching. Kicking. Hurting in any physical way
- Psychological: Bullying. Undermining through word and action
- Spiritual: Prevention from Worshipping and following Faith
- Financial: Taking money
- Sexual: Demanding sex and rape
- Emotional: Making a person insecure. Turning friends and family against them, especially children or in other ways isolating them
- Neglect: Depriving a person of food and everyday essentials

**We feel that any of this behaviour should not be an accepted part of Christian life. Where you know, or suspect, that children are at risk from witnessing domestic violence then you are legally required to report it to the police or social services.**

**If both victim & alleged perpetrator are church members or the alleged perpetrator is a church officer, staff or volunteer in any ministry the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor MUST be informed and a record kept by the Parish Safeguarding Officers**

This policy will be reviewed and adopted annually along with the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policies. In view of the current situation regarding Covid-19 this statement has not been physically signed by the signatories as listed below. This will be undertaken as soon as safe working practices allow.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints **\_Valerie Powell\_** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Incumbent **..VACANT.....**

Churchwardens: **Carl Hart and Ms Elaine Powell**

Date: **4th August 2020**