

PCR House of Bishops' definitions

A **child** is defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018" as:

Anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday

This is the definition to be utilised for the purposes of the PCR Review.

A **vulnerable adult** or **adult at risk** is variously defined in legislation and guidance. For the purposes of the PCR Review, the definition contained in the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 should be used:

"...vulnerable adult means a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired."

It is acknowledged that this is a broad definition and that discretion will need to be exercised in some cases having regard to the person's entitlement to exercise choice and their mental capacity. Instances of alleged domestic violence by clergy and those with the Bishop's licence should be included.

Please note that experience has shown that there have been some cases of alleged abuse to people over 16 who have later said that they consented. Any such cases should be included even though prosecution or cautioning has not taken place.

Church officer is used within the Church to refer to:

Anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to an office, post or role, whether they be ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

The Church's definition is open to some interpretation but for the purposes of the PCR Review it will certainly encompass all clergy, including those with PTO, deceased clergy and clergy such as hospital, school and prison chaplains who hold the Bishop's licence, readers and licensed lay workers and volunteers and diocesan and parish lay employees and volunteers whose role includes (or has included) direct involvement with children and vulnerable adults (including those paid fees and honoraria). The judgement to be made is whether the role has in the past, does currently, or is likely in the future to provide opportunities for the abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults whilst engaged in church organised activities and whether the role involves a relationship of trust.

Qualifying behaviours/cases

Children

- Behaviour which has harmed, may have harmed or is likely to harm a child including neglect.
- Possible commission of a criminal offence against or related to a child including the viewing, downloading or possession of indecent images of children.
- Behaviour which indicates that the person is unsuitable to work with children.
- More than one low level concern which would not, taken individually, meet the threshold for referral but taken together would justify further exploration.
- Cases of young people over the age of 16 who later say they gave consent and which have not led to prosecution or a caution.
- Cases where victims have reported abuse but it has subsequently lacked foundation. This should be clearly stated on the Parish Return.

Vulnerable Adults

- Behaviour which has harmed, may have harmed or is likely to harm a vulnerable adult.
- Behaviour which may be a criminal offence against a vulnerable adult.
- Behaviour which indicates that the person is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.
- More than one low level concern which would not, taken individually, meet the threshold for referral but taken together would justify further exploration.
- Cases of concern concerning adults who later say they gave consent and which have not led to prosecution or caution.
- Cases where victims have reported abuse but it has subsequently lacked foundation. This should be clearly stated on the Parish Return.

Relevant behaviours against both children and vulnerable adults may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, discrimination, theft, fraud and financial exploitation.