

Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults

Revised: June 2021

Policy Statement and Principles

Message Community Church (hereafter referred to as the Church) is committed to the safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable church members and visitors. The Church is committed to the following safeguarding principles:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Scope

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.”

This Church Safeguarding Policy is therefore applicable to “...everyone associated with the Church, who comes into contact with children, young people and adults.”

Basis of policy

This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with, and is part of, the full safeguarding policy, which can be provided upon request. It should form part of the recruitment process as outlined in the full policy. In addition, any new volunteer must sign to acknowledge they have read Section A as part of their Registration Form.

This document is intended to be compliant and consistent with the national and diocesan policies and no contradiction is intended.

SECTION A

Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Abuse

When is an adult vulnerable?

Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 defines a 'vulnerable adult' as '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.'¹

Through the Care Act 2014, the Government defines a vulnerable adult as any person over the age of 18 years "who has needs for care and support; is experiencing, or maybe at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those needs, is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it."

Whilst the government legislation prefers to use the terminology 'adult at risk', the Church has chosen to use the term 'vulnerable adult'.

Please note that some adults may not consider themselves vulnerable but may be vulnerable to being abused by individuals in positions of leadership and responsibility. As adults are not inherently vulnerable and in need of protection it is important to recognise that the factors described below do not, of themselves, mean that a person is vulnerable. It is a combination of these factors and the circumstances that a person finds him/herself in that can make an individual vulnerable to abuse or neglect:

- Sensory or physical disabilities or impairments
- Learning disabilities
- Chronic or acute mental ill health (including dementia)
- Frailty, including age-related frailty
- Requiring assistance in conducting own affairs
- Living in residential care/support accommodation, or receiving domiciliary care in their own home
- Addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Homelessness
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and /or significant emotional coercion.
- Providing unpaid care to others, such as an elderly family member
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma.

Who abuses adults?

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include:

- Relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer. Carers can experience considerable stress, exhaustion and frustration without respite or support. This can lead to unintended poor care or abuse. Relatives who are the main carers may also be subject to abuse by those for whom they are caring. This abuse is often endured for long periods and unreported.
- Neighbours
- Paid carers. It is worth noting that all people living in institutions are more likely to have a degree of vulnerability. Some members of the church may be visiting adults in institutions – hospitals, prisons and residential homes. If, as part of these responsibilities, they have concerns about the care being given and/or the way that someone is being treated, the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor should be contacted.
- Workers in places of worship
- People who are themselves vulnerable and/or are users of a care service
- Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere.

Factors that may lead to abuse

Abuse can occur in any setting no matter where a person lives or where they are being cared for. Abuse can occur in residential or day care setting, in hospitals, in other people's homes, churches, and other places previously assumed safe, and in public places.

Abuse is more likely to occur if the vulnerable adult:

- Rejects help
- Has a communication difficulty
- Has challenging/unusual behaviour
- Is not helpful or co-operative
- Is behaviourally disturbed or there are major changes in personality behaviour
- Is socially isolated

What is the definition of adult abuse?

The following table outlines the definitions of abuse of vulnerable adults as found in The Message Trust Safeguarding Handbook and possible signs and symptoms, taken from the Type of Abuse Fact Sheet. Anyone can witness or become aware of information suggesting that abuse or neglect is occurring. It may not always be obvious that a vulnerable adult is being abused or mistreated, however there may be general indicators that something is amiss: the adult may say or do things that hint all is not well. In some cases there may be a marked change in behaviour or a direct disclosure or complaint of abuse.

It is important to note that these categories of abuse are not mutually exclusive.

