

Appendix B

Definitions of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being any person under the age of 18: 'child' or 'children' is used to refer to all children under the age of 18.'

The House of Bishops Safeguarding Adults Policy defines a vulnerable adult as:

Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness, or other situation is permanently or for the time-being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Some factors which increase vulnerability include:

- a sensory or physical disability or impairment.
- a learning disability.
- a physical illness.
- a mental illness, chronic or acute.
- dementia.
- an addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- failing faculties of old age.
- an unpaid carer.
- those who are homeless.
- immigrant families or individuals.
- victims of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion.
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement or abuse or trauma.

Sometimes a person may have more than one vulnerability which can be missed: for example, someone with a drink problem masking underlying dementia.