

## Church of England Policy on Domestic Abuse

The Church of England published new guidance on domestic abuse in March 2017. St Mary's have not yet considered this formally within the PCC. **The PCC is requested to consider the guidance below and approve the attached policy.**

### Summary of policy:

The Church of England is committed to raising awareness about domestic abuse and its impact on individuals, children, the wider family and community.

It will ensure that:

- The safety of individuals suffering abuse is the first priority;
- Teaching and worship raises awareness;
- Inappropriate behaviour is carefully challenged without increasing risk to victims;
- Clergy and clergy spouses have the same access to support and resources as others.

It is committed to all church bodies:

- Adopting and publishing a local policy on domestic abuse;
- Having clear procedures in place to respond to concerns;
- Having signage to show that your church is willing to talk about domestic abuse;
- Appointing a named individual;
- Training those in leadership, safeguarding or pastoral positions;
- Discussing domestic abuse in appropriate contexts e.g. marriage preparation, youth groups, ordination training;
- Organising and promoting training and awareness-raising sessions;
- Working and supporting statutory agencies and other support bodies.

Parishes need to:

- PCC to agree a parish domestic abuse statement including who to contact if there are concerns (see below for template parish statement);
- Appoint a named individual who is a point of contact for any advice and support. This may be the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO);
- Follow the process on how to respond to concerns about domestic abuse;
- Support those in leadership positions, pastoral and safeguarding roles to engage in Diocesan domestic abuse training;
- Consider the best place to display the domestic abuse statement including information about helplines and local services;
- Discuss domestic abuse in appropriate contexts such as marriage preparation;
- Challenge inappropriate comments and behaviour by church members;

Recommended good practice:

- Encourage leaders and those who preach to speak against domestic abuse in teaching, sermons, prayers and parish magazines - remember that many of the congregation may have a personal experience;
- Offer some awareness raising activities e.g. invite speakers from local domestic abuse agencies, organise an activity around 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women);
- Consider including activities around healthy relationships within activities for children and young people;
- Develop links with any local domestic abuse organisations;
- Organise courses in parenting and confidence-building.

# **Parish statement on domestic abuse**

**Parish of St Mary Magdalen, Knighton**

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

**All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. 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;
- 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, family and friends 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 usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of 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:**

#### **In all our activities –**

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors, friends and family and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

#### **In our publicity –**

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and other areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

#### **When concerns are raised –**

- 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.

#### **In our care –**

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

**If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one please contact Cora Paul Tel: 0116 367 8954**