Type of abuse	Definition	Possible Signs and Symptoms
Physical Abuse	Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions	Bruises, black eyes, broken bones, scalds, burns, cigarette burns, human bites, or bruising which looks like hand or finger marks. Unexplained injuries, or injuries for which unconvincing explanations are given. Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back or abdomen Worsening health for no reason Broken eyeglasses or frames Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of carers or certain adults

Psychological Abuse	Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.	<p>Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting)</p> <p>Insomnia</p> <p>Change in appetite, weight gain or loss</p> <p>Ambivalence to carer</p> <p>Anger without an apparent cause</p> <p>Deference, resignation</p> <p>Helplessness, excessive fears</p> <p>Unexplained paranoia</p> <p>Self-harming/suicide attempts</p>
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		<p>Emotional withdrawal – the person becomes uncommunicative or nonresponsive Low self-esteem</p> <p>Possible behaviour by abuser – threats, intimidation, bullying; threats of abandonment; unkept promises; punitive approach to incontinence (blaming sanctions etc); few visitors or other contact; locking the person in.</p>
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Sexual Abuse	Including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.	Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas. Genital discharge or urinary tract infections. Sexually transmitted infections. Bites, bruising or any marks on inner thighs or arms Significant change in sexual behaviour/language Pregnancy in a person who is unable to consent Agitation during personal care/examination They could seem frightened of a particular person They may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, “secret” friendship.
Neglect or acts of omission	Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating	Untreated injuries, medical and dental needs. Unwashed clothes, or inadequate clothing for the weather. Skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm. Malnutrition Poor language, communication or social skills. Inadequate heating/lighting Failure to access medical care or give prescribed medication when required Lack of assistance with eating and drinking Failure to ensure privacy and dignity
		Inconsistent/reluctant contact with health or social agencies Poor personal hygiene Reports that there is no carer at home

Financial or material abuse	Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse of misappropriating of property, possessions or benefits.	<p>Signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the adult's signature or which are signed when the adult cannot write</p> <p>Sudden changes in bank activity including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money</p> <p>Inclusion of additional names on an adult's bank account</p> <p>Issues with Powers of Attorney</p> <p>Abrupt changes to or creation of wills</p> <p>Sudden appearance of uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a vulnerable person's affairs or possessions</p> <p>Unexplained transfers or assets to family members or someone outside the family</p> <p>Numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone should have been paying these for the vulnerable person</p> <p>A carer asks financial questions about a person, unrelated to their care</p> <p>Lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford</p> <p>Unexplained disappearance of money or valuable possessions e.g. silverware or jewellery.</p>
Discriminatory abuse	Including racists, sexist, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.	Many of the signs of discriminatory abuse will be the same as for psychological abuse. The impact of discriminatory abuse can lead to significant self-harming and must never be underestimated.
Domestic abuse	Usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour, by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.	<p>Unexplained bruises or injuries</p> <p>Shows signs of being suicidal</p> <p>Becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn</p> <p>Has panic attacks</p> <p>Has frequent absences from work or other commitments</p>

		<p>Wears clothes that conceal even on warm days</p> <p>Stops talking about his/her partner</p> <p>Is anxious about being out or rushes away</p>
Organisational abuse	<p>Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from oneoff incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation</p>	<p>Lack of respect and dignity</p> <p>Name calling – inappropriate ways of addressing people; inappropriate use of power or control</p> <p>Inability to make choices and decisions</p> <p>Agitation when routine is broken</p> <p>Patterns of challenging behaviour</p> <p>Inadequate staffing levels</p> <p>People being hungry or dehydrated</p> <p>Poor standards of care</p>
Modern Slavery	<p>Including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; and traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.</p>	

In addition to the above, the following are also recognised types of abuse:

Spiritual abuse: Although not a formal category of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

Self-neglect: This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It should be noted that self-neglect may not prompt enquiry. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

What to do if abuse is disclosed

If someone discloses abuse to you, let them know you are listening to them and that what you are saying will be taken seriously, ***but you must not promise confidentiality.***

Keep calm.

Be aware they may have been threatened.

Do not ask any closed questions and try to ask as few questions as possible. Ask only what is necessary. If a court case follows, it may be dismissed if any influence or guidance as to the nature of the disclosure could be interpreted in any way.

Helpful questions or phrases to use would be:

- I'm glad you have told me/you were right to tell me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you
- Why don't you tell me what happened?

Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know the outcome. You may have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police if you feel someone is in immediate danger and unable to return home.

