

A REFLECTION ON OUR LEADERSHIP ROLE

Everyone here today is called to be a 'safeguarding leader' within our Church. What does this mean for us in our leadership role as well as for us in our individual practice?

The following quotes explore these ideas. The first from the Revd David Gamble's presidential address (2009) and the second from Time For Action (2002), which explores the Church's response to those who have suffered sexual abuse.

- a) Creating safer space: safeguarding; sanctuary; safer to be different; safer to explore; safer all round. Creating safer space. Not just the name of a report or the theme for a presidential address. But it's a task, a role and a challenge for the Church and for each person here today, every single one of us. Creating safer space.
- b) Fundamentally, sexual harassment and abuse is a serious misuse of power and authority, committed by the dominant partner in an unequal relationship. Power is a fact of life. It is present in every relationship and situation. Clergy and others with leadership roles have been granted power as a resource and responsibility to support, lead and serve other people. The institution of the Church, and individual members, have a right to expect that such authority will be trustworthy and used in the best interests of those who are served. Ministry carries with it spiritual authority, and privileged, if not unique, access to people's homes. Clergy are expected to demonstrate high standards of moral and sexual integrity: those to whom they minister hope and expect, not that those whose vocation comes from God will be 'perfect' or beyond the reach of ordinary human complexity in relationship but that they should at least embody a mature and careful Christian understanding of the responsibility to respect and honour all members of their community.

ACTIVITY 1.1

Take five minutes to reflect on the themes of these paragraphs for your own leadership role.



A COMMITMENT AT THE START OF EACH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. We see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

Candles are lit for individuals known to us.