Reassure them that they will be fully involved in any decisions about what will happen next, and ask them what they would like to be done. If they decide they do not want to take it further, please refer to the section about respecting the adult's rights (below) and reassure them they can re-open the conversation at any time.

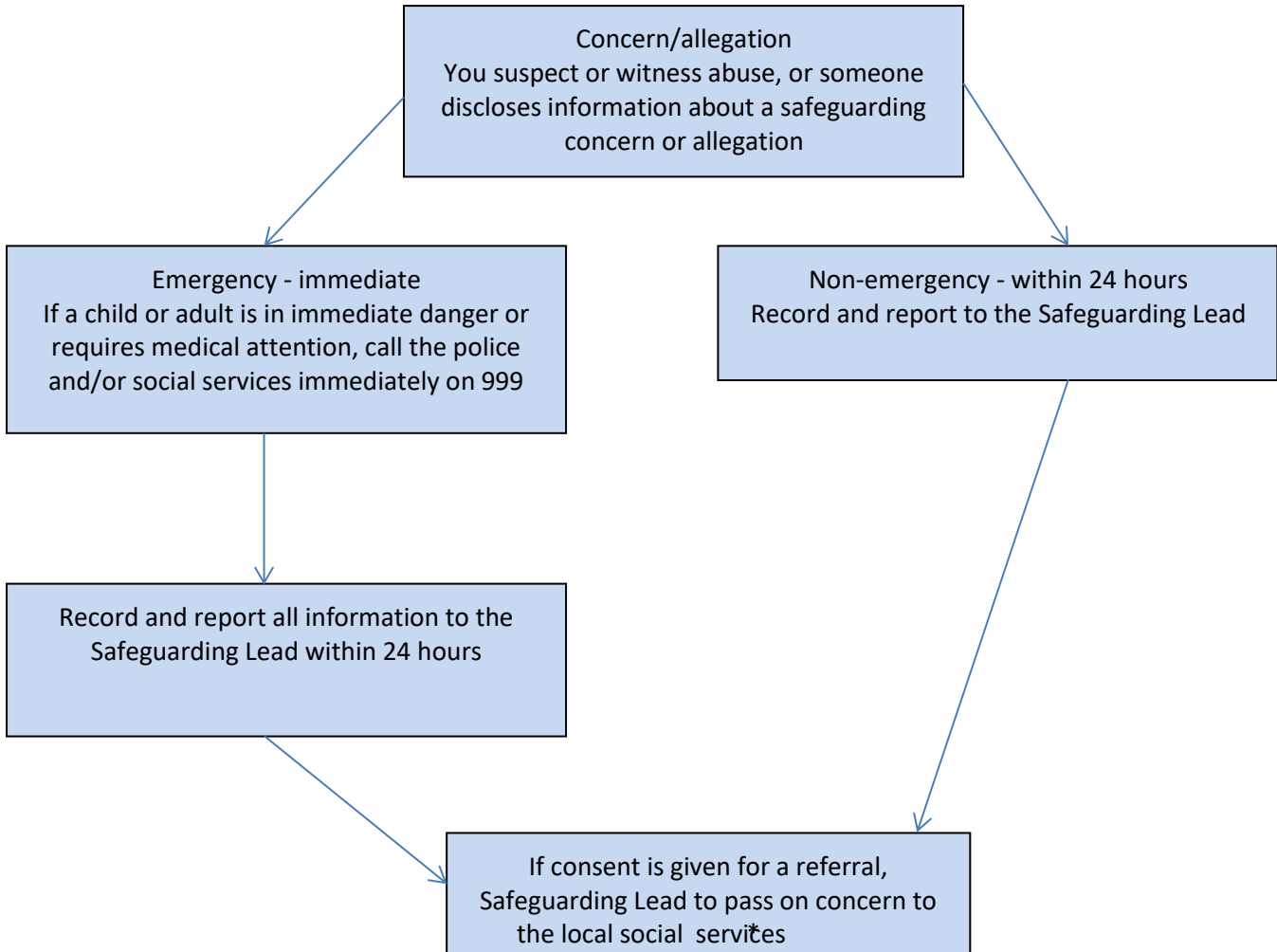
Regardless of consent, within 24 hours, make notes of both sides of the conversation. Use the recording incident form. Record your location, what activity was taking place, how the disclosure came about etc. Sign and date these notes and keep them even if subsequently typed. Please pass on all such confidential material (even if subsequently typed) to a member of the Safeguarding Team so it can be stored indefinitely in the Church's confidential, secure storage.

Speak at once to the Safeguarding Lead (details can be found in the key details at the end of this policy). Do this even if you are not sure of the implications of what you have learned, but your suspicions have been aroused.

Apart from telling the appropriate person as outlined above, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform or confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.

Responding to Concerns of Abuse – reporting procedure

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner. Action should be taken quickly, following the procedure outlined below.



***Respecting the vulnerable adult’s rights to decide if they want help** The

following is taken from the BMA Adult Safeguarding Toolkit:

“...where a competent adult explicitly refuses any supporting intervention, however, this should normally be respected. Exceptions are where a criminal offence may have taken place or where there may be a significant risk of harm to a third party. If, for example, an abusive adult is in a position of authority in relation to other adults, it may be appropriate to breach confidentiality and disclose information to a relevant authority. Where a criminal offence is suspected, it may also be necessary to involve the police or take legal advice. Ongoing support should also be offered...an adult should not be lost to or abandoned by relevant services because they initially refused the offer of assistance. The situation should be monitored and the individual informed that they can take up the offer of assistance at any time.”

Even without the consent of the individual, the Safeguarding Lead retains the right to seek advice from Social Services or the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer provided they do not use any names or details.

Responding to allegations of historic abuse

Allegations of abuse which took place in the past must be taken as seriously as recent allegations. It may have happened to an adult when they were a child or younger person, or to a child when they were younger.

A victim/survivor needs to be aware that if the alleged perpetrator is known to be currently working with children, young people or vulnerable adults in either a paid or voluntary capacity a referral to the statutory services – such as the Police – will be made. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor will make this referral as part of the reporting process as outlined above.

The procedure for reporting of historic safeguarding allegations is the same as that of recent allegations. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and adults and respecting the rights of the person against whom an allegation is made. In such circumstances the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult must come first. The rights of the person against whom the allegation is made are important and must be given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of the child or young person have been assured.

Any safeguarding concern or allegation made against a church officer who has died must also be reported to the DSA.

Procedures and support following alleged abuse by a church officer

All concerns or allegations of abuse by a church officer must be reported to the DSA (as outlined above):

- If the concern involves the Safeguarding Lead, in a non-emergency setting, it must be reported to a church leader.

SECTION B Supplementary Information

The following is intended as supplementary information for those working in ministries involving vulnerable adults.

Risk Assessment

To the full extent permitted by law, the Church cannot accept responsibility for accidents that happen on its premises when vulnerable adults are under the supervision of their carers.

Risk assessments should be in place for each group or activity and reviewed annually by the group leaders. All current risk assessments can be found in the Church Office. Leaders should be familiar with the relevant risk assessments and follow the appropriate advice to mitigate any risks.

A risk assessment for online video-conferencing via the church's chosen platform 'Zoom' has been compiled, and should be consulted when considering interaction with groups containing vulnerable adults. It can be found in our Health and Safety policy or at the end of this document (Appendix A).

Health and Safety

Doorways should be secured so that children and young people cannot get out (nor strangers in) without the knowledge of a leader. If children are being collected by a parent, leaders should ensure that children do not leave the building on their own.

The Church has provided first aid leaders should familiarise themselves with the locations.

- Permission for First Aid to be administered in the event of illness or accident lies with the person or their carer.
- Any prescribed medication should be administered by the person or their carer and kept securely.
- First Aid should be publicly administered.

Each group must have a leader trained in First Aid.

Transport

Lifts to and from activities, or attending church on a Sunday morning, should be arranged informally. The Church does not provide transport in an official capacity.

Key Safeguarding Roles

The Church Safeguarding Team have been given responsibility for Safeguarding within the church family

Key Contact Details:

Church Safeguarding Team:	Danielle Campsall Danielle.campsall@message.org.uk 07393423274
Manchester Social Services	<i>Contact us to report abuse or neglect of a child or an adult with care and support needs. Even if you're unsure, report it to us so that we can check. You can report your concerns anonymously if you want.</i> <i>Call: 0161 234 5001</i> <i>email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk</i>
National Contacts:	Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as CCPAS – the Church’s Child Protection Advisory Service): 0303 003 1111 Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: 0800 0699 784 ChildLine: 0800 1111 NSPCC: Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 Police: Urgent 999 or local police 101

Signed (church leader).....

Date.....

Appendix A: Risk assessment for church meetings held via Zoom.

	Activity	Risk Factors	Risk Level without controls and measures	Controls and Measures	Risk Level with controls and measures	Named person responsible
1.	<p>Using Zoom for online church meetings</p> <p><i>A church meeting is a gathering of two or more people to specifically discuss church related business.</i></p>	Unwanted attendees at the meeting	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting host must not share the meeting link or meeting ID on social media, website or any public platform. Meeting invitations must be by email only. The only exception to this is via Message Community Church Facebook group, whose members are already admitted by the Vicar and is therefore not a public page. 2. The meeting host must password protect the meeting. 3. Where possible the meeting host should enable the 'waiting room' to control participant access to the meeting. 4. Where possible, the meeting host should 'lock the meeting' when the expected participants are present. 	Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting host 2. Meeting host 3. Meeting host 4. Meeting host

2.	Young people meetings	Under 18s are in a Zoom room unaccompanied by an adult	High	<p>1. Any under 18s should be accompanied by an adult in the same physical house at all times. That adult will be responsible for supervising that young person.</p> <p>2. The meeting host must not share the meeting link or meeting ID on social media, website or any public platform. Meeting invitations must be by email only to parents' email addresses.</p>	Low	<p>1.Meeting host and parent/guardian</p> <p>2. Meeting host</p>
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				<p>3. The meeting host must password protect the meeting.</p> <p>4. The meeting host should enable the 'waiting room' to control participant access to the meeting. The meeting host must wait until two leaders are present before admitting children and young people to the meeting.</p> <p>5. Where possible, the meeting host should 'lock the meeting' when the expected participants are present.</p> <p>6. At the end of a meeting, the meeting host should either 'End meeting for all' or have at least two leaders present until all children and young people have left the meeting.</p>		<p>3. Meeting host</p> <p>4. Meeting host</p> <p>5. Meeting host</p> <p>6. Meeting host</p>
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3.	Using Zoom for online meetings	Software bugs or viruses allowing hackers to access the meeting	High	Any Zoom user must keep their installation of the Zoom software up to date (by accepting all prompts for software updates as soon as they are offered.)	Low	All Zoom users
4	Using Zoom for online meetings	Inappropriate or offensive behaviour by attendees causing distress or harm to other attendees of the meeting.	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where possible screen sharing should be set to 'host only' 2. It is the responsibility of the meeting host to remove any participant from the meeting who may be causing disruption, or to mute their sound or video. If you haven't already locked the meeting, do so now. 	Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Meeting host 2. Meeting host

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5	Safeguarding	A safeguarding incident occurs	Medium	It is everyone's responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns which occur during a meeting to Danielle Campsall (07393423274) as soon as possible, following the procedure as set out in our Safeguarding Policy.	Low	All Zoom users
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6	Environment	Participants inadvertently disclose potentially sensitive information to others by nature of what is visible to others in their background.	Medium	Make sure there is nothing personal in your background, for example, photographs of children which you would not want people to see ordinarily.	Low	All Zoom users
7	Recording of meetings	Data protection regulations are breached in the act of recording a Zoom meeting.	High	Although Zoom meetings can be recorded by the host, this should not be done. If there is a strong case to record, the permission of all attendees to that meeting should be obtained, either by verbal consent or emailed consent, prior to the start of the meeting.	Low	Meeting host

